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Analysis of the Influence of Job Autonomy, Leadership Style, and Emotional Intelligence on Employee Well-Being in Gig Workers

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ABSTRAK

Studi ini mengkaji bagaimana otonomi pekerjaan, gaya kepemimpinan, dan faktor kecerdasan emosional memengaruhi pekerja lepas dalam ekonomi gig. Saya menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif, melakukan survei terhadap 150 peserta yang dipilih secara sengaja. Peserta ini adalah pekerja gig selama minimal enam bulan, berinteraksi dengan pelanggan atau pengguna layanan, dan memiliki jadwal kerja sekitar 20 jam seminggu. Sebagai alat pengumpulan data utama, saya menggunakan kuesioner skala Likert lima poin yang telah divalidasi dan dianalisis dengan uji-t, dan reliabilitasnya diperiksa dengan menghitung Cronbach's Alpha. Sebelum analisis regresi, saya melakukan uji asumsi klasik termasuk pemeriksaan normalitas, heteroskedastisitas, dan multikolinearitas. Hasil pengolahan data menunjukkan bahwa ketiga variabel independen secara bersama-sama memiliki pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap kesejahteraan pekerja. Secara terpisah, masing-masing variabel juga menunjukkan pengaruh positif, yang berarti bahwa otonomi kerja yang lebih besar, persepsi kepemimpinan yang lebih baik, dan tingkat kecerdasan emosional yang lebih tinggi, menghasilkan tingkat kesejahteraan yang lebih tinggi yang dirasakan oleh pekerja lepas. Temuan ini memperluas pemahaman teoretis di bidang manajemen sumber daya manusia, khususnya dalam konteks kerja non-tradisional. Selain itu, hasil ini juga dapat digunakan sebagai referensi praktis oleh manajemen platform digital dalam merancang strategi yang lebih responsif terhadap kebutuhan kesejahteraan pekerja lepas di era ekonomi digital.

Kata kunci: otonomi kerja, gaya kepemimpinan, kecerdasan emosional, kesejahteraan karyawan

ABSTRACT

This study examines how job autonomy, leadership style, and emotional intelligence factors influence freelancers within the gig economy. I used a quantitative approach, conducting a survey of intentionally sampled 150 participants. These participants were gig workers for at least six months, engaged with customers or service users, and had a work schedule of roughly 20 hours a week. As the primary data collection tool, I used a validated five-point Likert scale questionnaire analyzed with a t-test, and reliability was checked by calculating Cronbach's Alpha. Before regression analysis, I performed classical assumption testing including checks for normality, heteroscedasticity, and multicollinearity. The results of data processing indicate that the three independent variables jointly have a significant effect on worker well-being. Separately, each variable also shows a positive effect, meaning that greater job autonomy, better perceived leadership, and higher levels of emotional intelligence, lead to higher levels of well-being perceived by gig workers. These findings broaden theoretical understanding in the field of human resource management, particularly in non-traditional work contexts. In addition, these results can also be used as a practical reference by digital platform management in designing strategies that are more responsive to the welfare needs of freelancers in the digital economy era.

Keywords: job autonomy, leadership style, emotional intelligence, employee well-being

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INTRODUCTION

Advances in information technology and the rapid growth of the digital economy have fueled the emergence of the gig economy, a project-based work system that offers flexible working hours and utilizes digital platforms as a bridge between workers and employers. Freelancers who work on platforms, often called gig workers, have become vital participants in the modern economy (Wibowo et al., 2023). While the model provides a great deal of job flexibility and the ability to self-schedule, there are trade-offs with that flexibility. Unpredictable work volume, relentless technological advancement, a lack of basic social security, and most of all, no guaranteed income create a load that puts the mental and physical health of coders and gig workers at risk (Rony et al., 2020). Protecting the mental and physical health of gig workers is crucial not just for the viability of the digital economy and digital social systems as a whole, but for the individual gig workers concerned.

Job autonomy refers to how much control employees have over the details of their jobs as well as over the timing and the method of execution (Lubis et al., 2023). For platform-based freelance workers, occupational flexibility is one of the main motivators to choose a flexible work arrangement. This usually translates to the psychological benefits of having a job, such as relaxation and a lower sense of external pressure (Arief et al., 2023; Tarigan et al., 2024). Having control over the work pace tends to encourage the adoption a more favorable work-life integration as additional personal obligations can be met more easily (Lubis et al., 2020). On the other hand, if insufficient support is provided by the platform or if the work is poorly structured, the lack of control can be overwhelming. Frustration and psychological stress can be experienced in situations that require independent planning. Therefore the balance of work autonomy and unsufficient control mechanisms within the support framework is a crucial determinant of worker well-being (Aryanto et al., 2020).

Along with the autonomy to arrange their tasks, the leadership style is likely to affect the well-being of gig workers (Ariawan et al., 2023). Even though gig workers perform their tasks independently, they still relate to a work system either a digital platform or a human coordinator system manager (Zakaria et al., 2025). The leadership style adopted by platform managers or project leaders can either foster a positive or a negative workplace atmosphere. A leadership style that is overly rigid, command-and-control, and fixated on outcomes can result in emotional harm, particularly in the absence of care for the mental health and other personal considerations of the workers (Harahap et al., 2025). Considering the gig economy demands high flexibility from workers, the need to refine an empowering, dialogically open, and concern for the mental health of workers leadership style is non-negotiable (Usmany et al., 2024; Wahyuriani et al., 2025).

Emotional intelligence is a personal trait that helps increase the well-being of gig workers (Putra & Kurniati, 2024). This ability encompasses how a person recognizes, understands, and manages their own and others' emotions. Workers in the gig economy operate in high-pressure and unpredictable settings

that involve competing deadlines, shifting client demands, and continual changes in the working environment, and they often deal negative emotions and stress (Tarigan et al., 2022). Individuals who have acquired emotional intelligence have considerable flexibility in how they approach challenges and relate to others; they are optimistic about overcoming obstacles. Such individuals keep their enthusiasm and positive emotional states crucial to the achievement of goals in stressful situations (Annas & Putra, 2024). Weak emotional stability, however, can easily generate conflicts, emotional drain, and further decline in overall wellbeing. Therefore, for gig workers, emotional intelligence is important to sustain psychological equilibrium and flexibility to the changing demands of their work. This study comes from the need to understand the effects of job autonomy, leadership style, and emotional intelligence on gig workers' wellbeing (Rahmawati et al., 2024).

The study is intended to contribute academically to the body of knowledge in human resource management, particularly for the gig economy, which is still growing in Indonesia. The practical relevance of the study is to help the digital platform managers, the employers of gig workers, and the gig workers themselves, to strategically improve the wellbeing of the workplace. Recognizing the value of autonomy in the job, and emotionally supportive leaders will translate to gig workers improving their wellbeing, and a positive work environment and culture will form around the growing demands of the gig economy.

RESEARCH METHOD

For this research, I employed a quantitative method using a survey to measure the impact of job autonomy, leadership style, and emotional intelligence on the well-being of gig workers in Indonesia. Survey respondents were gig economy workers on digital platforms in the areas of transportation, delivery, and project-based services. Purposive sampling was used to select 150 of the respondents, who met the following requirements: (1) currently and actively employed as a gig worker for a minimum of the preceding six months, (2) worked an average of 20 hours each week, (3) worked within a structure of supervision or rules that displayed a leadership style and had client or consumer interactions that required emotional intelligence in work, (4) worked in system-based leadership supervision and had client interactions that emotionally required concentration. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire which ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to measure the variables. The instruments were validated using the item-total correlation method at a minimum correlation of 0.30 and significance below 0.05. Meanwhile, the reliability of the instrument was measured using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, with a minimum threshold of 0.70. Before entering the regression analysis stage, the data was first tested using the classical assumption test. The analysis process was conducted using multiple linear regression to determine the simultaneous and partial effects of the three variables on gig worker well-being.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the test results, all questionnaire items representing the variables of job autonomy, leadership style, emotional intelligence, and worker well-being were proven valid, with item-total correlation values exceeding 0.30 and significance below 0.05. The reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha also showed satisfactory results, where all variables obtained values above 0.70, indicating that the research instrument had a good level of internal consistency. The normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method showed that the data were normally distributed. Furthermore, the heteroscedasticity test using the Glejser method showed that there were no symptoms of heteroscedasticity. Meanwhile, the results of the multicollinearity test showed that all independent variables had tolerance values greater than 0.10 and VIF below 10, so it can be concluded that there is no problem of high correlation between the independent variables. The results of the regression analysis showed that the research model was significant partially and simultaneously. These findings indicate that job autonomy, leadership style, and emotional intelligence have a significant influence on the well-being of gig workers. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.57 indicates that these three variables explain 57% of the variation in employee well-being, with the remainder influenced by other factors. This confirms that the higher the level of job autonomy, supportive leadership, and emotional intelligence of employees, the higher the level of well-being they experience in the gig economy work environment.

This study found that a high level of job autonomy has a positive and significant impact on gig workers' well-being. The more flexibility employees have in choosing what hours to work, where to work, and how to perform a given task, the more positive employees feel with regards to their emotional and psychological well-being and overall work-life integration. Having the ability to choose and make decisions regarding the work empowers individuals and makes them feel more in control, and can relieve stress and increase job satisfaction. For gig workers, the ability to create their own schedules and choose the most appropriate work methods fosters the integration of their personal and professional spheres. This fosters emotional well-being and strengthens their sense of stability at work. These observations fit well within the job demand-control model, which argues the need to configure work in a way that maintains a healthy balance between work demands and control a worker has over their tasks. Thus, we can conclude that job autonomy is paramount in enhancing well-being of gig workers in the flexible and fluid work settings.

Along with job autonomy, this study emphasizes the importance of the leadership style in enhancing the well-being of gig workers. Transformational leadership, which inspires, has a clear vision, and shows genuine concern for individual needs, has been demonstrated to bolster motivation, foster appreciation, and build positive emotional ties with workers. When gig workers see that management or project leaders tend to their needs and ‘care’ for them, their sense of well-being increases because they do not feel alone in their work. In the gig economy where work flexibility offers a challenge, a leadership

style that is communicatively open, responsive to workers' needs and 'dynamics', and promotes partnership in work is more than welcome. In addition, emotionally supportive leaders provide psychological safety to stressed workers, and help to build social ties with others isolation who are systematically and spatially dispersed. Hence, effective leadership can contribute to better psychological and social well-being, even in flexible and informal work arrangements.

The influence of emotional intelligence on the well-being of gig workers is also positive. During stressful circumstances, the ability to comprehend, control, and react to emotions becomes highly essential. Emotional gig workers find it easy to control their calm, inner state, and motivation, and have pleasant interactions with customers and colleagues. They strongly withstand the negative emotions that come with unstable shifts, irregular hours, and changing income with greater optimism and emotional flexibility. Positive emotional intelligence helps to build supportive social networks in the workplace. Emotional workers feel more accepted, respected, and supported in their community. Other workers feel the and-networks emotional and social burdens. Emotional networks focus on the flexibility and regulation of emotions. They also present emotional processing and the maintenance and control of shifting and changing networks. Thus, the development of emotional intelligence is important to the improvement of the well-being of gig workers.

CONCLUSION

This study identifies three factors: job autonomy, leadership style, and emotional intelligence, as being crucial to enhancing the well-being of gig workers. In practice, digital platform managers and gig employers should focus on some well-defined initiatives, including the formulation of policies that promote a favorable equilibrium between autonomy at work and social safeguards, the adoption of a leadership style that is emotionally available and constructive, and the provision of emotionally supportive work training. Such a framework will enable the ecosystem of the gig economy to prosper as a business and offer a safe and sustainable environment to its workers, even with the ongoing disruptions in the digital economy.

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