Analysing the perception of white-collar gig employees who chose the Gig economy over conventional work.

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MSc in International Business

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I certify that the dissertation entitled:

submitted for the degree of: MSc in International Business is the result of the my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgment is given.

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Date:

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Abstract

Gig Economy has captured a lot of attention in the way things work and how the future of employment looks like with its advancements, it has captured high academic attention with never ending debates of labour regulation, future of work, job quality and impact of technology. But amongst all this, most research is done with the blue-collar sector of the Gig in mind, this paper tries to put some light on the less talked white-collar sector and how the Gig Economy has affected them or the way they work. This paper studies the challenges and perks of working in the gig economy by analysing the perspective of the white-collar employees who are a part of this Economy and who chose the Gig Economy after working on a traditional work for more than five years.

The study proposes to look into the Gig Economy sector through the glasses of the white-collar executives to help organisations to understand them and their approach towards work better. This would also help the employees who want to transition towards the gig economy in taking their first steps. This work also envision the possibility of future study of the organisations hiring the Gig workers to understand their perspective or the impact of region and culture on the perspective of the gig worker and their working conditions.

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Acronym used in the study

CXO - A chief experience officer, who ensures positive interactions with an organization's customers

1. Introduction

The topic of this research is:

To analyse the perception of white-collar employees who chose the Gig economy over conventional work.

1.1 Overview

This study is based on the working of the white-collar sector of the gig economy. With the recent changes in work style and working conditions, it is becoming increasingly important to accept the changing features of work and update ourselves with the ever-evolving changes in work culture. The recent pandemic was like a pick in the eye to remind us that we need to show a greater range of flexibility towards our working style and need to keep updated with the technological advancements that assist work. These changes require us to accept concepts like freelancing, elancing, and gig work (Aguinis and Lalwal, 2013).

Previous researches have claimed that there is no single, agreed definition of the gig economy, a research tried to define the gig economy based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria while a working definition of the gig economy was created in consultation with BEIS and the Institute for Employment Studies as: "The gig economy involves the exchange of labour for money between individuals or companies via digital platforms that actively facilitate matching between providers and customers, on a short-term and payment by task basis" (Huws, Spencer, Joyce, 2016).

Although not a new concept, but the gig way of work got a lot of interest in the recent times given to its independence and flexibility, a London based study confirmed that over half of all gig economy providers were satisfied with these two aspects of their work - 58 percent and 56 percent respectively (Kaine and Josserand, 2019). Given to the reach that comes with working in the gig sector, Sundararajan puts gig economy as a new ways of doing familiar things, being powered by technologies that extend your economic "community" far beyond

family or friends who live in your neighbourhood, to a digitally vetted subset of the population at large (Sundararajan, 2016).

The gig, the Collars and the Concerns

To get to the depth of this study, understanding various sectors of the gig environment becomes necessary, precisely the blue-collar and the white-collar sectors of the gig economy. To define the two sectors, previous researches state that the values attached to work by white and blue-collar workers suggest that white-collar workers are more concerned with "intrinsic" values which emanate from the work activity itself, such as that a job is considered to be important and give a feeling of accomplishment. Blue-collar workers, on the other hand, are said to emphasize more often the "extrinsic" components of a job, such as its accompanying economic rewards, promotional opportunities, and provisions for security (Weaver, 1975). To understand these two sectors from the gig economy point of view, the Uber drivers and Deliveroo workers would fall into the category of Blue-collar and the workers who are recognised by their higher education and work experience and whose work determines the working and success of an organisation are categorized under white-collar.
Multiple research based on the gig's blue-collar population, this research focusses on the white-collar section of the Gig Economy. This research concentrates on understanding the attitude and concerns of the gig workers involved in the white-collar sector of the gig. The investigation will help to understand the white-collar sector of the gig and will also enable its comparison to its blue-collar counterpart to compare the similarities and differences.

The study is focused exclusively on the white-collar sector of the gig economy, the research is done through analysis of the statements provided by the white-collar personnel. These white-collar workers were previously involved in traditional work for more than an average of twelve years before transitioning to the gig economy. This research collected data by conducting a semi-structured qualitative interview of eight gig personnel dwelling from various geographical backgrounds and working in different positions of the management background.

1.2 Research Purpose

The interest in this topic arose from trying the understand the gig economy to see its future potentials in addressing issues of unemployability, but for that, understanding the psychology of the workforce and their challenges and factors of motivation prevalent in the Gig economy was necessary.

This research was a logical choice as, firstly the gig economy appears to be the alternative future of the working industry with its ever-evolving new concepts and more workers preferring to work in it. The most evident disruptive impact of the gig economy was exemplified by the Uber platform, founded in 2009 which by 2018 had a market value of over US$60 billion, disrupting the status quo of the existing taxi business and represented over 0.5% of the Australian workforce (Lansbury et al., 2019). With the interest of organisations increasing towards having a flexible resource approach and them trying to strengthen their economic strength in the real estates, many organisations and employees were trying to navigate to concepts like WFH and business without an office. The advent of the COVID19 pandemic showed us that it is perfectly normal to work from home or that having temporary workforce can also help achieve the same level of proficiency at work. These advancements can be a sign that the future of work is changing. To understand the alternatives of traditional 9-9 style of working, the study was conducted, to research the gig sector which is already applying the flexible way in their work. Since the white-collar sectors play a dominant role in the working of any organisation, the study is focused on the white-collar sector of the gig economy. This study will help to analyse the mindsets of the gig workers towards flexible working and will explore how this can be an alternative to future work in the future. The results are expected to help conventional workers interested in trying the gig way of work and the organisations to understand if they want to try this alternative way to work with talents without actually having them in their conventional workforce and payroll.

1.3 Research Objective

There have been multiple works conducted on blue-collar employee, as a result, other forms of gig work have received lesser attention (Lansbury et al., 2019). This work tries to cover this research gap, by reflecting on the white-collar sections of the gig economy who are rather distinctively different from the blue-collar employees with regards to their educational background and the working options available to them. These white-collar employees work as consultants sharing their wide industrial knowledge across organisations, the study will analyse their view of working in the gig economy sector and their motivation and challenges while working in the sector.

The main Questions that will be addressed in the study are:

1. What made these conventional employees navigate towards working in the Gig Economy? How well is the gig concept accepted by organizations and how the gig economy can be beneficial to organizations?

2. What are the most prevalent challenges faced by the white-collar gig workers when working in the Gig Economy? How do external stimuli influence the working of the white-collar sector of the gig economy (in light of the COVID19 pandemic)?

These questions will be elaborately discussed across the sections of the study.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Defining the two classes of the Gig Economy, the blue-collar employees are the one who serves the Gig Economy through smaller work engagement that requires lower levels of educational qualification and low skills specialization. This involves works such as Food Delivery through Deliveroo and Shared Cab services like Uber. While the white-collar executives are differentiated through their high skill specializations and high educational

qualification, the white-collar employees are involved in the managerial and executive-level responsibilities that matter in the precise and organized functioning of the business.

Since the working of an organization is usually determined by the performance of the white-collar employees, organisations are critical regarding whom they associate with. With the increase in the number of white-collar executives getting themselves involved in the Gig working style, this study is a way to analyse how they associate with an organization and how much value and importance do they hold in the organisation.

The study is focussed to help two sectors:

1. The experienced workforce who are willing to either join the gig economy or understand the concept of how things work in it.
2. The hiring organisations, to enable them to understand the phycology of a white-collar gig employee and how they can help in the function of their organisation with equal precision without joining them as a conventional employee.

1.5 Structure of the Study

The method of studying used in the research is the Qualitative research technique. This research will ponder on the perspective and attitude of white-collar professionals working in the gig economy sector.

The study starts with introducing all the aspects of the gig economy and the contents that play a role in the working of the gig sector. The literature review showcases the previous work conducted on the gig economy, mostly focussed on the blue-collar sector.

The methodology section expresses the conceptual framework used for conducting the study, the conceptual framework helps to understand the whole process from data collection to analysis. The methodology used in this study is Qualitative research methods. Since the research was to understand the emotions and motivations of the gig economy personnel, a Qualitative approach was used for understanding questions like why and how instead of what and how (Blumberg, n.d.). Eight interviews were conducted in the course of the study via digital applications like Zoom and Skype, the responses of the interviewees to the semi-

structured questions formed the base to analysis the questions and hypothesis of the study and drive to conclusion.

The discussion section portrays the interpretations derived from the study. The analysis is inferred by segregating the interview statements into themes and using the colour coding technique to achieve the results.

Finally, the conclusions are drawn following the study in the last section, the research concludes here by portraying its findings through analysis of the interviews and depicts how the gig economy can be utilised by the organisations.

2. Literature review

2.1 Overview

It wasn't until about a decade ago that workers and work were linked to the location and work was based on skills and locational availability, as portrayed by Ray Hudson in his famous book on theory and production based in capitalist societies, labours were usually place-bound as factors of production (Hudson, 2000) but with evolving time, the conditions changed and the widespread of the internet made providers, workers, and end-users more connected than ever. Clients, bosses, workers, and users of the end-products of work can now all be located in different corners of the planet (Graham et al., 2017) International Labour Organisation (2014) estimated 213 million new entries into the labour market by end of 2019. With this amount of increase in the availability of executives, it becomes increasingly important to connect the workers and providers throughout the globe following each other's needs irrespective of their location constraints.

With the increase of these concepts, remote work became a fundamental part of the working community and with more workers working online, flexibility became important.

Some research suggests that gig work, rather than empowering workers as freelancers, could serve to reinforce the commodification of labour and undermine existing labour standards, while other research points that Gig work can be seen as a new variation of putting-out and subcontracting, with no job security and unpredictable employment and earning (Stanford, 2017). The Gig economy workers, not being legal employees and working as contractors are usually not able to claim the benefits like other employees in a traditional job and thus fail to claim for any protection and support from the employer side, making it important for them to get regular work for survival and maintenance.

2.1.1 Definition of the key concepts :

The research journals, books, publications, articles, and other forms of literature utilised for conducting the study in the usage of the key concepts listed below. The key concepts are listed with a working definition to understand the background to enable a proper understanding of the work presented in this research.

Gig Economy

The ‘gig economy’ has emerged as a key theme in a recent independent review of modern employment practices (Taylor, 2017). Gig work can also be referred to as a form of self-employment, strictly speaking, is a contemporary labour market phenomenon analogous to the current century (de Ruyter et al., 2019). There is a very thin line differentiating the various fields under the gig economy, these workers can be differentiated according to their skill and experience level and the way and platforms they use to connect them to their desired work. Research points the distinction between different gig workers according to the online platforms they use to get work and how they interact with their employers (Barley et al., 2017), analysis indicates that in most gig workplaces, the employees never know their employers and usually they are relatively low skilled in general like workers getting their work over Uber and TaskRabbit. So we can say that the platform from which the economy worker look for their work can be a good distinction to identify their skill levels. There are some doubts regarding the difference of Gig work and Freelancing, to naively define the both, the help of a job portal is taken due to deficiency of a technical definition, A freelancer is an independent worker who essentially runs their own business. Freelancers are responsible for their marketing, billing, and communication, they are both the CEO and front-line worker while Gig's work is technically freelancing, a “gig,” as it is defined today is usually mediated through a specialized app or platform. Gig workers are classified the same way as freelancers. They earn money independently but do not entirely run their own business. Their marketing is typically done for them via the company that runs the gig platform, and jobs are often routed to them randomly (Nelson, 2019).

Pandemic

According to disease control experts, a pandemic an infection that spreads widely and affects a significant proportion of the population is inevitable. A pandemic is stated to be a unique disaster especially because other than its effect on mankind it has an immense impact on the workforce (Santos et al., 2009) It affects the workforce, the individuals of a population and the workforce as a whole while keeping its effect much longer than when it actually occurred. Pandemics throughout history had a very negative effect on the economy with a history of slow recovery. The Swine flu pandemic of 2009 was an example that showed us the disastrous effect of a pandemic on our economy, research on the UK economy of the times shows how the UK Economy which should in principle have been able to cope with the pandemic actually suffered a significant risk of triggering a set of unfavourable behavioural changes tipping into deflation. A graph showing how the Swine flu pandemic affected UK economy is shown in Fig. 1 below.

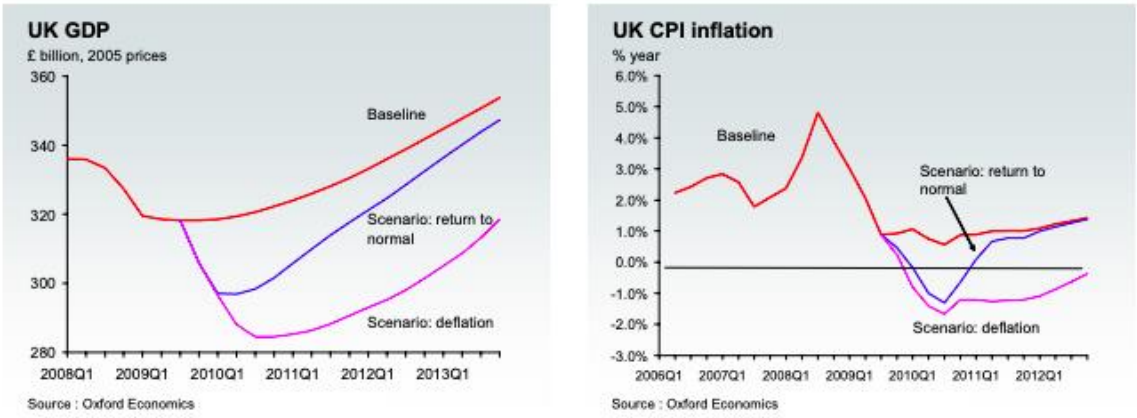

Fig 1. The threat of Swine flu leading to deflation in UK (Economic Outlook, 2009)

COVID 19

With the advent of the pandemic since November 2019, the world hit a huge setback, various degrees of lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that is challenging the healthcare infrastructure of many countries, with ripple effects for the larger economic and social fabric that constitutes everyday life (Leidner, 2020).

COVID 19 will supposedly have direct effects on the economy, potentially causing more workers to work part-time or be laid off, cutting incomes and consumption further. The potential for a spiralling recession is real (Heywood, 2020). This lead to discussions on the increasing public and policy interest in the digitally enabled economy – alternatively referred to as the platform economy, on-demand economy or gig economy (Kaine and Josserand, 2019).

Platforms

The key economic exchange that is taking place in the gig economy is platform-enabled gig work (Meijerink and Keegan, 2019). Platforms are basically the online sources that are used by the gig workers to connect them to the work providing organisations . In the gig economy an identifiable employer-employee relationship within the confines of an organization is absent (Meijerink and Keegan, 2019) thus platforms become the medium of connection between the gig workers and the organisations providing work.

To briefly define the topics that would be analysed by this study, we have the following:

1. The Gig work and Flexibility

If we try to define gig work, it is characterised by particularly short cycle time and a high degree of formal worker control over scheduling (Lehdonvirta, 2018), we see some people being attracted towards the gig economy following the glitters of flexibility, this study will try to explore if it is true or just a myth? Some studies have proved that the slaves of the gig work actually have to work longer hours to satiate their thrust for more or even for a secure future given the lack of consistency in gig work. For instance, flexible supermarket workers were formally free to declare the hours that they were available to work, but in practice had to accept disruptive shifts or risk no longer being offered shifts (Lehdonvirta, 2018) while sometimes this paid temporary work actually prevent regular work (Silver and Goldscheider, 1994) but Lehdonvirta's conclusion based on three online platforms stated that online pieceworkers enjoyed considerable formal freedom in scheduling their work, and valued this

freedom as a means to satisfy individual needs and combine work with other activities (Lehdonvirta, 2018) this is further supported by a London based study which claims that Independence and flexibility were the two aspects that the gig economy was most often satisfied with (Huws, Spencer, Joyce, 2016).

2. The Gig work and work exposure

The exposure to different work and working environment is seemingly provided if one works in the gig economy. Increasing knowledge and web of the network is of utmost importance in the new era of the connected web to get you to places and opportunities otherwise impossible, but a question that has not yet been adequately answered is what does the emergence of gig work mean to skills acquisition and career development (Kaine and Josserand, 2019), A work by Wood conducted over online workers based in Asia and Africa in the trade-off sector, says on the positive side, these jobs offer flexibility, autonomy, task variety, and complexity, while the negative characteristics include low pay, social isolation, unsocial and irregular hours, overwork, sleep deprivation and exhaustion (Wood et al., 2019). This study focused on understanding the concept of work exposure through analysis of the perception of white-collar gig workers in order to try and answer the questions staged by these previous researches.

3. The monetary aspect of the gig

Money is another concern which is seen both in a positive and negative light in the researches of the blue-collar gig work sector. While a few do get the benefits of a higher salary or multiple salary source, some have complained to be getting lower than marginal revenues due to issues like zero-hour contracts and getting mistreated or fooled by organisations who do not define their employability. A study based conducted on a small sample of blue-collar people based in London estimated mean income from the gig economy to be £5,634. However, this was skewed by a relatively small proportion of high earners. The median gig economy income was £375. 4. The findings suggested that income earned in the gig economy

forms a small proportion of most gig workers' total annual income (Huws, Spencer, Joyce, 2016), this work is determined to understand this aspect in the lights of the white-collar sector.

In the dissertation by Leeds university, the author concludes that the advantages of the gig-economy, namely flexibility, the ability to pursue entrepreneurial activities and control over ones work, are examined to find associations with the perceived benefits are actually preferred by millennial (Leeds, 2018), With inquiries on both the positive and negative aspects present in the gig, this qualitative research will provide an insider's view, allowing the reader to understand the concept of gig work for experienced professionals from an insider point of view.

After finishing the review of the literature, journal articles from Stanford and Graham enabled in conjecturing the concept of gig work and the perspectives of organisation concerning the gig economy. While the work Hews enabled the understanding of the gig with the European geography in particular. Work of Hudson pronounces how geographical locations were important in determining the work availability, and Bradford's investigation shows us how the concept changes with the advent on newer work styles in general and gig economy in particular. All the work appraised in the process of the study enabled the development of the base of this research by demonstrating the concepts and pointing out the key factors to ponder on while going about the research. Previous works also elucidated that there is limited study based on particular sectors of the gig, thus making this research a logical to understand the working of the white-collar gig sector in particular.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Background: Being a student of business and liking the subject of economics in general, Gig Economy seems to be a way of future to eradicate unemployment, but to move to such wider array to determine the future, analysis of the challenges and perks of working in the gig to form a better concept of the same is important. This led the interest to work on this subject. To proceed with the research, a qualitative approach was chosen. Since qualitative research seeks to contribute to a better understanding of social realities and to draw attention to processes, meaning patterns, and structural features (Flick, Kardorff, Steinke, 2004). Eight interviews were conducted of Gig professionals across the globe and across various industries with one thing in common, they were all experienced professionals who transitioned towards the gig economy from their conventional work and had an average of twelve years of working experience in the traditional sector.

The following path was followed to conduct the process of the study as shown in Fig. 2, adopted from Blackstone.

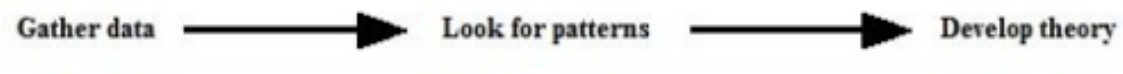

Fig 2. The process followed for conducting the study(Blackstone, 2012)

The picturised path depicts that the study is of inductive nature, initially previous studies of Hews, Hayley and Graham provided the base to understand the concept of work and its pattern and impacts in a general view of the gig economy, the study them propagates to identifying variables that would be used throughout the study to illustrate the working of the gig. The next flow was collecting data from semi-structured interviews of white-collar gig economy workers and look for patterns for thematic analysis and finally develop a theory that goes in unison to the understandings from literature review and analysis of the data collected through the interview process. Following Gunsydin, the Qualitative approach was used to answer questions about the ‘what’, ‘how’ or ‘why’ of a phenomenon rather than ‘how many’ or ‘how much’, which are answered by quantitative methods. For conducting the research, semi-structured interviews were taken to understand the psychology and concerns

of the white-collar gig economy people in depth since it generates a significant proportion of data collected by social scientists –data that is mostly spoken and written (Cook, 2009).

Choosing the Variables

With extensive study, the three variables that were of most concern were: Work-life balance, Flexibility, updated knowledge, platforms, competition, and COVID 19. They all are addressing the Gig Economy as they have a direct impact on the same.

Thirty-five articles were identified to understand and come to terms with the theories and terms used while interacting with the gig economy, but after deep reading and removal of duplicates, it was evident that the concept of freedom and flexibility were the most common terms that were mostly used in defining the advantages of the gig sector while some studies supported the concept others found it to be used disastrously by organisations in robbing the gig workers of their basic needs and amenities and making their life more miserable in the name of freedom. This study thus focussed on gathering the individual take of the participants on the advantages and segregating these advantages into internal feelings and materialistic help, and challenges into a perspective challenge or externally influenced challenge to get a wider view.

The following Fig 3 shows the Conceptual framework followed in this research

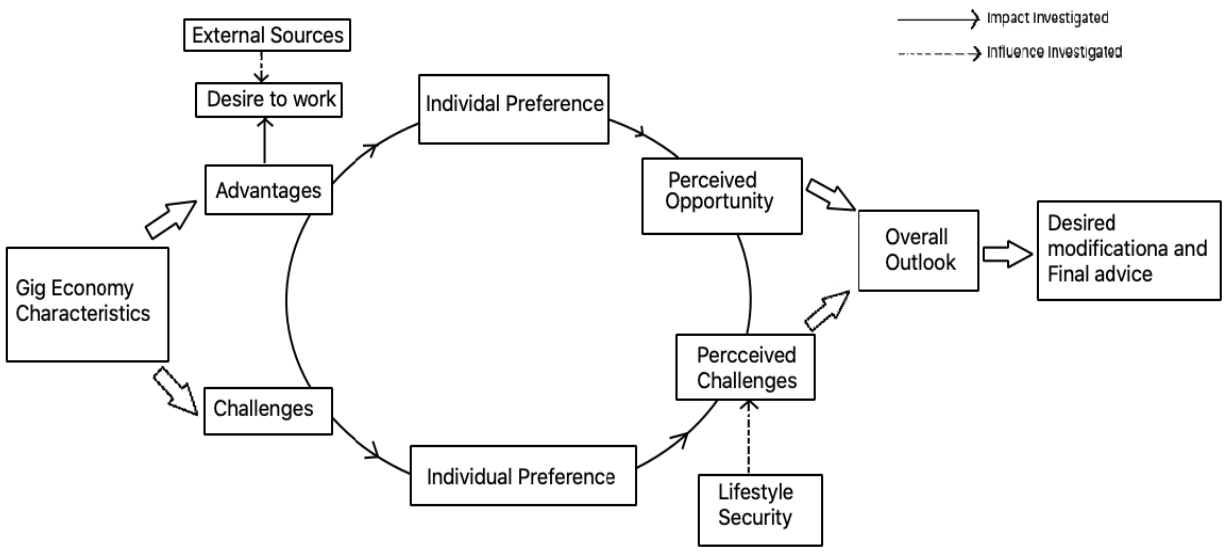

Fig 3. The Conceptual framework of the study

The Conceptual framework started with the understanding of the two sides of the gig economy, the advantages and the challenges. The Advantages and Challenges both were analysed according to subjective opinions presented by the interviewees, which yielded the perceived opportunity and challenges to get to the overall outlook of the interviewees towards gig economy enabling to derive conclusions and inferences and ultimately to understanding their perception to drive suggestions to modifications or acceptance of the gig industry in the white-collar space, and bits of advice to improve the working or being a part of this economy further. The direct impacts are invested in the previously defined process while the indirect influences are investigated while talked about the advantages and challenges. The indirect influences are as important as the direct ones as they lead to understand if the challenges can be resolved by improving the outlook of people or modification of the system is required. Similarly, it enables to understand if the advantages perceived by the gig workers are just a reflection of external influences or is the satisfaction imbibed in them. This approach of analysing direct perspective and external influences enabled to have an overall understanding of the overall perspective of working of the white-collar sector of the gig economy through the views of the interviewees.

2.3 Conclusion and Research Gap

Attempts to estimate the size of the on-demand economy face several difficulties, which mainly derive from issues discussed above; namely, the significant variety of crowd work and the lack of clear definitions and accepted terminology (Huws, Spencer, Joyce, 2016). While there have been attempts to overcome this negativity by conducting research based on either particular field or region or platform, reliable estimates for the overall size of the on-demand economy remain elusive (Huws, Spencer, Joyce, 2016) especially when talking about one sector, this led to the genesis of this study to look exclusively on the white-collar sector of the gig economy.

Despite there being various researches on the gig economy and the issues relating to the gig economy, there are still further scopes of study to understand the working of the gig concerning the white-collar employees of an organisation in particular, the white-collar

employees who would have more responsibility in the working of the organisation and not just a fraction of the work. This research is focused to understand why do these employees prefer working in gig and what are the challenges they face. With the immense amount of research on the issues in the blue-collar, I will compare to see if the same issues exist in the white-collar or are they different. In concluding, I would also take the concern of the COVID19 pandemic to study how the pandemic affected the working of these professionals while leaving a shadow on the economy as a whole.

Several studies have been conducted revealing the working conditions of the blue-collar gig economy and the issues they face, the agonies of working in a gig economy has been discussed in various papers, the disaggregation of the 'workplace' in both crowd work and on-demand gig work is significant as it potentially creates a disconnected, individualised experience of work (Kaine and Josserand, 2019) but considerably lesser amount of work has been done for the white-collar in the gig economy, although they can sometimes be identified as contract workers but the recent ways made to draw a line between (Anon, n.d.) can help us to distinguish between them following their work style and then comment of their aspect of the story regarding working in the gig economy sector.

Based on the previous studies related to this field, the research come up with the following observations :

- There are several classifications of types of work present within the Gig Economy, the Gig economy can work differently for these different types of employment. The type of gig work or its classification is largely dependent on the educational background and work experience of the candidates. This makes it important to stop generalising the gig and its and differentiating the sectors of the gig economy to understand the classifications and their workings in particular.
- People do demand more from their work life, more than just security and added benefits of working in a traditional job, they demand challenges and learning opportunities and being useful rather than just having a secured source of income with security benefits. People do put importance on work satisfaction and space and time to accomplish their passions in addition to having a good professional life. This

observation makes it important to understand if the balance is the primary focus of the employees for choosing the gig way of work.

- Lastly, studies like Graham and Keegan proves that the alternative working styles are getting popular and accepted in the organisations given to the benefits of partial commitment between the employee and employer, but there is no study to particularly address this by comparing it with the perception of the workers of the gig economy. This study would enable in understanding how the gig workers feel about their acceptance in the working environment.

3. Methodology and Research Design

3.1 Overview

The methodology and design approaches for the study are chosen to justify the research design and explain the nature of the study. The research considers a part of the working society who are highly educated and have a good number of years of experience in working in a traditional job and still chose to switch from their conventional environment to work in the gig economy. The research is to understand the advantages and challenges of taking this leap through the eyes of these employees to understand the concerns at a more personal level. Since the study is focused to understand the aspects of the works more deeply and personally, the qualitative research technique was used to conduct the research process. The methodology was chosen following the considerations of the primary goal and the appropriate way to achieve it, the primary goal of this research is investigating through analysis of subjective experience, Qualitative methods are, in general, better at developing rich descriptions of phenomena and processes–aiding conceptual and definitional clarification (Harper, 2011) thus choosing it seemed correct, to get to the epistemology, the typology used was Interpretative, this is justified by Harper's of Interpretivism. Phenomenologists who wish to go beyond the text and, interpret the experience and so render it more meaningful by placing a participant's account in a broader social, cultural, and theoretical context (Harper, 2011).

3.2 Research Philosophy and Approach

The research has a highly subjective philosophical influence given to the fact that the main objective of the study is to identify the concerns of the gig workers through interviews of the gig workers and understanding their opinions about various issues regarding working in the gig environment. The study has an inductive approach given to the fact it considers the opinions of the gig workers and then determines a broader conclusion form the analysis of their statements following Interpretivism, thus moving backward from collecting observations to generalising to form a theory.

To get the process of choosing a paradigm the following pattern as shown in Fig 4. was considered:

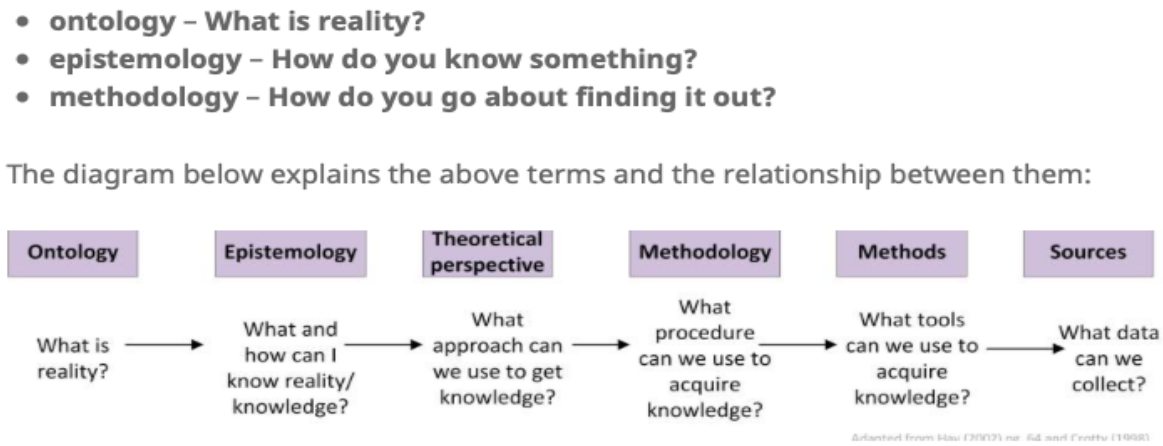

Fig 4. Understanding the research paradigm (Patel, 2015)

Paradigms do not represent hard and fast sets of rules but that they are, more accurately, loose and developing guidelines that assist the ongoing production and resolution of research problems (Makombe, 2017). Referring to the above diagram and Saunders's 'Research Onion' (Saunders et al., 2009), the interpretivism approach was focused to conduct the research. To understand the research paradigm building process for the study the following diagram was utilised.

Constructivist / Interpretive	There is no single reality or truth. Reality is created by individuals in groups (less realist).	Therefore, reality needs to be interpreted. It is used to discover the underlying meaning of events and activities.	Interpretivism (reality needs to be interpreted) • Phenomenology • Symbolic interactionism • Hermeneutics Critical Inquiry Feminism	Ethnography Grounded Theory Phenomenological research Heuristic inquiry Action Research Discourse Analysis Femenist Standpoint research etc	Usually qualitative, could include: Qualitative interview Observation Participant Non participant Case study Life history Narrative Theme identification etc
Paradigm	**Ontology** *What is reality?*	**Epistemology** *How can I know reality?*	**Theoretical Perspective** *Which approach do you use to know something?*	**Methodology** *How do you go about finding out?*	**Method** *What techniques do you use to find out?*

Fig 5. The research paradigm followed in conducting this study adopted from (Patel, 2015) and (Crotty, 1998)

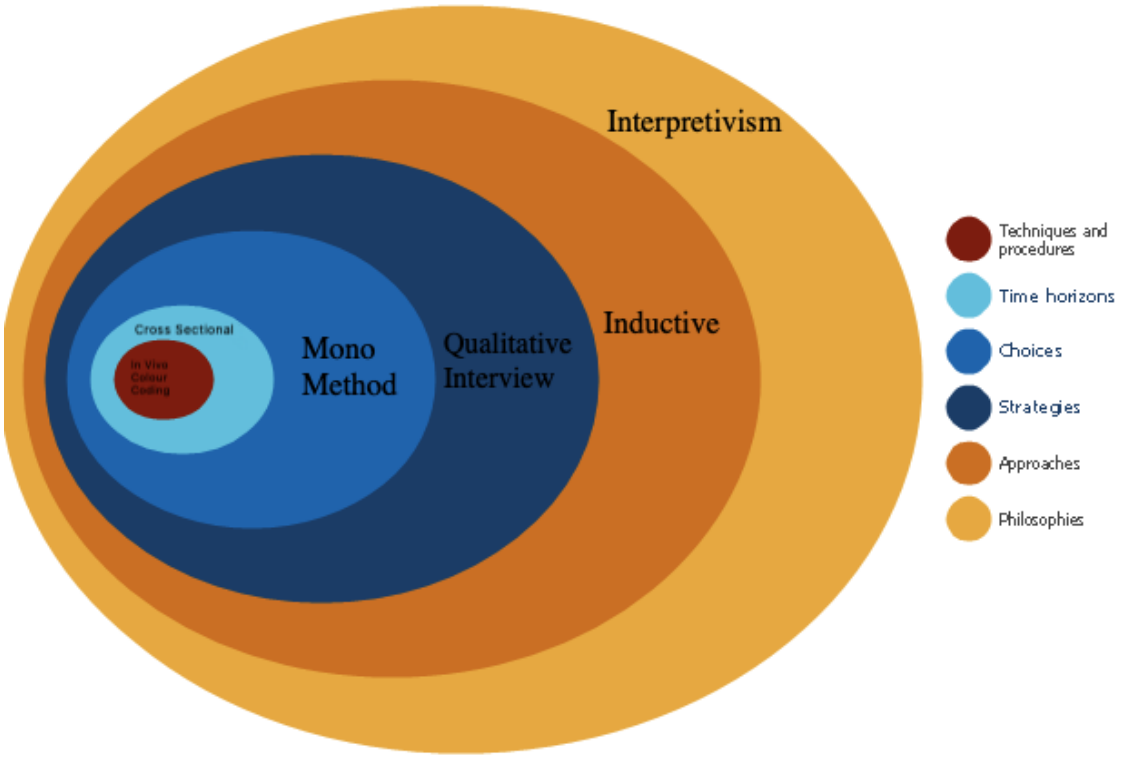

Fig 6. The Research Onion representation of the study adopted from (Saunders et al., 2009)

The above diagram illustrates the study process in the 'Research onion' representation. Previous researches conducted on blue-collar gig workers formed the literature to understand the reflected reality presented by them, and analytical research using the method of semi-structured interviews of the people working in the white-collar sector of the gig was chosen for understanding the actual scenario. Thus, inductive phenomenology was used with analysis methodology by applying the methods of qualitative interviews to conduct the research process.

3.3 Research Strategy

The data collected in this study will be through a Qualitative interview, which has become a prominent research method in social sciences (King et al., 2018)according to Kings by actually conversing with people to enables them to share their experiences and understanding. (King et al., 2018) since understanding the perspectives of the white-collar gig economy

workers is the base of this study, the analysis of the qualitative interviews forms the strategy of result analysis.

3.3.1 Research Design

Research design plays a fundamental part in getting the most valid result, without validated research methods and conclusions, research will be vague, because they will contain loopholes making them untestable (Mitchell and Jolley, 2012). The most practical approach to address a problem is to be sceptical and gather evidence not just in support of the belief but also the ones against it, thus being open to all conclusions that may arrive at the end of the study and enabling further research on the given topic, thus understanding research design enables us to an open-minded better thinker who is scientifically literate and will help in distinguishing between science, pseudoscience, nonscience, and nonsense (Mitchell and Jolley, 2012).

Since this research is focused on the analysis of the perceptions, the understanding of the concerns, challenges, and advantages of working in the gig was required, to provide a clear understanding. Given to the nature of the study, a fixed predefined question would not have yielded perfect results since a structured flow can have a potential risk of guiding the candidates to give a set of predefined answers thus not achieve correct conclusions, so a basic set of applicable questions were designed that provided a framework to guide the interview process. There no fixed flow structure of the questions and the flow was entirely based on the interviewee's response.

The interviews conducted, stretched form twenty to forty-five minutes depending on the candidate's availability. A semi-structured approach was followed while designing the questions of the interview, these questions were open-ended questions giving the candidate more opportunity to voice their thoughts and feelings. The semi-structured mannerism was advantageous in a way that the interviewee was not trying to conclude specific to the study but was voicing their thoughts and feelings. Age was not included as a method of segregation, the study is not specific to geography and considered candidates from across the world. The candidates were finalised based on the criteria of the field of work and years of experience in a traditional work environment.

3.3.2 Sampling

The sample size was formed of eight personal interviews of the people working in the gig economy, who had more than five years of experience working in the conventional working environment. The study was not specific to a region, candidates were chosen from different countries, the data from these different geographies enabled to understand the outlook of these countries towards the gig economy. This helped in the understanding of the gig personnel in the lights of their cultural background. The candidates were part of three fundamental sectors of the business world, Marketing, HR, and Accounting, the average experience was twelve years. The study criteria could not simply ask if they belonged to the gig economy following the debate of a lack of definition of the word gig (Huws, Spencer, Joyce, 2016). The survey thus considered people who addressed themselves as a part of the gig economy, like similar research conducted by Leeds University whose survey was designed to capture those who fit the middle bracket between being an employee and self-employed, with a focus upon precarious employment relationships (Leeds, 2018).

Some of the participants pointed out that to them freelancing and Gig economy is not much different, but they identified themselves as a part of the gig working sector since they achieve their work through a platform.

To assure that the review is reflective of the globe and not confined to a particular geography, samples were collected across the various business background on the gig and across different continents of the globe. The cultural and occupational backgrounds are presented In Table 1 below.

Country	Gig Sector
India	Marketing
India	Communication and Media
India	Executive Lead
Columbia	SEO and Marketing
Egypt	Accountancy
USA	Human Resource
Nigeria	Planning and Strategy Management
Ireland	Public Relations and Brand Communication

Table 1. Cultural and Occupational background of the participants of the study

3.4 Collection Primary Data

The participants for this study were reached out through LinkedIn and Fiverr and the networks of participants who agreed to be a part of this study. The search of gig economy workers in these platforms generated results and they were contacted via email or LinkedIn chat facility and requested to participate in the study. The method of data collection for the research was Semi-structured telephonic interviews conducted via Zoom and Skype.

The generalised Research Perspectives in qualitative research is described in Fig 6. Below.

Table 1.1 Research perspectives in qualitative research

	Research perspective		
	Modes of access to subjective viewpoints	**Description of processes of creation of social situations**	**Hermeneutic analysis of underlying structures**
Theoretical positions	Symbolic interactionism Phenomenology	Ethnomethodology Constructivism	Psychoanalysis Genetic structuralism
Methods of data collection	Semistructured interviews Narrative interviews	Focus groups ethnography Participant observation Recording of interactions Collection of documents	Recording of interactions Photography Films
Methods of interpretation	Theoretical coding Qualitative content analysis Narrative analyses Hermeneutic procedures	Conversation analysis Discourse analysis Genre analysis Document analysis	Objective hermeneutics Deep structure hermeneutics Hermeneutic sociology of knowledge
Fields of application	Biographical research Analysis of everyday knowledge	Analysis of life-worlds and organizations Evaluation research Cultural studies	Family research Biographical research Generation research Gender research

Fig 6. Research Perspectives in qualitative research (Flick,Kardorff,Steinke, 2004)

Although neo- positivists do believe that the interviewer cannot be Entirely impersonal And neutral data collector, however, they can attempt to minimise the personal impact(King et al., 2018), thus the interviews were taken in a to make it least biased and enable it to put forward the gathered conclusion in neutral shades. Data was collected through online methods to help have a hustle free way of communication, and following a primary internet-based research technique also known as Internet-mediated research (IMR) (Hewson, 2007). To justify using online interview platforms, it needs to be stated that qualitative researchers tend to use less structured (Mann et al., 2000) more open-ended approaches than those characteristics of quantitative research strategies (Hewson, 2007). For conducting these open-ended interactions, physical presence might be a better option as participants feel discomfort and tend towards being more reticent as a result of the lack of personal cues (e.g. appearance, gender, age, etc.) available from the researcher (Madge, 2002) but a higher level of anonymity can also be made possible through the mode of online telephonic conversations where the participants do not need to face the interviewee. Research by Valeria stated, some 'researchers may feel awkward when interacting with participants in person…interviewers need to develop strategies to feel comfortable, put participants at ease, and develop rapport'.

Skype and other VoIP video methods, we argue, offer a viable option as a research method (Lo Iacono et al., 2016).

Data was collected through eight qualitative interviews conducted via Zoom and Skype, the interviews were telephonic calls and the recorded conversations were put to transcripts and used for analysis purpose to reach to the conclusion of the study. Both Skype and Zoom were used in the collection of data but Zoom was more preferred given to the key advantage of Zoom being its ability to securely record and store sessions without recourse to third-party software protecting highly sensitive data (Archibald et al., 2019).

3.4.1 Sources

The data will be sourced as a mixture of primary and secondary data. Previous studies conducted on flexible work, gig economy, issues in the gig economy and the effects of COVID 19 on the economy with added research on the impact of any pandemic on work and economy were considered.
To broadly classify the data:

Primary Data
One on One Interviews conducted through Skype and Zoom. Eight interviews were conducted with white-collar gig personnel from a different business background and representing different geographic and cultural backgrounds.

Secondary Data
Previous work was done on the Gig economy. This includes books like Sundararajan, sharing the concepts of Sharing Economy, journal articles studying the significance of alternative economies in general, and gig in particular and research projects based on the working of the gig sector and blue-collar workers. All the data gathered from previous work have been recognised and cited across the study.

3.4.2 Access and Ethical Issues

The interviewees were connected via platforms like LinkedIn and Fiverr and after they agreed for participation, the overview of the study was shared with them along with the style of questions they will be asked. Before conducting the interview, the interviewees were informed about the ethical section and were assured to the maintenance of anonymity and confidentiality. The participants were given the ethical forms designed with the association of the college and were made aware that they can also discontinue from the study at any point.

The interviewees were contacted atlases once via email or telephonic conversations before interviewing to have better communication and understanding of both the study and each other. Given the limited time availability of the gig workers, the interviews extended from an average of thirty minutes to one hour.

While conducting the interview, the interviewees were made comfortable and given space and time to answer the questions, they were made well informed about the research matter and the purpose of the research. The interviewees always had the choice to not answer any question and a mix of open and close-ended questions were asked to keep the interview process interesting.

Post completion of the interview, data was securely saved to ensure they are not lost, (the transcripts of the interviews can be found in Appendix-A) anonymity was maintained and the interviewees were free to opt-out of the study at any point of time. The data is kept intact, and every data and documentation used in the process will be erased post completion of the research.

3.5 Approach to Data Analysis

The thematic analysis technique is used in this research approach. Since the research is inductive, the interviews collected were coded under a codebook created in the Literature review phase of the research process. Analysing interview data is a multistep ‘‘sense-making’’ endeavour. To make sense of interviews, researchers must engage in the process of

coding data (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). The interview data recorded was categorized and labeled with a theme following theories that come up following the literature review.

Codes are defined as ‘‘tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles and Huberman, 1994), these codes are thus chunks of data connected to a specific context. A codebook is a set of codes, definitions, and examples used as a guide to help analysed interview data, applying codes to raw data enables the researcher to begin examining how their data supports or contradicts the theory that is guiding their research as well as enhances the current research literature (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). The Circular process of coding followed in the study has been demonstrated in Fig 7 below.

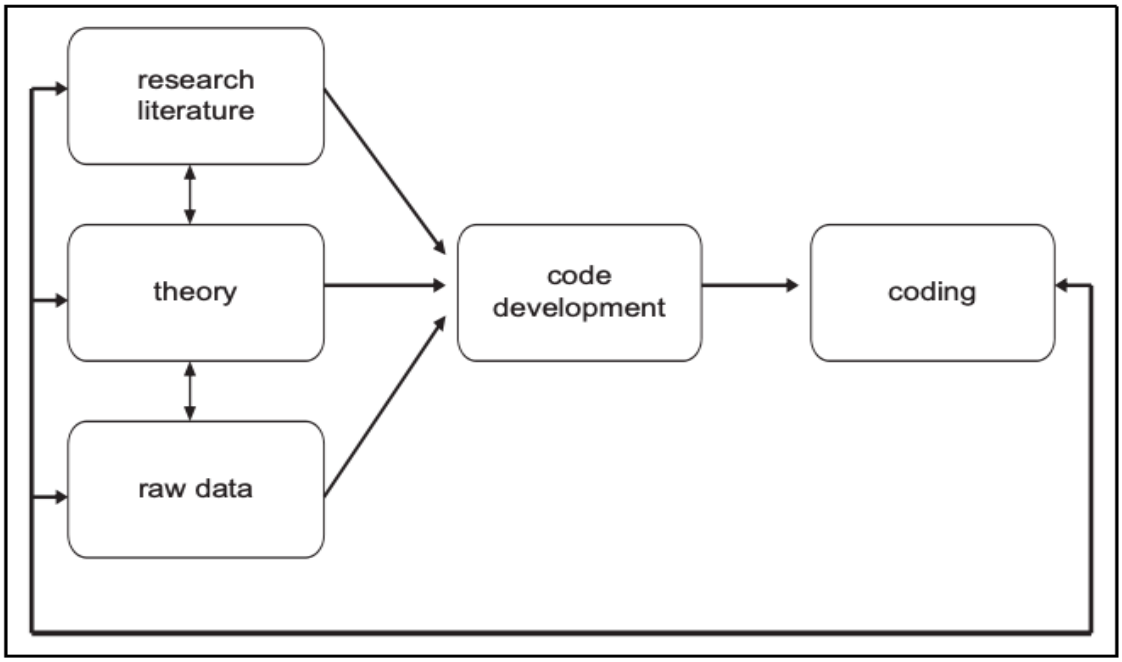

Fig 7. Circular process of coding(DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011)

The next stage of coding was to keep a balance between the theory-driven and data-driven approaches, both of which were necessary for reaching to get the conclusion of the study. The Theory Driven Codes were gathered through the literature review of the previous work on the gig sector, Gunby stated Codes are generated from the theories that guide the research (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011). The theory-driven codes were finalised from the concerns raised by previous work on the gig, the next set of codes were the Data-driven Codes, that

formed the main requirements for the analysis which were to be compared with the Theory-driven codes to come to the given conclusion. The first step in developing data-driven codes was to determine and reduce raw information into smaller units, such as categories or themes (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011) which were then compared to one another and the theory-driven data. The Overall Process of analysis using Codes designed for this study is illustrated in Fig 8 below.

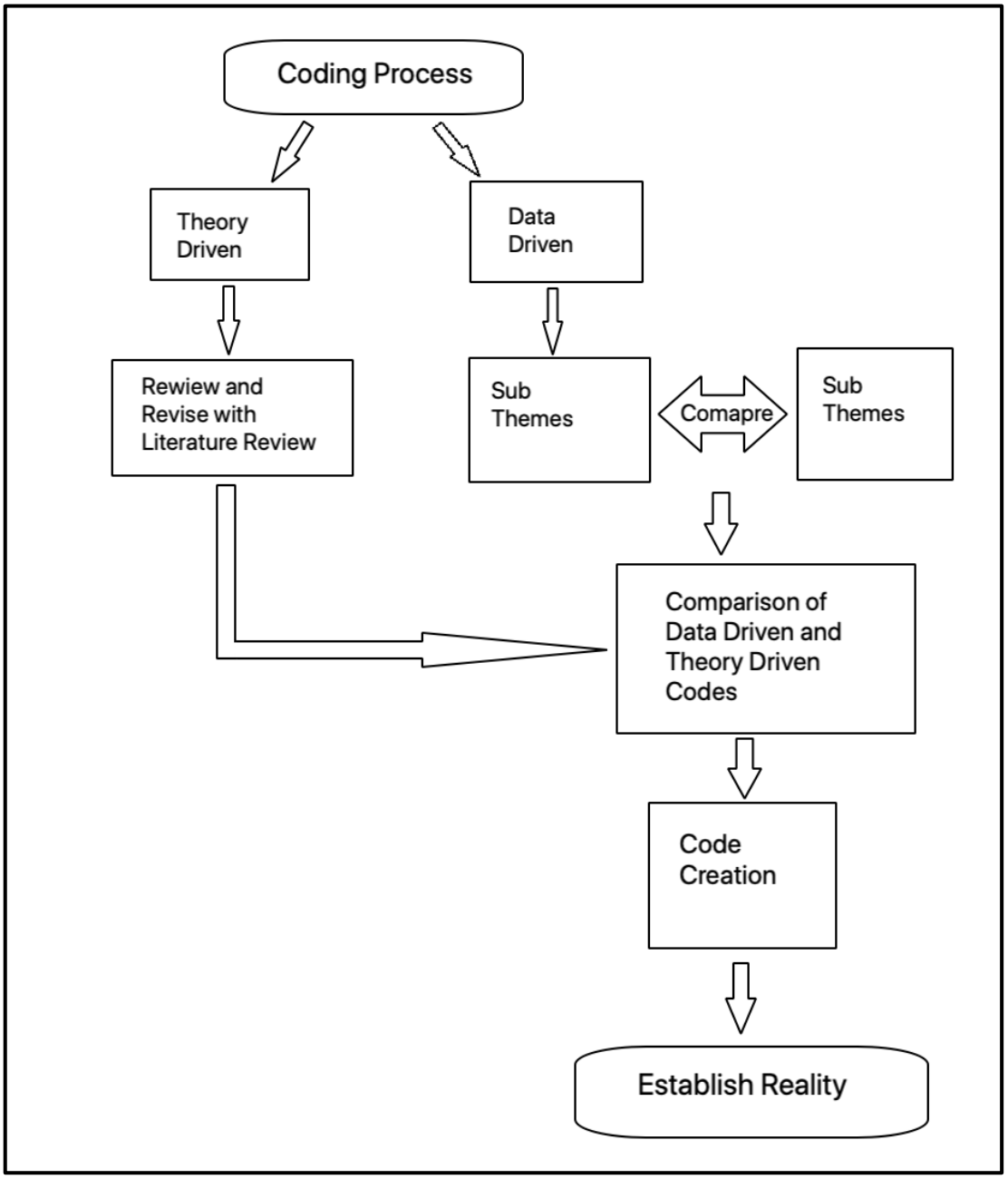

Fig 8. Overall Process of analysis using Codes

Once they are categorized into various codes and segregated, they were analyzed to gather conclusions from each of them. In the last stage, all the conclusions were looked into and derived opinion in general to determine the similarity and difference between different workers of the gig economy and of the opinions present in previous works related to the gig economy in general.

The thematic analysis technique is used in this research approach, defined as "method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (or themes) within data" and represents a foundational, conceptually demanding method for qualitative analysis (Bree and Gallagher, 2016) the study followed an inductive approach meaning that the data was coded for analysis then conclusions were drawn instead of fitting the data into analytical preconceptions. Following this, the data was gathered into an excel worksheet and then initially reviewed to remove duplicate entries, the data was then divided into themes. Each cell was reviewed an assigned a particular theme and a colour code was applied.

This approach ultimately led to the identification of eight themes (See the below Fig9. showing a snapshot of the thematic representation) the link to the code book is: https://griffithcollege628-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/srijani_basak_student_griffith_ie/EcSIeQzl9k5PhK6a4puRAh4BjbONaNgXpstwmFTAeuZsAQ?e=qh8oJ9

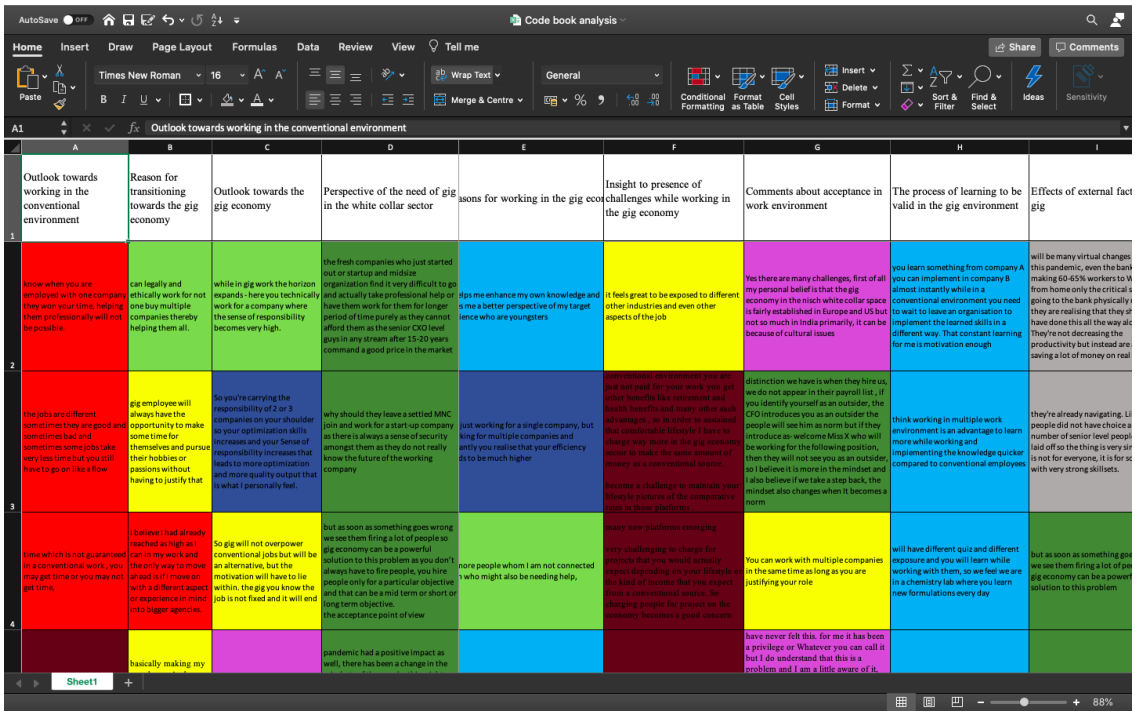

Fig 9. Analysis using thematic analysis technique

The colour coding was done according to the background under which the statements were made by the participants, thus a theme had either a singular or multiple colour code entries.

3.6 Conclusion

The research being highly oriented to the analysis of the perception of the white-collar gig workers, a qualitative method of research was approached for the study which was supported by conducting eight one on one telephonic interviews over digital technological platforms of Zoom and Skype. The data thus generated were applied thematic analysis technique and were segregated into eight different themes and colour coded using excel to generate conclusions.

4. Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

4.1 Overview

This study was aimed to understand the perspective of the white-collar employees who chose the gig economy over their conventional work to help understand the working of the white-collar sector of the gig economy in an elaborated scale. This study would help explore the challenges and advantages of working in the gig industry for the white-collar section which can help conventional workers willing to navigate towards the gig find substantial roadmap and understanding. This study also compared the challenges of the blue-collar sector of the gig with the white-collar to see if the challenges of the gig economy are unified or are sector-specific.

For conducting the study, the method of qualitative analysis was used. The study draws its conclusion from the detailed analysis of eight interviews conducted of white-collar gig economy workers who were previously involved in a conventional working environment for more than eight years. To have a wider perception, interviewees were selected from varied cultural and professional backgrounds with varied numbers of years of experience ranging from eight to twenty-six years. Given the time limit of the study, only eight interviews could

be conducted, higher numbers could be targeted in future endeavours to provide more detail to the foundations of the study.

The data was analysed using the In-Vivo coding technique. The statements were into different themes which were further subdivided using colour coding in excel and the results were derived with their analysis, due to the lack of time required for more proportional ways to measure interrater reliability, the method of the basic proportion of argument in the content analysis was used (Miles and Huberman, 1994) suggest calculating reliability as the number of agreements divided by the total number of agreements and disagreements while targeting reliability of 90% or better for maximum consistency of coding (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011).

4.2 Findings

The in-depth conversations with the interviews were enriching enough to reach consensus on the coding protocol, coding and analysis were done using Microsoft Excel, the statements from the interviews were analysed to segregate them int different themes, the themes were further subdivided through colour coding for further comparison, the figure below shows a page from the analysis.

This section is divided into two parts, the first explores the challenges and advantages of working in the gig environment as gathered from the conversation with the interviewees and the second part considers the advantages of working in the gig fashion for white-collar employees and suggest in which sense it is an equally rewarding alternative way of work for both white-collar employees and the organisations .

For better analytical understanding the conversations recorded from the participants were classified into nine themes, literature review of previous work and analysis of participant's views helped in defining the outcome of the study in light of the nine themes. These themes define the perspectives of the interviewees concerning varied aspects of working in the gig environment.

4.2.1 Theme 1: Outlook of the gig workers towards working in the conventional environment

The "gig economy" is typically defined as "temporary positions filled by independent contractors on a short term basis", the gig economy allows people who are poorly matched in their regular job, in terms of the number of hours available for work or type of work available, to create an overall labour market portfolio with multiple jobs enabling the increase in the efficiency of the labour market as a whole (Doucette and Bradford, 2019). The interviews with the gig personnel pointed out that although the traditional style of work can never be fully replaced, the gig is a very promising alternative. All the gig workers had a unified vision about the fact that regular working style does confine you to a particular organisation, Participant 1 quotes about regular jobs as: "they are good and sometimes bad and sometimes some jobs take very less time but you still have to go on like a flow" but with growing years of experience, skills are developed which makes scheduled work to be completed quicker, but the added time cannot be utilised otherwise in a traditional environment portrayed by Participant 4: "I chose gig to give myself more time which I was not getting in my traditional work because it did require me to be present in the office everyday respective of the work that I have scheduled for the day" this sometimes hampers the personal growth of the employee or their willingness to achieve more from their life as portrayed by Participant 8: "I realised that my growth curve was going stagnant and I really was not finding anything pretty interesting I wanted to explore more and learn more". Participants also pointed out that drifting away from conventional work also enabled them to save time from commuting to the office or being present in administrative meetings none of which helps in the personal development of the employee. Few participants were also found to state that they could peruse their passion from the time they could summon while working in the gig sector, something they were not always able to do in the traditional environment.

Some participants pointed out that given to the volatility of the gig "a secured source of income is never bad" and it has advantages of security and stability, but, this was highly contradicted by the statement of Participant 8: "since ages people have been obsessed with this 'job security', but working for 2 to 3 companies has more job security than somebody who is working in a single company as all of them cannot fire you and you are not relying on one source of income, if my company collapse is due to some reason then I would have been

jobless". Following the statements, the gig workers seemed despondent of the traditional way of work.

4.2.2 Theme 2: Reason for transitioning towards the gig economy

There have always been doubts regarding the compensation achieved by a gig economy worker compared to a traditional worker, while a gig worker can earn more by taking two or three projects simultaneously they lose out on fixed benefits like pension pay security and other costs which are usually born by any given organisation for the welfare of their employees. But the participants stated that more than the money they have other wider reasons for working in the gig economy previous studies have pointed that worker wants to increase the heterogeneity of their work-life by taking on a job in another area of interest, increase flexibility in working hours, or some other nonpecuniary motivation (Doucette and Bradford, 2019) Kimmel and Conway introduced the term "job packaging motive" in their work (Kimmel and Conway, 1995). All the participants showed a positive attitude towards a challenging work environment that increases your skillsets while providing enough opportunities to learn. The participants claimed to have gained more knowledge through the projects they undertook which belonging to varied backgrounds that enabled them to challenge themselves and learn about different sectors. Participant 6, an accounts manager with years of experience of working in a bank undertook a project of the healthcare sector and learned about it through the application of his skills in an entirely different working environment. Participant 5 also said: "you can take up new challenges and better opportunities that you feel is better for you, you do not have to waste your time and commuting or sitting idle in office or doing work that you do not appreciate or think does not grow your skill sets" Participant 7 pointed: "So I would say that this excitement of learning something new taking risk and challengers made me choose the gig over what I was doing in a regular 9-5 job"

Flexibility is another thing which is of high importance, the participants are seen to be highly interested in being able to choose the projects that suit their talents and time like Participant 2 stated: "but in the gig economy you can choose what to do that so I like the flexibility", some of them want to take some time for themselves to peruse a hobby, studies by Henly and

Hyman tries to elaborately understand the effect of flexibility on the view of work by gig workers Participant 8 says: “for someone with 25 years of experience, you know what you are good at and what you enjoy doing and you don’t want to do anything else and to me that freedom you only get if you are working in the gig environment.” The freedom to work from the comfort of the home and be considered productive not by their presence in the office but how they complete their given task is also appreciated by the gig participants, Participant 8 points out “I wanted to work in a context where my skills are valued more than time”.

The study also pointed out that the participants were willing to be of help to more than one organisation which is not possible while working traditionally but the gig environment gives them the freedom to legally and ethically help more people.

4.2.3 Theme 3: Insight to presence of challenges while working in the gig economy

From the study, a certain number of challenges were gathered from the participants about working in the gig economy, amid the excitement of new challenges, learnings and working in a different background, the gig workers expressed the risks of mismanagement. The participants also accepted the risk of working in the gig economy given to the lack of any additional benefits and the added effort to manage their finances themselves, which sometimes becomes difficult. The gig workers stated that they need to be extra cautious while managing their time and finances to have a healthy and balanced life, both Participant 2and 4 says: “you cannot expect to maintain the same lifestyle right away if you navigate to the gig economy because now you pay all your taxes and Social Security and things like that that usually are paid by your employer, so you need to be very aware of all your expenses and your cost of living and your lifestyle have a healthy transition phase manage your work and wages”, “You need to be very aware of where you are investing your time, your finances and your talent.”

Being volatile environment stability becomes an issue, workers may experience generally reduced access to important benefits, such as health insurance or retirement. These benefits are generally not included for gig economy jobs. Thus, if the gig economy work expands for many workers to become the primary job setting, then the burden for acquiring benefits such as health insurance will fall on the individual rather than the firm (Doucette and Bradford,

2019) like Participant 3 points out: “stability is an issue. In the traditional world, things are far more stable. If you are being laid off, it will come with its policies or step by step procedures.”, the gig workers need to keep themselves updated at all cost as pointed by Participant 3 and 4: “You have to be wired”, “every time there is a new technology that is coming up or a new evolution of Products, you need to be aware of everything that is happening in your field”

Similarly, Platforms play a critical role in the functioning of the gig economy given to that fact that gig is considered to be “platform dependent” and the study proved that the gig workers are somehow always related to an online platform for their functioning, while some highly experienced gig participants explained their source of getting gigs to be through networks, some were entirely dependent on platforms for their projects.

With the lack of an actual definition of Gig Economy, it is usually described as a Platform based economy where users find their work through a Platform. There have been previous discussions focused on the blue-collar sector, which showcased the dependence, and sometimes the problems caused by this dependency on the platform. In Uber, for instance, drivers must accept rides quickly while logged-in, or they are penalised thus risking their performance rating (Healy et al., 2017).

Interviewees were dependent on platforms like Fiverr, COHIRE and Upwork to get their gigs, of the interviewees four of them were primarily dependent on Fiverr for work, while platforms enabled the gig workers to connect themselves to the world at a global scale to showcase their skills across the globe irrespective of their physical presence, it also causes higher levels of competition amongst the gig workers, more sources of talent and various levels of knowledge and experience makes the platform a highly competitive environment making the gig workers be on their toes.

A further critique of the gig economy relates to its potential for accelerating ‘fragmentation’: breaking down once-whole jobs into discrete task elements, each of which is then auctioned to the lowest bidder (Brinckmann et al., 2010). The gig workers are classified not only according to their work experience but how much they charge for every gig work. Geography plays a significant factor in determining the remuneration of the gig workers, a country with a stronger currency faces a high challenge to compete with weaker currency countries in this

field given to their higher cost of living. Similar high competition is faced on the platform by more experienced workers who sometimes have to work at a lower cost given to the high competition caused by less experienced workers completing the same task at half the price. Participant 4 being from the US expressed his concerns regarding the same when he says: "charging people for a project on the economy becomes a good concern, but given to the global competition I have to charge a much lower rate than I can to compete with those living in countries where the exchange rate and cost of living is comparatively low."

Platforms also bring the concept of reviews, although reviews determine the seriousness of a professional and give an insight to their experience it does cause some troubles to the gig workers, reviews are like the virtual image in the gig economy which needs to be maintained well in order to thrive in the economy, the study showed that this strive to keep a positive image does cause the gig workers to work longer hours, take more number of initial projects and also sometimes perform un agreed tasks to avoid the situation of negative comments. Participant 5 commented: "I have to take more work-load in order to survive in here and live comfortably, due to the threat of getting a bad review I might have to complete the full work which was not agreed, as a bad review can affect my whole performance in Fiverr."

For the ones with higher expertise and more years of experience, networking plays a dominant role to get their next gig. Highly experienced gig employees are more dependent on networking to get their projects, word of mouth, and appreciation from current employees generate networks and leads for the consults working in the gig economy. Platform dependency decreases with years of experience and hierarchy of the position operational by the gig worker, platform independency is more prevalent in positions like consultants, senior managers, or Executive Officers.

The usual mode of entrance into a gig economy is usually via any given platforms, with years of Experience the gig workers build a network and reputation for themselves making them significantly free from the dependency of platforms. More years of experience build a reputation for the gig employees making them achieve more opportunities to work and lowering their dependency on any platforms providing the gigs, so in the white-collar sector of the gig, people find recognition with their work which gets them projects for future

lowering their dependency on any source to get them gigs unlike in blue-collar sector where irrespective of their years of experience they are always platform dependent for their gigs.

Another high challenge faced by the gig is the challenge of competing with the perception gap, as pointed out by Participant 8: “There are definitely challengers the biggest challenge is that the market has not fully understood the concept of this gig economy because of the perception gap and people are not very aware of the whole concept and many are also not ready yet to fully adopt it, the challenge lies more in the outside like the outsourcing CXO side than from the receivers end.”

4.2.4 Theme 4: Comments about acceptance in work environment

A gig economy is a place where workers are considered independent contractors instead of employees, this has important implications not just for access to benefits, but also for the effectiveness of worker protection laws such as minimum wage, discrimination, and workplace safety regulation (Jackson et al., 2017) the acceptance in the work environment thus plays a considerable role in maintaining the mental health of the employees and to keep themselves motivated.

The study shows that geography plays a key role in the way the Gig Economy workers are accepted in any position in an Organisation, countries like India and Columbia are found to be newly adapting to the concept on Gig workers in the higher designations of an organisation, which in some instances causes a difference in the way the gig workers and the conventional workers are looked at in an organisation in the first instance, while other countries like Egypt, the US, Ireland, and Nigeria do not see such differentiation which points out to the difference in perception towards the gig economy in various geographies. Given the small number of participants in the current study, in future endeavours, it would be interesting to go in-depth to study in which exact ways does geography affects in determining the success of working in the gig economy.

Although the prioritization of employees in the gig environment is debated and has many ongoing legal issues, Petriglieri provides a process model of the management of precarious and personalized work identities and having Participants who noted the lack of organizational direction and support in their current working conditions, he concludes that for people

working outside of organisations, the pendulum swings to the former as they invest their selves in the performance of work (Petriglieri et al., 2018). While Blue-collar sectors like Uber driving saw mismatched workers who prefer to be classified as employees rather than independent contractors leading to issues of some labour protection and traditional labour rights (Berger et al., 2019) the white-collar sector of the gig economy does not face such issues; the gig workers are treated equivalent to any regular employees and are made to sign temporary contracts to keep both the employees and employer in the same agreement terms of work. they are also trusted with vulnerable information given that they do sign the non-disclosure agreements, they are responsible for authoritative actions of an organization And the organization is dependent on them for its proper function, they are treated with respect and are valued in the organization for their skill sets and not for the type of employment they have with the organization. Unlike the blue-collar sector, the white-collar sector does not complain of negative employment relationships and enjoy better regulations at the workplace. Researches on HRM applications in the gig economy showcase that they are not exclusively aimed at managing and controlling gig worker performance but everyone present in it like an ecosystem and aims to ensure that all ecosystem actors provide value to one another, which ultimately creates a viable platform ecosystem where all actors remain involved and continue to engage in multilateral exchanges (Meijerink and Keegan, 2019).

4.2.5 Theme 5: The process of learning to be valid in the gig environment

Being updated is a necessity to be valid in the gig economy sector, this has been pointed by the participants, like Participant 6 says: “I feel the world is ever-changing and if we do not change with it we will just be stuck and we need to go about with it” but this would mean training themselves for longer hours which has high requirement of both time and money!

For employees navigating in the gig economy with medium years of experience, the initial period of the navigation was challenging apart from having skills in their particular area of work but gathering more skills to showcase their expertise and talent in their field of work.

But experience is the main source of their training. Participant 8 says: “there is no school Better than experience, whatever we learn in schools or Business School is to get a job but once you are a in it, it is the experience that will help you learn, you learn more while working

in three months than you will learn in two years in a business school. Dealing with various kinds of people and various kinds of work challengers and different expectations and delivering different objectives makes the learning faster, then you don't need to set aside some time for learning, you don't need to go to a library, there is no better library than work" while learning from experience can be slow for conventional employees, for the gig worker it is quick given to the low time lag they have to face to apply the same as explained by Participant 1: "you learn something from company A you can implement in company B almost instantly while in a conventional environment you need to wait to leave an organisation to implement the learned skills in a different way, thus I think working in multiple work environment is an advantage to learn more while working and implementing the knowledge quicker compared to conventional employees."

4.2.6 Theme 6: Effects of external factors on gig

External factors play an active role in the working of the gig economy, the fluctuations of the economy is an evident factor, while it can mean the organisations to switch to hiring gig workers instead of regular ones, it could also mean loss of important projects. Platforms are another factor affecting the working of the gig economy, and the white-collar is equally affected by the same. While platforms like COHIRE claimed to form a team of gig workers to connect them to work and gives the security of payment for the projects they take, platforms can also affect the number of projects a gig worker needs to take to have a better reputation in the platform. Although the presence of HRM activities is highly debated in the Gig Economy sector and some works pointed out the lack of proper management of worker satisfaction in blue-collar sectors, a current study found in the Journal of Managerial Psychology pointed out that some platform firms have a reputation for withholding HRM inducements (e.g. training, job security, and secondary benefits like paid sick leave and pension planning) and by applying current thinking on HRM to the context of platform-enabled gig work, it is apparent that the particularities regarding gig work to change the conceptual meaning of HRM as intermediary platform firms institute HRM activities, yet without actually employing gig workers (Meijerink and Keegan, 2019). The same has been

found analysing the responses of the interviewees, they pointed out the facts that the platforms provided them with free basic training and methods to uplift their game and also increase more awareness regarding new technologies or providing them with learning opportunities at lower costs

4.2.7 Theme 7: Outlook towards the gig economy and Reasons for working in the gig economy

The Participants showed a very positive and highly responsible outlook towards working in the gig sector. The participants also expressed their interest in the gig economy given to the flexibility they enjoy with working in the same, also they shared how they were able to learn from a more challenging environment and could expand their skill sets and their areas of expertise. Participant 1 said: “So you're carrying the responsibility of 2 or 3 companies on your shoulder so your optimization skills increases and your Sense of responsibility increases that lead to more optimization and more quality output that is what I personally feel.” Given the unified will of the participants to help multiple organisations, the gig way of work gives them the opportunity to do the same. Participant 2 says: “being able to help people in other sectors that I previously was are not much aware of.”

The participant though coming from varied backgrounds and professional sector united in their opinion that the gig economy provided them a better opportunity to help multiple organisations , Participant 1 expresses: “It helps me enhance my own knowledge and gives me a better perspective of my target audience who are youngsters, not just working for a single company, but working for multiple companies and instantly you realise that your efficiency needs to be much higher” this gives them the opportunity to look beyond monetary interest and thrive to be of better help to the community, Participant 6 says: “I want myself to be a very useful and valuable brand so that I leave my kids something special” Flexibility is highly appreciated in the gig sector, Participant 5 points out: “I can choose how much work I can do each day, I can plan and pick up more work accordingly. I can be more active and earn even better than just doing one job, even it feels better”, Participant 7 says: “I wanted to work in a context where my skills are valued more than time”.

4.2.8 Theme 8: Perspective towards the need of gig in the white-collar sector

The gig economy has come up to be an important discussion across the globe, with many sectors. Looking at the gig stories and our study proves that it can play a highly effective role in the white-collar space as well. Previous studies pointed that discussions of the 'future of work'—how much work will be available, how it will be arranged, and the impacts of technological change—frequently refer to the gig economy (Healy et al., 2017), this work provides more depth to Healy's analysis. The interviews conducted revealed that all the participants felt that even in the white-collar space, which needs an individual who is highly responsible, trustworthy, and experienced, the gig economy can play a very dominant role by providing the organisations with capable talents in a better arrangement.

The study suggested that having a gig approach can be cost-effective to the organisation, finding gig economy employment usually involves much lower search costs than finding a traditional job. Further, since gig jobs are by definition extremely short in duration, the opportunity costs of poor matching are much lower than would be the case with traditional employment. In a setting where a worker may change employers dozens of times per hour, poor job matches can generally impose only trivial costs. Taken together, these characteristics of gig jobs suggest that these could serve to increase the efficiency of the labour market overall (Doucette and Bradford, 2019).

The participants of this study showed that the gig economy can help in strengthening the white-collar sector by providing commendable talents while giving commercial advantages to organisations. With more importance being placed on flexible working options to save the commercial cost related to real estate for organisations, the gig economy can help by providing capable resources that work from their space and flexibility, Healy suggested that in many developed economies, work has been radically overhauled since the 1980s in pursuit of greater 'flexibility' and cost savings (Healy et al., 2017). Participant 8 supported this idea by commenting: "Before we are trying to be saving more by talking about things like less office more business but after the pandemic era we are now transitioning into no office more

business, COHIRE and Gig in general It's beautifully into this paradigm because it is about more business and no office because every economy worker is working from their own space, so it fits perfectly"

The cost of hiring senior-level employees turn out to be very costly and so is the turnover cost, proved by the work of Center of American Progress claimed that thirty case studies taken from the 11 most-relevant research papers on the costs of employee turnover demonstrate that it costs businesses about one-fifth of a worker's salary to replace that worker. For all positions except executives and physicians—jobs that require very specific skills—across the remaining 27 case studies, the typical (median) cost of turnover was 21 percent of an employee's annual salary (Boushey and Glynn, 2012), this entire cost can be saved if the organisations are open to hiring gig workers as they are appointed for a specific period of time, thus hiring them neither requires higher human resource cost not do they affect the company with high turnover cost, based on Participant 8's ideas: "Plus when you hire somebody in a CXO level there are many intricate challengers which are implicit, one is finding someone like that then recruiting him an all so from search to retain gets really difficult especially for a start-up which gets to be a big issue but in gig system the things change! like if we talk about COHIRE if a company once a certain CXO level person in their organisation they can just start off working with them in like 10 days which saves a lot of time and reduces stagnancy. Plus renting an office is really expensive! so when you hire a person, there is a lot of expenses that need to be paid from giving them a place to work to their commute expense so it's an extra 30-40% on top of their package you save all that if you hire someone in the gig. Finally, when you hire somebody at that level and then they decide to leave replacing that person is another headache this can also be avoided if you are working with the gig because they are contractual and they are with you for a certain period of time, but this cannot ever happen if you are conventionally hiring someone at that level."

Finally, If we look at the most advantageous part, then working with the gig workers will enable even a start-up to hire more experienced individuals at an economic cost. From the gig worker perspective, it would give them a better learning opportunity at a challenging environment which is appreciated by them ad since they are not just working with one organisation the lower pricing will also not bother them much, Participant 8 says: "The

economies are going into a serious devastations state which is very difficult to predict at this point of time, so in that environment it will be difficult even for larger companies to spare higher amount of money for retaining or getting somebody at the CXO level, while they can get the same person from COHIRE or gig in general, so I think there Will be a general spike and demand of the CXO level people post the pandemic stress, as when things get harder you need to have a better strategy from highly qualified and experienced people that is when you can fully utilise the gig in general and I will say COHIRE specifically."

4.3 Discussion

Given the analysis we find the following facts about gig workers working in the white-collar space:

- They in general like to work in a challenging environment with higher flexibility and opportunity to learn than working in a monotonous traditional setup.
- Other than monetary benefits they are highly inclined to the idea of helping people and appreciations and a good reputation is highly cherished by the gig workers.
- To most participants, a regular job had higher boundation that did not support their skill growth like commuting to office regularly or participating in the administrative meetings, they chose gig to get over them and provide them better flexibility to choose their working mode and hours and preferred projects.
- The challenges faced by the gig participants were dependent on their number of experience, while the higher experienced personnel expressed the challenges to be perception and the acceptance of the concept in an organisation, for the lower experienced people, getting the first gig and maintaining their finances and lifestyle was a challenge.
- An interesting aspect noticed in the course of the study was the acceptance of the gig concept in important white-collar positions, geography played a key role in determining the acceptance of the gig concept. While countries like the US, Nigeria, Egypt, and Ireland did not face any challenge in their acceptance in an organisation, countries like Columbia and India expressed that a perception and acceptance gap led them to be seen differently from regular employees in an organisation initially.

- While there are challenges and perks of working in the gig sector, it needs to be accepted that the gig can be a solution to the economy jeopardized by the recent pandemic. The gig would enable an organisation to hire better talents without a long commitment from across the world and have economic benefits by saving the real estate costs by not having to provide them with working spaces. Now the argument lies in how much acceptance will the gig enjoys in the white-collar niche sector of the organisations.

4.4 Conclusion

This research provides an analysis of the qualitative findings in regards to exploring the challenges prevalent in the white-collar section of the gig economy and helped in understanding how these concerns compared to the blue-collar sector. The study focuses on understanding the factors that lead the participants to choose the gig sector irrespective of their high years of traditional working experience. The study concluded its observations based on the analysis of the primary data which were the qualitative semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted with eight gig personnel belonging to different geographies and different work backgrounds. The transcripts of the same can be found in the link: https://griffithcollege628-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/srijani_basak_student_griffith_ie/EXSB9zigBe1Jn-zrgzoHt4gBP54czt2LYNX99NYHO0PlQQ?e=i8MQp8. Given the small period, limited data could be collected and analysed. For future propagandas, a wider range of data would enable us to understand how both geography and years of experience affect the views of the gig personnel.

5. Concluding Thoughts on the Contribution of this Research, its Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

This research was focused on studying the perception of gig workers who chose and transitioned toward the gig, the findings are subjective to current players of the gig sector. The learning and findings are through the eyes of the gig economy workforce and portray the challenges and advantages of working in the gig. The study found that the perspective of these gig employees was highly influenced by their geographical background and years of experience.

The study found that the reason for the navigation of traditional workers towards the gig economy is due to the monotonicity in their traditional working conditions and their lack of freedom in choosing their work while working in a traditional environment. The opportunity of having flexibility in time and choice of projects is highly appreciated by the gig workers, who also showcased a keen interest in learning through exposure to various opportunities usually found while working in the gig economy.

In conclusion, the study pointed that getting a regular gig is a challenge for the white-collar people, an issue similar to their blue-collar counterparts, but this challenge can be overruled in the white-collar sector through increased years of experience and building a network and reputation. In the white-collar sector, networks play a key role in getting projects. There are mixed views regarding work acceptance in the workplace which was largely dependent on the cultural acceptance of the gig concept in the specific geographies of the participants.

The organisations should consider the advantages of engaging with the gig workers are, from saving investments in real estate by not having to provide an office to get the benefit of highly experienced talents across the globe without worrying about including them in the payroll.

5.1 Implications of Findings for the Research Questions

The study concludes that the gig workers of the white-collar sector are in general more driven to helping multiple organisations and learn while taking challenges and working in their structured way. Their dislike for boundation and lack of independence in choosing their tasks makes them choose the gig sector over traditional work. The research findings show us that challenges in the white-collar sectors are different from their blue-collar counterparts.

The following conclusions were drawn while studying the reason for the transition of the traditional workers towards the gig economy:

- The participants experienced monotony in their traditional working environment where they were unable to utilize their full potentials and faced sluggish growth in their learning opportunities.
- The participants mentioned transitioning towards the gig economy to work in a challenging environment with higher flexibility and higher opportunity to learn through exposure to various projects.
- The gig workers are inclined to the idea of helping multiple people and maintaining a good reputation, this inclination towards appreciation and helping others is sometimes more important to them than monetary gains.
- To understand the aspect of acceptance of the gig workers in organisations, geography played a key role. While countries like the US, Nigeria, Egypt, and Ireland showed higher rates of acceptance toward the gig workers, in countries like Columbia and India the participants expressed a perception and acceptance gap that led them to be seen differently from regular employees in an organization initially.
- As pointed by participants, organisations can benefit from using gig employees to have a better reach to talent across the globe which is independent of their physical presence in the organization, this can also help the organization in cost saving by not having to provide offices and other benefits. Also, given to the flexible commitments the organisations share with the gig, the transition of employees in and out of organisations becomes easy the gig can thus be a viable solution to the economy jeopardized by the recent pandemic.

To understand the challenges faced by the gig workers, the following conclusion can be drawn:

- The number of experience of the gig employees had a huge influence on the way they look at the challenges prevalent in the white-collar gig sector. While the higher experienced personnel expressed the challenges to be a lack of perception and acceptance of the concept of the gig in an organisation, for people with comparatively lower years of experience, getting the first gig, a continued source of gigs, and maintaining their finances and lifestyle was a challenge.
- External factors like the rise and fall of the economy or the advent of new technologies are usually external factors affecting the working of the gig. COVID is seen to have a generalized positive effect on the gig workers given to the fact that more organisations now wanted to work online and follow lesser commitments in employment, both of which fall under the concept of the working of the gig sector.

5.2 Contributions and Limitations of the Research

The findings of this study were twofold, Firstly it enabled in understanding how the white-collar sector of the gig economy is different from the blue-collar by understanding the challenges and advantages of working in the white-collar gig sector. This would help in not generalizing the concept of the gig economy and understand that there are various sectors to it which can be different from each other. Secondly, it helped in understanding how it can be the new alternative to traditional work and what advantages do organisations and the employees enjoy by associating with the gig. This analysis not only helped in determining the perception of the white-collar gig workers but can also help anyone interested in navigating to the gig industry from their traditional working environment.

Although the interviews gave insights to understand the critical concepts of the gig it also enabled us to understand how the views are different are dependent on the geography and work experience of the participants. Given the limitation of time and resources a wider view which could have better established a theory of work acceptance in the gig industry could not be achieved. Given to qualitative approach taken for conducting the study, getting more data

or analysing the same would have been a herculean task. For future studies, higher sample size can be targeted.

5.3 Recommendations for Practice

The gig economy has always suffered high criticism given to fact that it does not always give benefits to its associates, but Secretary Tom Perez said at a December 2015 Aspen Institute workshop about portable benefits, ambiguity in labour classification is neither a new challenge nor one created by the on-demand economy. Worker categorization is thus a historically vexing issue, not a fresh challenge posed by the sharing economy's newly minted corporate giants (Sundararajan, 2016). The study points that the gig employees find the lack of benefits in the gig sector a challenge but other factors like flexibility, challenge, and learning opportunities make them overlook the lack of usual benefits and choose the gig economy, but as Sundararajan's study in 2005 pointed that a vast majority of self-employed workers and independent contractors don't want an alternative employment structure. Of course, perhaps many of them wouldn't mind the benefits associated with being an employee, but why should the quest for this kind of protection have to involve the Faustian bargain of full-time employment? (Sundararajan, 2016) a balance can be achieved by providing certain benefits to gig works and having a better perception towards the acceptance of the gig way in white-collar space to utilise the best talents in a better way or as Sundararajan puts it, freedom to invest in them without having to employ them full-time. (Sundararajan, 2016) After all, at least in the United States, several facets of "employee benefits," including paid maternity leave, income stability, subsidies on better than average health and dental insurance, and paid vacations, are not mandated by law, but are often provided voluntarily by companies, driven by their desire to keep good talent, and to nurture it appropriately.

From the employee point of view, the participants pointed out challenges of working in the gig sector, but also mentioned that the challenges ensure high learning opportunities that can lead to the formation of better network and reputations and provide a more fulfilling work-life with a proper balance of time for work and passion, so if conventional workers can take the initial challenges and given themselves enough time while keeping in mind the challenges

and insights provided by the participants, the transition phase can be better maneuvered by them.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Given the small timeframe and the abundance of various scopes of the field, like other researches, this research also has its limitations. The interview was conducted with eight Gig employee experts due to the limitations of time. Given to the nature of the study, and the fact that a qualitative method of approach needed to be followed, collecting more data would mean extended periods of analysis given to the vastness of qualitative raw data that would have been generated, making it difficult to be analysed alone without forming a bias in conclusions. For future studies, larger sample size and a wider phase of time can be targeted, also given to the fact that the conclusions were dependent on geography and years of experience, a segregated data from different geographies and work history can be used to provide better precision. Investigation of a related topic - to understand the outlook of industries and organisations towards accepting the gig way of work can also be done.

5.5 Final Conclusion and Reflections

The study was born from the never-ending debate of whether to support the gig economy or not, Negativities of the gig work is usually prevalent in researches conducted on the blue-collar employees like the one Conducted on Uber drivers by Chan concluded that the lives of these drives are a constant struggle to make a living (Chan, 2019). On the other hand, research conducted on millennials concerning individuals born between 1980 to 2000 identifies that advantages from the millennial's viewpoint tend to outweigh the disadvantages. The study enabled to conclude that the white-collar gig workers function exactly similar to white-collar employees in general by sharing similar responsibilities and outlook towards completing an expected task, just their motivation and expectation from work separated them from traditional employees. The study helped in understanding that the gig economy has different sectors and some challenges are experienced in all the sectors while some are specific. Like the majority of the gig economy workers are somehow dependent on a platform for getting their projects. The researched helped in understanding

the gig workers and how skill growth and appreciations are more valued to them than monetary benefits, the research enabled to understand the outlook of the gig workers towards work and the outlook of organisations towards them through their experience, the research thus helped in learning more about their thoughts challenges and outlook, in general, to help the reader understand them better.

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Appendix A

Record of the interviews conducted for the analysis of the study can be found on the link:

https://griffithcollege628-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/srijani_basak_student_griffith_ie/EXSB9zigBe1Jn-zrgzoHt4gBP54czt2LYNX99NYHO0PlQQ?e=uoqKv5

As an illustration, below is one of the anonymised interview:

Participant 1

Interviewer: Srijani Basak
Interviewee: Gig economy personnel, CEO of COHIRE
Date and time: July 24,2020. 05 PM
Location: Dublin, Ireland
Mode : Zoom Interview

I suppose you know, the memoranda of the meeting is to discuss about the gig economy and the gig economy culture and the white-collar association.

So, to start off, Can you tell me about yourself and how did you get into the gig economic sector and what got you interested in that?

Basically, it was more from my experience while I was working in the corporate sector, I was working with the largest business conglomerate in India, as a head of marketing and communication. While I was there a lot of people used to approach me for help in marketing communications brand as my background has been same for the past 23 years, most of them used to come to me through personal referencing, then I thought that I should help them, while I was employed with a proper company in India, I used to help people more on a pro-bono basis you know just like anyone will like their fellow human being and friends, that is when I realised there can be more people whom I am not connected with who might also be needing help, and how do they get that help? There are actually two ways! You firstly reach out to friends and family or you reach out for professional help. Now what happens when you reach put for professional help is, lot of people actually want to take help from someone who is more experienced and has seen the proper business journey and who will be the best guide to help you drive a company in its best goals, but the fresh companies who just started out or startup and midsize organization find it very difficult to go and actually take professional help or have them work for them for longer period of time purely as they cannot afford them as the senior CXO level guys in any stream after 15-20 years command a good price in the market, secondly the professionals also feel, why should they leave a settled MNC join and work for a start-up company as there is always a sense of security amongst

them as they do not really know the future of the working company. That is where I really felt while I was employed with one company I felt the boundation within me as I could not legally work for any other company, my hands were tied and that is how the realisation came where a senior level working professional can legally and ethically work for not one buy multiple companies thereby helping them all.

So You would say that you would rather work with multiple companies than working with a single one.

See as you all know when you are employed with one company they won your time, you can only help others more on a pro-bono or social cause basis but helping them professionally will not be possible. That was the main issue well currently even when you and I speak, we still have that problems, it has not vanished even in the senior level space.

With that would you define yourself as a freelancer or a gig economy worker?

Freelancer has its own connotation Srijani, Freelancing has its own connotations, it has been there for long and has been working well and has lot of advantages, but when we hear the word, the idea comes in mind that the guy is there for a particular project or task, for e.g. If I have to get A thing done, he will only do A and not B., while in gig work the horizon expands - here you technically work for a company where the sense of responsibility becomes very high. Now even in Gig economy there are two parts one is the blue-collared workers whom we see in many companies across India for delivery work etc, it is an unorganised segment but in the white-collar niche space the trend has recently started off, here you are responsible for the company output not just for a task, for e.g. I have to get a brochure designed, I will go t a freelancer as you give them a particular brief and they will do your work but the thought that weather the brochure will work or not is a task any business guy will take, I call myself in that space.

What then do you regard as the challenges? You seem very comfortable working in the gig economy sector, do you still think there are any challenges and if there are what are they?

Yes there are many challenges, first of all my personal belief is that the gig economy in the niche white-collar space is fairly established in Europe and US but not so much in India primarily, it can be because of cultural issues, for eg Ecommerce is very well adopted much before it got adopted in India, so it mut has to do lot with our culture and how we work, we are a country where countries have the tendence to hire their own team and there is nothing wrong with that but as soon as something goes wrong we see them firing a lot of people as we see now in the midst of the COVID issue many companies and not doing as well and there are news that so many people are getting laid off, so gig economy can be a powerful solution to this problem as you don't always have to fire people, you hire people only for a particular objective and that can be a midterm or short or long term objective.
To answer the question, yes there are challenges, first from the acceptance point of view. Gig economy has been very well accepted from the blue-collar point of view but may not be so for the white-collar. But the initial pattern shows that it is getting accepted in the senior level also and one of the primary reason which I feel Srijani is because this model has not been tried before has it been I could have been in a more comfortable position to answer your

question that it has been well accepted. I think currently it’s all about acceptability which will come when more companies and more profession accept this model. It’s like few years back not many used to buy online but in the recent years the numbers have gone up drastically so I think we are in that stage where a very few people are trying, and when more people try it will become a norm.

About the acceptance part, since we are talking about the white-collar employees there are a lot of people in the organisation who are looking up to them and getting job directions from them and need to work under then is there a scenario does it become a concern when they might think that this boy or girl is an outsider and do not belong to my company or any such conflicts arising?

Yes there is but we cannot generalise that, but this question seems very proportional to the previous question, see Srijani again currently where you have exceptions people will always take you as exception but when it becomes a norm people will not take t as exception. Currently there are very few instances when a person is not on the payroll list, the only distinction we have is when they hire us, we do not appear in their payroll list , if you identify yourself as an outsider, the CFO introduces you as an outsider the people will see him as norm but if they introduce as- welcome Miss X who will be working for the following position, then they will not see you as an outsider, so I believe it is more in the mindset and I also believe if we take a step back, the mindset also changes when It becomes a norm.

So when you transitioned from the traditional to the gig sector, did you feel anything of that sort?

I believe the difference is in the approach ,when you are employed as a conventional employee the approach is very different You're supposed to only think and work for that company , the jobs are different sometimes they are good and sometimes bad and sometimes some jobs take very less time but you still have to go on like a flow, but when you come out of that like the comfort zone and transition towards the Gig you realise that you are not just working for a single company, but working for multiple companies and instantly you realise that your efficiency needs to be much higher! You cannot have the “I'll do it tomorrow” attitude because if you leave a job undone from one company what if there is a more critical job coming from the other company ? So optimisation of your thinking increases when you work as a gig worker, So you're carrying the responsibility of 2 or 3 companies on your shoulder so your optimization skills increases and your Sense of responsibility increases that leads to more optimization and more quality output that is what I personally feel. I'm not saying that if you work as a conventional employee your sense of responsibility goes down, it is as good but when we work as gig workers, by default you have to increase the sense of responsibility.

So there has been a lot of concern about the motivation of workers working in the gig economy and how big can actually destroy the motivation of the workers by not providing much help towards the non-contracted or less contracted workers what are your views on that ? You are suggesting that the Motivation of working in a gig economy is the aspect of doing more getting more challenging work and be more responsible but they also come with the added stress of low motivation, what is your take on that?

I want to divide the answer into parts, to answer the question of motivation , If you are gig worker in the niche white-collar space , everyone assumes that you are highly experience so it is expected that you will be highly motivated. If after 20 years of working in any Sector you need motivation to work , that is a different concern altogether.
For the second part what I believe or most in my position would believe that when you are working with multiple brands or multiple products having multiple rules that adds lots of excitement in life more cross level learning and implementation, you learn something from company A you can implement in company B almost instantly while in a conventional environment you need to wait to leave an organisation to implement the learned skills in a different way. That constant learning for me is motivation enough.
I also don't not think that economy will take over the conventional way we hire employees, there will always be certain spaces in an organisation where you need to have a team where you need regular employees and who will share highly confidential data. So gig will not overpower conventional jobs but will be an alternative, but the motivation will have to lie within.

How do you see the job security aspect with this kind of job?

If I may answer this question In a psychological way, Whenever somebody goes to join an organization Both the employee and the employer go with the mindset to have a settled life and professional career and not with the mindset of leaving the organization in 2 or 3 months of time. They change job only when there are any issues with their job or satisfaction or they get a better offer, like the previous generation who used to work for over 20-30 years in a single organisation, but in the gig you know the job is not fixed and it will end, you typically sign up for a year and renew it if needed, it’s like going to the hospital where you go not to stay, so you start with the end in the mind. So it’s more like a fixed term security more like a Fixed Deposit which will mature. Well unless you renew it.

So how do you manage the time and expense to keep yourself updated to be in the top which must be a necessity to attract more projects in the gig sector?

Well it is very much like any other executive would do, but I would say there is an advantage because we are working in 2 or 3 different companies having 2 or 3 different platforms and exposure so you anyway learn, like simultaneously working In an ecommerce company and a technical company , both of them will have different quiz and different exposure and you will learn while working with them, so we feel we are in a chemistry lab where you learn new formulations every day, also I keep myself updated to the happenings, it is conventional answer as in any mode of work if you do not learn you will be redundant but for me, I think working in multiple work environment is an advantage to learn more while working and implementing the knowledge quicker compared to conventional employees.

Sometimes the companies push the conventional employees to do any certifications and they also pay for the certifications , but in your case how do you handle doing any certification?

For me it'll be a self push, But there is a good aspect because I like in conventional work you do not need to take permission for doing any certification that you like. Thus we can have

much more independence and time to peruse your hobbies. Secondly if we talk about my platform CoWork Where I am trying to build an Association of gig workers, if there is certification that is much needed for them as a company we can also encourage the associated people to do that and can even pay for that. I do know some people working in the gig economy who want to pursue their hobbies other than their work , like someone wants to write a book but for doing that you need time which is not guaranteed in a conventional work , you may get time or you may not get time, you need to be in the office irrespective of the fact that you are done with your work or not, on the other hand a gig employee will always have the opportunity to make some time for themselves and pursue their hobbies or passions without having to justify that.

How do you believe external factors play a role in the working of the gig economy? With the recent pandemic in mind, did you find any changes in your outlook towards your workstyle?

If I talk about India specifically, India has never been a work from home type , but the recent pandemic has changed the outlook if made remote working possible for most jobs, so this did change the outlook. It is a very visible change in the outlook of work, and I hope This will actually have an impact in the way people see work , not taking it differently but the pandemic had a positive impact as well, there has been a change in the mindsets of the people, this might have an effect on the CEO of an organisation who might think that is it really necessary to have a CXO level personal on our payroll? why can't we hire gig employees instead ?Because anyway they are working remotely and it is not necessary for them to be present in the premises regularly given to the fact that a lot of productive time will be lost in commuting to office, So this can actually be a blessing in disguise for a gig worker operating on a niche space as their acceptance in a company to work remotely with flexi hours can be a win-win situation for both the employee and the organisation. So external factors do play a significant role and in this case let’s say futuristically we can hope that it will have a positive effect.

So we need can you please tell us more about your initiative of COHIRE and what is it about?

So we know about coworking ,co-living so I made COHIRE. Where do not hire a person you co hire them, you do not need to be working in a particular organisation You can work with multiple companies in the same time as long as you are justifying your role, One has to face high challenges in requesting organisations to give them projects, I am trying to create an ecosystem for the gig workers Where an organization can request for executive having a specific skill set and we have a panel of workers who can help them so they both coelomate at one place and be of use to each other. Whenever there is a need for a gig Workers, you do not need to go to various places but come to us and we will make sure that your needs are fulfilled.

So you are basically creating a platform for gig workers to get their projects ?

As of now for the lack of better words we can say that but we are much more than a platform.

So you met people working in both conventional and gig working environment, did you find any difference in the attitude or personality of the two workers.

I would say that there is no such thing as a difference in attitude or personality , for me attitude would be directly proportional to immaturity , if your attitude changes because of the fact that you are a conventional worker or a Gig worker then that is basic immaturity. So all the people I this level have the same outlook towards work and are effective and productive given to their responsibility.

Did you see a difference in your outlook towards work when you moved into the gig economy? like any change in work ethics or believes? in a conventional work you have a mentality of working in the organization For longer period of time while in a gig you know that the project would be over in 6 months, does that have any effect on your work outlook?

I do not believe that I had any change in my outlook towards work, so I left my conventional work to get into the gig economy what does that mean that I will cause any harm to the company that I left? of course not, it is not a right attitude. For us the gg workers, As long as you are hired in a company you should have 110% loyalty towards them and even after you leave the company. We definitely sign NDS to ensure ethicality from the legal point of view for data protection, but it is the work ethics that will take you ahead in work life. I believe I became more responsible while working in the gig, we pass on learnings and skills but not data from one company to other and the companies also appreciate that.

So does the concept of contracts exist in the white-collar sector of the economy ? even for Co higher do you make your employees sign a contract ?

First of all let me correct you, we do not have any employees, we have a Panel of 100 and experienced employees who work with us but are not our employees , they basically work with us on a work basis and we help both the organisation and the gig workers get a job when it comes up. So once any organization hires a gig employee associated with COHIRE, we sign a contract with both the employees and organization Which can be renewed overtime making sure that both the parties understand the job responsibilities and payment terms. We provide payment security to them, that they will get a payment no matter if the company pays us or not, so it basically a documentation of the conversation.

So what do you believe is the mode of getting projects for these white-collar employees ?Is it the platforms like the ones you created or something else?

Largely through word of mouth, When you work in a particular sector for 15 to 20 years you basically build your own network, people know you and you create value for yourself in the market, so companies would know you and start requesting you to take up projects. But largely it is word of mouth and networking that gets employees projects in the niche space.

That was an incredible insight to the working of the gig economy, thank you so much for participating.