

Exploring Job Satisfaction Among Gig Workers Through Job Enrichment: The Mediating Role of Leadership in the Indian Context

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Grounded in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and the Job Characteristics Theory, the present study aims to examine the impact of job enrichment on leadership and job satisfaction among gig workers in the Indian job market. The study further investigates the mediating role of leadership in enhancing job satisfaction among gig workers.

Methodology: The study adopted a quantitative research design using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. Primary data were collected from 404 gig workers engaged in freelance and gig-based employment across India. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed using SmartPLS software to examine the proposed relationships and test the hypotheses.

Findings: The findings revealed that job enrichment factors; skill variety, task identity, and autonomy significantly and positively influenced leadership, whereas task significance and feedback showed insignificant effects. Among all predictors, task identity emerged as the strongest determinant of leadership. The model explained 42.7% variance in leadership/supervision and 39.3% variance in job satisfaction, indicating moderate explanatory power.

Practical implications: The study suggests that digital platform organizations should focus on improving task clarity, autonomy, and skill utilization to enhance supervisory support and employee satisfaction among gig workers. Effective leadership practices can significantly improve workers' overall job satisfaction and engagement.

Originality/value: The study contributes to the existing literature on gig economy and job satisfaction by examining the mediating role of leadership within the Indian digital platform workforce. It provides empirical evidence regarding the influence of job characteristics on supervisory practices and job satisfaction in the gig work environment.

Keywords: gig economy, job satisfaction, job enrichment, leadership, gig workers, job characteristics, PLS-SEM, India

I. INTRODUCTION

The gig economy has been a game-changer in the world of work, especially in developing nations like India. Digital platforms like Uber, Swiggy, Zomato, Urban Company, Freelancer and Upwork have given rise to new flexible job opportunities, which has allowed people to earn through their own means and plan their work schedule as per their convenience (Thomas et al. 2022). However, gig workers may also experience concerns about job security, lack of organizational support, career development opportunities, and income stability, potentially impacting their overall job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is an important outcome in organizational behavior studies as it affects employee motivation, commitment, productivity, and retention. As gig work expands, it is more critical than ever to understand what factors lead to satisfaction at work (Roberts et al. 2022). Gig workers work in a relatively autonomous context, and the design of work and leadership support along with experiences in the field can greatly influence their work experiences and satisfaction (Sija et al. 2021).

Based on the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), the following characteristics of a job have been shown to influence the psychological state of an employee and thereby affect job satisfaction: Skill Variety, Task Identity, Task Significance, Autonomy and Feedback. Work experiences that allow opportunities to develop a variety of skills, accomplish identifiable tasks, make a difference in society, operate independently, and receive positive feedback are more likely to happen in jobs. These qualities are especially significant in the gig economy, where individuals are frequently forced to manage themselves and communicate with other people through platform apps.

Meanwhile, leadership continues to be a key driver of employee attitudes and behaviours. Good leadership can establish a supportive atmosphere, communicate job expectations, improve communication and

give guidance to improve workers' perceptions of their jobs. Leadership behaviors also have a potential impact on the role perceptions and work satisfaction of gig workers even in flexible and digitally mediated work contexts. Autonomy, recognition and timely feedback from leaders can help reinforce worker engagement and job satisfaction.

The present study explores the interrelationship between gig-worker job satisfaction and leadership based on the Job Characteristics Model and literature on leadership. More specifically, the study examines the five job characteristics that have been found to mediate the relationship between leadership and job satisfaction – Skill Variety, Task Identity, Task Significance, Autonomy, and Feedback. This research examines the emerging gig workforce and aims to enhance the understanding of the effects of leadership and enriched job design on worker satisfaction in the current employment context.

The study's objectives are to offer empirical proof for organizations, digital platforms, and policy makers looking to improve the health and productivity of gig workers. By examining the interrelationship between leadership, job characteristics and job satisfaction, organizations can create strategies that foster meaningful experiences and help them sustain their workforce in the organization.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Leadership and Job Satisfaction

Leadership has always been considered as one of the most important factors affecting outcomes at work and employee attitudes. Effective leaders create a supportive environment by providing guidance, motivation, recognition, and opportunities for employee development. Transformational Leadership theory suggests that leaders who inspire and empower employees can be a major source of increased employee satisfaction. Previous research has consistently showed a positive correlation between leadership behaviors and employee satisfaction, indicating that supportive leadership improves motivational, commitment and well-being in the workplace (Malik et al. 2022).

Gig work brings a new context to leadership, as gig workers tend to work independently, and may communicate with supervisors via digital channels. Despite the flexible nature of gig employment, workers still require support, communication, and performance-related guidance (Crayne et al. 2024). Gig workers are not always certain, and good leadership can help to reduce that uncertainty, make their experiences better and make their jobs more satisfying.

2.2 Job Characteristics and Job Satisfaction

The Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976) proposes that five core job dimensions- Skill Variety, Task Identity, Task Significance, Autonomy, and Feedback create meaningful work experiences and positively influence employee satisfaction. Opportunities to apply multiple skills, to finish identifiable tasks, to contribute to meaningful outcomes, to exercise discretion, and to receive performance feedback are more likely to bring about intrinsic motivation and satisfaction (Chanda 2023).

It has been demonstrated that jobs that are enriched leads to increased engagement, commitment and job satisfaction in various industries. In gig work contexts, where workers rely on the design of platform-based tasks and interactions to find satisfaction in their work, these elements of gig work are given special significance.

2.3 Leadership and Job Characteristics

Employee perception of job characteristics is influenced by leadership. This can help leaders to promote skill development, define job duties, explain the importance of work tasks, allow decision making freedom, and give meaningful feedback. These actions lead to improvements in job factors that have ultimate consequences for employee outcomes (Athaya et al. 2025).

Research has shown that supportive leadership is associated with increased perceptions of autonomy, task clarity, and feedback quality about the work among employees. Leadership, therefore, can indirectly influence job satisfaction by providing positive job attributes.

2.4 Job Characteristics as Mediators

Job characteristics have been the object of growing interest in organizational research. Perhaps leadership doesn't directly affect job satisfaction, but instead it can affect it via the establishment of meaningful and motivating job conditions. Workers report greater job satisfaction when they feel more skilled – more varied – and when their work has more identity and significance, more autonomy and more feedback (Kalanther et al. 2026).

Job characteristics are important as mechanisms by which leadership practices influence the attitudes and satisfaction of workers in the gig economy, where formal organizational structure is less prevalent.

III. RESEARCH GAP

While several past studies have extensively studied the relationship between leadership, job characteristics and job satisfaction in the conventional work place, there has been little focus on the relationship within the gig economy, especially in the Indian context.

Leadership and job satisfaction are the two aspects that are studied in most of the literature, and the mediating role of the five job characteristics has been under-researched among gig workers. Moreover, with the increasing use of digital platforms, the nature of work has changed, and the question of the impact of leadership on flexibly and independently working workers is new.

Hence, this study aims to address the gaps as follows: There is little empirical research related to gig workers and their job satisfaction in India. Lack of mediation of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback. There is a scarcity of research that has combined leadership and the Job Characteristics Model in the gig economy context. Requirement for data-driven guidelines for digital platform companies on how to boost employee satisfaction.

IV. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS

This study is intended to develop a conceptual model for studying the relationship between job satisfaction and leadership by the use of five basic job dimensions in the Job Characteristics Model (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The leadership is an independent variable, and job satisfaction is a dependent variable, as shown in the framework. The five dimensions-Skill Variety, Task Identity, Task Significance, Autonomy, and Feedback are mediators of leadership on employee job satisfaction.

Leaders have a significant impact on employees' work experiences by establishing a work environment that maximizes the use of skills, explains task responsibilities, reinforces the value of the job, offers independence, and gives constructive feedback. These job characteristics are expected to positively influence employee motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction when employees perceive them as being higher.

Defining it more specifically: Skill Variety is the degree to which a job demands different skills and abilities to execute diverse tasks. Task Identity is the level of employees doing a complete and recognisable task. Task Significance indicates the impact of a job on others within or outside the organization. Autonomy is the degree of freedom and independence that employees are granted in executing their work, and Feedback is the information about the efficiency and effectiveness of work execution.

The framework proposes that leadership has an indirect effect on job satisfaction through improving these five job characteristics . Workplaces incentivized by effective leadership practices are likely to generate more fulfilling and motivating workplaces and therefore higher levels of employee satisfaction.

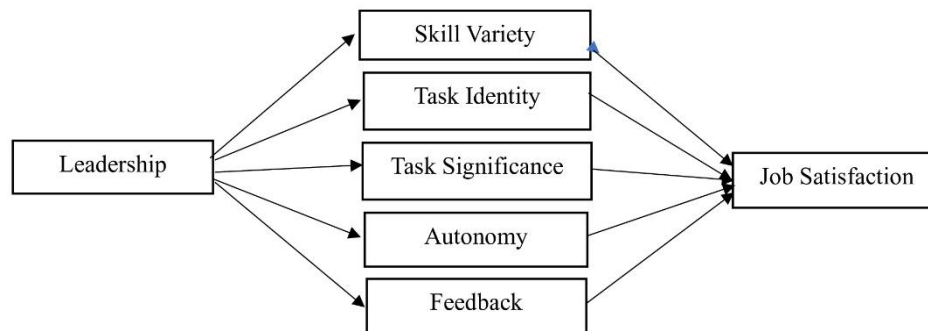


Fig 1. “The mediating role of job characteristics between leadership and job satisfaction”

H1: Autonomy positively influences Leadership.

H2: Feedback has a positive influence in Leadership.

H3: Skill Variety positively affects Leadership.

H4: There is a significant positive relationship between Task Identity and Leadership.

H5: Task Significance has a positive effect on Leadership.

H6: Job Satisfaction is related to Leadership.

V. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Research Design

The research design of this study is explanatory research design with quantitative approach that aims to understand the relationship between leadership and job satisfaction mediated by job characteristic for gig workers in India. Quantitative is appropriate as it enables statistical testing of the proposed hypotheses, and also examining causal relationships between variables.

5.2 SAMPLING

The target population included people who were already engaging with gig economy jobs in India in an active manner such as restaurant and package delivery workers and independent digital workers. Since the gig economy worker pool included people in scattered environments, it was decided that the snowball sampling technique could be appropriately used in the study. A target of 404 gig economy workers (online and offline) could easily be accessed and agreed to participate in the study. The importance of confidentiality has been maintained in the study.

Table 1 describes the demographic profile of the respondents, including gender, age, educational attainment, kind of gig work, and experience in gig work.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Gender	Female	150	37.1
	Male	254	62.9
Age	18-20	34	8.4
	21-25	186	46.0
	26-35	161	39.9
	36-45	17	4.2
	46+	6	1.5
Type of Gig Worker	Full-Time Gig worker	200	49.51
	Part-Time Gig Worker	146	36.13
	Occasional Gig worker	58	14.36
Gig Occupation	Design & Creative (Graphic / UI-UX / Video / Animation)	165	40.8
	IT/software	31	7.7
	Teaching/ Academic	45	11.1
	Freelancing	25	6.2
	Delivery / Platform Work	33	8.2
	Others	105	26.0
Experience as a gig worker	Less than 6 months	97	24.0
	6 months- 1 year	101	25.0
	1-2 year	75	18.6
	2-5 years	88	21.8
	5-10 years	31	7.7
	More than 10 years	12	3.0
On, average, how many hours you work in a week	0-10 hrs.	57	14.1
	11-20 hrs.	81	20.0
	21-30 hrs.	77	19.1
	31-40 hrs.	97	24.0
	41-50 hrs	69	17.1
	More than 51 hrs.	23	5.7
Do you plan to continue it in the long term	Yes	276	68.3
	No	128	31.6
Did u get hired through any online platform?	No	233	58.25
	Yes	171	42.75
Which platform is used to get hired?	LinkedIn / Professional	80	19.8
	Job Portals	25	6.2
	Freelancing Platforms	16	4.0
	Social-Media	16	4.0
	Delivery App	34	8.4
	Offline/No Platform	233	57.7
	Total	404	100

5.3 MEASUREMENT

A self-designed survey questionnaire was the main tool of measurement to analyse an individual’s perception of compensation, recognition at their workplace, and overall job satisfaction. It was designed with the help of Likert items ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It examines the statistical associations between motivational factors and job satisfaction of the gig economy workforce.

5.3.1 MEASUREMENT OF CONSTRUCTS

The constructs in this study were adapted from Herzberg's Two Factor theory and Hackman & Oldham's Job Characteristics Model . The four items (lead1-lead4) of the Leadership scale assessed the level of support, direction, motivation, and effective communication provided by the supervisor to gig workers. Skill Variety (SV) was measured as (sv1-sv4), Task Identity (TI) as (ti1-ti4) and Task Significance (TS) as (ts1-ts3). The autonomy scale (AUT) consisted of three items (aut1 through aut3) that reflect autonomy and discretion in scheduling work

and how tasks are chosen. Feedback (FB): three items (f1-f3) representing the clarity and promptness of performance communications. JS scale includes 4 items (JS1-JS4) related to the overall satisfaction of his/her job by the worker.

VI. RESULTS

6.1 MEASUREMENT MODEL

The results of the measurement model were checked for reliability and validity of the proposed constructs in the study. The reliability tests considered were the reliability of the indicators, the reliability of the model/internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. Generally recommended criteria for assessing the outcomes of PLS-SEM were taken into consideration.

6.1.1 INDICATOR RELIABILITY (OUTER LOADINGS)

The external loadings of all measurement items were used to determine indicator reliability. Hair et al. (2022) stated that outer loadings equal or greater than 0.70 are considered sufficient representation of the latent construct. The higher the loading, the better the relationship between the observed variables and constructs.

As may be seen in Table 2, the outer loadings of most measurement items were above the recommended threshold value of 0.70, which represents good indicator reliability.

Table 2. Outer Loadings of the Measurement Items

	Outer loadings
aut1 <- aut	0.828
aut2 <- aut	0.848
aut3 <- aut	0.803
f1 <- fb	0.847
f2 <- fb	0.858
f3 <- fb	0.837
js1 <- js	0.648
js2 <- js	0.814
js3 <- js	0.824
js4 <- js	0.817
lead2 <- lead	0.811
lead3 <- lead	0.782
lead4 <- lead	0.795
lead`1 <- lead	0.781
sv1 <- sv	0.758
sv2 <- sv	0.734
sv3 <- sv	0.844
sv4 <- sv	0.781
ti1 <- ti	0.874
ti2 <- ti	0.867
ti3 <- ti	0.874
ti4 <- ti	0.851
ts1 <- ts	0.858
ts2 <- ts	0.868
ts3 <- ts	0.882

Source: Author's analysis using SmartPLS 4.0

Indicator Reliability (Outer Loadings) – Interpretation:

The outer loadings of the Autonomy (AUT) construct ranged from 0.803 to 0.848, which was high reliability and suggested that all three items measured the autonomy dimension quite well. Likewise, the items of the Feedback (FB) construct exhibited high reliability ranging between 0.837 and 0.858.

In the Leadership (LEAD) construct, all indicators had outer loadings between 0.781 and 0.811, suggesting that all indicators were significant for measuring leadership. Similarly, the Skill Variety (SV) construct showed loadings ranging from 0.734 to 0.844, indicating good reliability for all items.

Task Identity (TI) had the highest indicator reliability among all constructs, with loadings ranging between 0.851 and 0.874. Likewise, Task Significance (TS) showed extremely high reliability ranging from 0.858 to 0.882.

Three items (js2, js3, and js4) demonstrated satisfactory loadings over 0.80 for Job Satisfaction (JS). The item loading for js1 was 0.648, a little lower than the recommended value of 0.70. However, Hair et al. (2022) recommend keeping indicators with loadings in the range of 0.40 to 0.70 in the model, if their exclusion does not significantly affect the Composite Reliability (CR) or Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Accordingly, the item js1 was kept since it still had some theoretical relevance in explaining the general construct of job satisfaction.

The outer loading results taken overall show that all constructs have satisfactory indicator reliabilities and that the measurement items are good representations of their underlying constructs. The measurement model, therefore, is reliable to be tested for validity and tested with the structural model.

6.1.2 CONSTRUCT RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Internal consistency reliability was using Cronbach’s Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values . Acceptable internal consistency among items in the measurement, based on established guidelines, is indicated by values above 0.70. The Cronbach's alpha, CR, and average variance extracted (AVE) values by construct are summarized in Table 3, as presented from the evidence of internal consistency/convergent validity.

Table 3. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho a)	Composite reliability (rho c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
aut	0.767	0.769	0.866	0.683
fb	0.804	0.807	0.884	0.718
js	0.780	0.777	0.860	0.607
lead	0.802	0.803	0.871	0.628
sv	0.786	0.791	0.862	0.609
ti	0.890	0.891	0.924	0.751
ts	0.839	0.843	0.903	0.756

Source: Author’s analysis using SmartPLS 4.0

Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity – Interpretation

Cronbach's Alpha (CA), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) were used to assess the reliability and convergent validity of the measurement model . As per Hair et al. (2022), Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.70 are considered as satisfactory internal consistency, while Composite Reliability greater than 0.50 is for good convergent validity.

Data in Table 3 showed that all constructs had good reliability and validities. The Cronbach's Alpha values of the measurement items were from 0.767 to 0.890, which is higher than the recommended value of 0.70, which indicated a satisfactory internal consistency of the measurement items. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for Task Identity was highest ($\alpha = 0.890$), meaning that it was highly reliable, while the value of Autonomy was lowest ($\alpha = 0.767$) but still accepted.

Likewise, the Composite Reliability (rho_c) values were between 0.860 and 0.924, which are higher than the suggested cut-off point of 0.70. This implies that the constructs have high internal consistency, and that they assess the constructs they are supposed to measure. Task Identity (CR = 0.924) and Task Significance (CR = 0.903) showed the highest construct reliability. The lowest Composite Reliability score was found for Job Satisfaction (CR = 0.860) which is still above the acceptable limit.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was used as the measure for convergent validity . The values of the AVE were between 0.607 and 0.756, which is higher than 0.50. This suggests that the indicators for each construct account for over 50% of the variance in the construct, which demonstrates good convergent validity. Convergent validity was high with the highest AVE for Task Significance (AVE = 0.756) and closely followed by Task Identity (AVE = 0.751). The lowest AVE is for Job Satisfaction (AVE = 0.607) which is still acceptable.

In general, the findings indicate that the internal consistency reliability and convergent validity of all constructs are acceptable. Thus, the measurement model is deemed as reliable and valid for further analysis in the structural model and testing of the hypothesis.

6.1.3 Discriminant Validity (HTMT ratio)

Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was used to test the discriminant validity. In the recommended criterion, values for the HTMT below 0.90 are used as evidence of discriminant validity among constructs. Table 3 indicates the Cronbach's Alpha, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR) of the constructs, which provides the internal consistency and convergent validity of the constructs.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratio)

	aut	fb	js	lead	sv	ti	ts
aut	0.826						
fb	0.583	0.847					
js	0.533	0.548	0.779				
lead	0.519	0.493	0.627	0.792			
sv	0.631	0.653	0.664	0.580	0.781		
ti	0.599	0.586	0.675	0.597	0.739	0.867	
ts	0.592	0.575	0.627	0.576	0.747	0.816	0.870

Source: Author’s analysis using SmartPLS 4.0

Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratio) and Model Fit Assessment – Interpretation

Henseler et al. (2015) found that scores of < 0.90 demonstrated acceptable discriminant validity, which means that constructs are empirically different.

Table 4 indicates that all values of the HTMT are within the recommended range of < 0.90. All constructs showed good discriminant validity with HTMT values between 0.493 and 0.816.

The highest HTMT value was found for the relationship between Task Identity (TI) and Task Significance (TS) (HTMT = 0.816), followed by the relation between Skill Variety (SV) and Task Significance (TS) (HTMT = 0.747) and Skill Variety (SV) and Task Identity (TI) (HTMT = 0.739). These values are somewhat high yet not high enough, as the values were still under 0.90, which is the critical level in which the constructs are conceptually related, but also far enough apart.

The lowest HTMT value was observed between the constructs of Feedback (FB) and Leadership (LEAD) (HTMT = 0.493) indicating high discriminant validity between these constructs.

The overall results of the HTMT analysis show that each construct is measuring a different concept and that discriminant validity of the measurement model is obtained.

6.1.4 Model Fit Assessment

Table 5. Model Fit Assessment

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.065	0.101
d _{ULS}	1.376	3.308
d _G	0.557	0.641
Chi-square	1306.051	1403.350
NFI	0.785	0.769

Source: Author's analysis using SmartPLS 4.0

Overall model fit was assessed by the values of SRMR, d_{ULS}, d_G, Chi square, and NFI. The value of the saturated model is 0.065 which is less than the suggested cut-off value of 0.08, suggesting that the model is a good fit. The model SRMR value of the estimated model (0.101) is slightly higher than the ideal value, but can be acceptable in exploratory PLS-SEM studies.

The NFI values of 0.785 (saturated model) and 0.769 (estimated model) are above the threshold of 0.70, indicating a good degree of model fit. The values of the d_{ULS} and d_G parameters are within reasonable bounds, which means that there is no significant difference between the proposed model and the observed data. It was not used as the first selection criterion for model assessment because the size of the sample used will influence the results of Chi-square.

In general, the model has a good fit, thus it can be used for further structural modeling analysis and hypothesis testing.

6.2 STRUCTURAL MODEL ASSESSMENT

The bootstrapping technique (5,000 samples) was used to conduct tests on the significance of each hypothesized path.

6.2.1 PATH COEFFICIENTS AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Table 5. Path Coefficients

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
aut -> lead	0.153	0.150	0.070	2.171	0.030
fb -> lead	0.092	0.094	0.065	1.427	0.154
lead -> js	0.627	0.629	0.032	19.809	0.000
sv -> lead	0.159	0.164	0.079	1.996	0.046
ti -> lead	0.233	0.233	0.070	3.309	0.001
ts -> lead	0.124	0.123	0.075	1.647	0.100

Source: Author's analysis using SmartPLS 4.0

Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Path coefficients (β), t-values and p-values derived from the bootstrapping procedure were used to verify the structural model. The results indicate that Autonomy (β = 0.153, p = 0.030), Skill Variety (β = 0.159, p = 0.046), and Task Identity (β = 0.233, p = 0.001) have a significant positive effect on Leadership/Supervision, as their p-values are below 0.05. Of these predictors, the strongest predictor of Leadership was Task Identity. Feedback (β = 0.092, p = 0.154) and Task Significance (β = 0.124, p = 0.100) did not yield significant effects on Leadership in the study since the p-values for the two factors were higher than 0.05.

Moreover, Leadership had a significant and positive impact on Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.627, p < 0.001$) meaning that when leadership is good, it has a significant positive influence on the level of job satisfaction among gig workers.

In general, the results confirmed the hypotheses on the following dimensions: Autonomy, Skill Variety, Task Identity, and Leadership \rightarrow Job Satisfaction; and non-supported hypotheses were Feedback and Task Significance.

6.2.2 Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The coefficient of determination (R²) was used to assess the predictive power of the structural model.

Table 6. Coefficient of Determination (R²)

	R-square	R-square adjusted
js	0.393	0.391
lead	0.427	0.420

Source: Author's analysis using SmartPLS 4.0

The result reveals Leadership (LEAD): R² = 0.427 and adjusted R² = 0.420 means that 42.7% of the variance of Leadership is explained by Autonomy, Feedback, Skill Variety, Task Identity and Task Significance.

Job Satisfaction (JS) also had an R² of 0.393 and an adjusted R² of 0.391 which indicates that 39.3% of the variance in Job Satisfaction is accounted for by Leadership.

Hair et al. (2022) suggest that the range of 0.25 to 0.50 represents weak, moderate, and substantial R² values, respectively. Thus, R² values obtained were moderate, meaning that the model explains moderate percentage of the data. The findings show that the suggested model is able to account for the differences in the leadership and job satisfaction of gig workers across all measures.

6.2.3 Path Coefficients

The path coefficients indicate the strength and direction of relationships among the constructs in the structural model.

Table 7. Path Coefficients

	Path coefficients
aut -> lead	0.153
fb -> lead	0.092
lead -> js	0.627
sv -> lead	0.159
ti -> lead	0.233
ts -> lead	0.124

Source: Author's analysis using SmartPLS 4.0

The result indicates that the greatest positive relationship is between Task Identity ($\beta = 0.233$) and Leadership, whereas Skill Variety ($\beta = 0.159$) and Autonomy ($\beta = 0.153$) are in the second place. This indicates that those gig workers with higher task identity, skill variety and autonomy are more likely to feel strong leadership support. Task Significance ($\beta = 0.124$) and Feedback ($\beta = 0.092$) on the other hand, have relatively weak positive relationships with Leadership.

Moreover, Leadership positively affects Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.627$) which means that having an effective leadership has a significant impact in increasing job satisfaction of gig workers.

Overall, the results showed that Leadership has a significant impact on Job Satisfaction and Task Identity is the strongest predictor of Leadership among the examined job characteristics.

N1 = 0.0254 N2 = 0.0107 Relationship is positive >0.05 Accept the hypothesis <0.05 Reject the hypothesis

Table 6. Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results for the Main Conceptual Model

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	p-value	Decision
H1	Autonomy \rightarrow Leadership	0.153	0.030	Supported
H2	Feedback \rightarrow Leadership	0.092	0.154	Not Supported
H3	Skill Variety \rightarrow Leadership	0.159	0.046	Supported
H4	Task Identity \rightarrow Leadership	0.233	0.001	Supported
H5	Task Significance \rightarrow Leadership	0.124	0.100	Not Supported
H6	Leadership \rightarrow Job Satisfaction	0.627	0.000	Supported

Source: Author's analysis using SmartPLS 4.0

The results reveal that Autonomy ($\beta = 0.153, p = 0.030$), Skill Variety ($\beta = 0.159, p = 0.046$), and Task Identity ($\beta = 0.233, p = 0.001$) have significant positive effects on Leadership; therefore, H1, H3, and H4 are supported. Of these variables, Task Identity was the most significant predictor of Leadership.

Feedback ($\beta = 0.092, p = 0.154$) and Task Significance ($\beta = 0.124, p = 0.100$) did not have a statistically significant effect on Leadership. Hence, H2 and H5 are not available.

In addition, there was positive support for H6, as Job Satisfaction was strongly positively influenced by the Leadership variable ($\beta = 0.627$, $p < 0.001$). This discovery highlights that strong leadership can have a major impact on gig workers' job satisfaction.

VII. DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to investigate the effect of job characteristics on the leadership and in turn, the effect of leadership on job satisfaction for gig workers in India. The findings show that the constructs of Autonomy, Skill Variety and Task Identity significantly and positively affect leadership, while there is no significant effect of the constructs of Feedback and Task Significance.

Task Identity was the most significant predictor of leadership of all predictors ($\beta = 0.233$, $p = 0.001$). This discovery indicates that gig workers who see their work as a whole and meaningful experience are likely to receive positive leadership support. The findings are consistent with the Job Characteristics Model that suggests that well-defined jobs improve employee motivation and involvement. A sense of task ownership can boost workers' judgment of leadership effectiveness in a gig economy with small jobs.

Like this, Skill Variety ($\beta = 0.159$, $p = 0.046$) was also determined as a positive significant factor on leadership. This suggests that the more skills and competencies required to the job lead to more positive perceptions of leadership. Gig workers who are doing different things might have more learning and development opportunities, and may value the leadership support and guidance more.

Autonomy was found to be significantly related to gig work in terms of leadership ($\beta = 0.153$, $p = 0.030$), underscoring the importance of independence in a gig work context. Gig work is flexible and self-managed, so employee self-management and flexible leadership can have a positive impact on employee experiences and satisfaction.

Leadership was not significantly affected by any of the other factors, though: Feedback and Task Significance. The reason may be that a lot of gig workers are more connected with digital platforms, which may have less in-person contact and feedback. Likewise, workers might be more concerned with financial results and task completion instead of the social significance of their work, which may minimize the importance of task significance on leadership perceptions.

The results also indicate that Leadership has a significant positive effect on Job Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.627$, $p < 0.001$). The finding aligns with the literature, which also indicates that effective leadership is key to improving job satisfaction, regardless of the job context. Good leadership can enhance communication, offer guidance, diminish uncertainty, and foster a positive work setting, which in turn will boost worker satisfaction.

The model accounted for 42.7% of the variance in leadership and 39.3% of the variance in job satisfaction, which is considered to be medium. The results confirm the applicability of JCM to explain the attitudes of employees in the gig economy and highlight the critical role of leadership in converting favourable job features to better job satisfaction.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the relationship between job characteristics, leadership and job satisfaction of gig workers in India. The study, based on the Job Characteristics Model, looked at the relationship between Autonomy, Feedback, Skill Variety, Task Identity, Task Significance and Leadership, and the relationship between Leadership and Job Satisfaction.

The results showed that Autonomy, Skill Variety and Task Identity significantly affect Leadership with no significant effect of Feedback and Task Significance. Of all the job characteristics, Task Identity proved to be the most significant predictor of Leadership. Additionally, the influence of Leadership on Job Satisfaction was identified as strong, highlighting its relevance in enhancing gig workers' job experiences.

The results indicate that organizations/ digital labor platforms need to design jobs to improve autonomy, promote the use of skills, and give workers a sense of task ownership. Meanwhile, effective leadership that provides support and guidance alongside effective communication can greatly enhance worker satisfaction and engagement.

The study is a piece of the increasing literature on the gig economy by adding empirical evidence in the context of India and the impact of leadership as a link between job features and job satisfaction. The study has its limitations due to the cross-sectional design and non-probability sampling methods used. Longitudinal designs could be used for future studies, and other variables, including organizational support, platform trust, and work-life balance, could be explored to provide a better understanding of gig workers' job satisfaction.

In general, the results of the study indicate that job satisfaction and a sustainable approach to workforce engagement in the fast-growing gig economy depend significantly on effective leadership and job characteristics that are enriched.

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