

Can the Perception of Flexible Work Arrangements Increase Job Satisfaction Among Online Ride-Hailing Drivers?

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of the gig economy in Indonesia has introduced flexible work systems, particularly among ride-hailing drivers, enabling them to independently manage their working hours and work intensity. However, such flexibility is accompanied by income uncertainty, limited employment protection, and algorithm-based performance demands that may affect job satisfaction. Perceptions of flexible work arrangements are assumed to contribute to job satisfaction. This study aimed to examine the relationship between perceived flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction among ride-hailing drivers in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. A total of 128 drivers aged 18–42 years, who had worked for at least one year, participated in the study through purposive sampling. Perceived flexible work arrangements were measured using the Flexible Work Arrangement Scale, while job satisfaction was assessed using the Job Satisfaction Scale. Spearman's correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between perceived work flexibility and job satisfaction ($\rho = 0.229$, $p = 0.009$), indicating that higher perceived flexibility is associated with higher levels of job satisfaction. These findings underscore the role of perceived work flexibility as a psychological factor contributing to job satisfaction among gig workers and provide an empirical basis for developing policies or interventions aimed at enhancing the well-being of ride-hailing drivers in the Indonesian context.

Keywords: ride-hailing drivers, flexible work arrangements, gig economy, job satisfaction, perception

Introduction

The development of the world of work over the past decade has shown a significant shift toward more flexible work systems, particularly alongside advances in digital technology and the platform-based economy (Mäntymäki, Baiyere, & Islam, 2019). Flexible Work Arrangements (FWA) are understood as negotiated agreements between employees and organizations concerning working time and/or work location (Allen & Shockley, 2009). Recent studies indicate that work flexibility is associated with increased psychological well-being, work–life balance, and job satisfaction, as it allows individuals greater control over their work activities (Becker, Belkin, Tuskey, & Conroy, 2022; Indradewa & Prasetio, 2023). Empirical findings further emphasize that perceptions of work flexibility, rather than objective flexibility alone, play a crucial role in shaping positive attitudes toward work and the organization (Chen & Fulmer, 2018).

One occupational group characterized by a high degree of flexibility is online ride-hailing drivers. The app-based work system enables drivers to independently determine their working hours, work intensity, and operational areas. In Indonesia, the online motorcycle taxi profession has grown rapidly as part of the gig economy, providing alternative income opportunities for various segments of society (De Ruyter & Rachmawati, 2020). Nevertheless, such flexibility is not always accompanied by stable working conditions. Online ride-hailing drivers face income uncertainty, indirect performance demands embedded within the platform system, competition among drivers, and occupational risks on the road. These conditions may influence their psychological well-being and level of job satisfaction (Afriyanda & Jimad, 2023; Sanubari & Amalia, 2019).

Job satisfaction is a key construct in industrial and organizational psychology, reflecting individuals' evaluations of their work (Sunarta, 2019). Job satisfaction is defined as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal that one's job fulfills important personal values (Locke, 1969). Individuals with higher levels of job satisfaction tend to demonstrate greater motivation, stronger work commitment, and better psychological well-being (Ngoc, Huu, Minh, Lam, & Van, 2024a). However, job satisfaction is influenced not only by income or working conditions but also by the extent to which individuals perceive autonomy, control, and balance between work and personal life (Ngoc, Huu, Minh, Lam, & Van, 2024b). Therefore, perceptions of work flexibility represent a relevant psychological factor in understanding job satisfaction among gig workers.

A number of studies have shown that flexible work arrangements are positively associated with job satisfaction across various formal sectors, including corporate employees, professionals, and service workers (Davidescu, Apostu, Paul, & Casuneanu, 2020; Rajaram & Jha, 2024). However, most of these studies focus on formal employees within clearly structured organizational systems, while research on workers in the informal sector or gig economy remains relatively limited.

Several research gaps warrant attention. First, studies examining the relationship between perceived work flexibility and job satisfaction among online ride-hailing drivers remain scarce, despite the distinct characteristics of their work compared to formal employees. Second, flexibility within the gig economy is paradoxical: while it offers autonomy and freedom, it is also accompanied by income uncertainty and limited employment protection. Third, most research on flexible work arrangements has been conducted in formal organizational contexts or in developed countries, and thus does not fully capture the psychological dynamics of digital platform workers in Indonesia.

Based on these gaps, this study aims to contribute to the literature by examining the role of perceived flexible work arrangements in predicting job satisfaction among online ride-hailing drivers. This approach is grounded in the argument that perceptions of work flexibility may serve as a psychological resource that enhances autonomy, control, and work-life balance, ultimately contributing to job satisfaction. Additionally, this study is expected to provide empirical insights into the psychological dynamics of gig workers in the

Indonesian context and to inform the development of policies or interventions that support their well-being.

Accordingly, this study aims to:

1. Examine the relationship between perceived flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction among online ride-hailing drivers.
2. Provide empirical evidence regarding the role of perceived work flexibility as a psychological factor contributing to job satisfaction among gig workers.

Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method to examine the relationship between perceived flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction among online ride-hailing drivers. Job satisfaction was measured using the Job Satisfaction Scale developed by the researchers based on the dimensions proposed by Luthans (2011). The instrument consisted of 25 items rated on a four-point Likert scale (1–4). The adaptation results indicated acceptable psychometric properties, with item validity coefficients (r_{ix}) \geq 0.25, item discrimination indices ranging from 0.363 to 0.746, and a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.947.

Flexible work arrangements were measured using the Flexible Work Arrangement Scale developed by Carlson, Grzywacz, and Michele Kacmar (2010), which was pilot-tested by the researchers. The scale consisted of 15 items rated on a four-point Likert scale (1–4). The pilot testing results showed item validity coefficients (r_{ix}) \geq 0.30, with item discrimination indices ranging from 0.366 to 0.688, and a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.864.

The population of this study comprised online ride-hailing drivers in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The sample was selected using purposive sampling with the following criteria: female drivers aged 18–42 years, having worked for at least one year, and possessing one active driver account. This technique was employed to ensure that participants met specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives. A total of 128 respondents participated in the study.

Data were collected online using Google Forms distributed via social media platforms. Prior to completing the questionnaire, participants were required to read and provide informed consent. The collected data were downloaded and subjected to a data cleaning process to ensure there were no duplicate entries and that all responses were complete. Variable scores were calculated by summing all item scores according to the scoring guidelines of each instrument.

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test indicated that the data were not normally distributed; therefore, nonparametric statistical analysis was applied. The analytical procedures included normality testing, linearity testing, and Spearman's Rho correlation analysis to examine the relationship

between perceived flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction among online ride-hailing drivers.

Results

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis

| Variable | N | Mean | Skor | | SD |
|---------------------------|-----|-------|------|-----|--------|
| | | | Min | Max | |
| Job Satisfaction | 128 | 71.93 | 25 | 100 | 11.954 |
| Flexible Work Arrangement | 128 | 52.42 | 15 | 60 | 7.568 |

Table 1 presents an overview of the levels of job satisfaction and perceived flexible work arrangements among the 128 research participants. The mean score for job satisfaction was 71.93, with a score range of 25 to 100 and a standard deviation of 11.95. Meanwhile, flexible work arrangements had a mean score of 52.42, with a score range of 15 to 60 and a standard deviation of 7.57. These findings indicate that, overall, participants tended to report moderate to high levels of job satisfaction and relatively high perceptions of work flexibility.

Table 2. Test of Normality

| | Kolmogorof-Smirnov ³ | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|------|-------|--------------|-----|-------|
| | Statistic | df | Sig | Statistic | df | Sig |
| Flexible Work Arrangement | 0.159 | 1218 | 0.000 | 0.842 | 128 | 0.000 |
| Job Satisfaction | 0.086 | 128 | 0.021 | 0.969 | 128 | 0.005 |

The normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test. The analysis results showed that the significance value for Flexible Work Arrangement was 0.000 and for Job Satisfaction was 0.021, both of which were below the 0.05 significance threshold. These findings indicate that the data for both variables were not normally distributed. Therefore, subsequent analysis employed a nonparametric statistical technique, namely Spearman's Rho correlation.

Table 3. Test of Linearity

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. | |
|--|----------------|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------|--------|-------|
| Resilience * Character Strengths | Between Groups | (Combined) | 4814.089 | 19 | 253.373 | 2.052 | 0.00 |
| | | Linearity | 2261.652 | 1 | 2261.652 | 18.318 | 0.000 |
| | Within Groups | Deviation from Linearity | 2552.437 | 18 | 141.802 | 1.149 | 0.317 |
| | | Total | 13334.279 | 108 | 123.466 | | |
| | | 18148.367 | 127 | | | | |

The results of the linearity test showed a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a significant linear relationship between flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction. This finding suggests that the relationship between the two variables follows a linear pattern and meets the assumption required for correlation analysis.

Table 4. Test of Correlation

| | | | Resilience | Character Strengths |
|----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Spearman's Rho | Flexible Work Arrangement | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | 0.229 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.009 |
| | | N | 128 | 128 |
| | Job Satisfaction | Correlation Coefficient | 0.229 | 1.000 |
| | | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.009 | |
| | | N | 128 | 128 |

The hypothesis testing using Spearman's Rho correlation yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.229 with a significance value of 0.009 ($p < 0.05$). These results indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between perceived flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction among online ride-hailing drivers. The positive direction of the relationship suggests that higher levels of perceived work flexibility are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction.

However, the magnitude of the correlation coefficient indicates that the strength of the relationship falls within the low category. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.125 suggests that flexible work arrangements account for 12.5% of the variance in job satisfaction, while the remaining 87.5% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

Discussions

The findings of this study indicate a significant positive relationship between perceived flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction among online ride-hailing drivers in Yogyakarta, although the strength of the relationship is relatively low. This result provides empirical evidence that perceptions of work flexibility function as a psychological factor contributing to job satisfaction among gig workers. The finding addresses the research question proposed in the introduction, namely whether perceived flexible work arrangements are significantly related to job satisfaction among online ride-hailing drivers. The positive direction of the relationship suggests that higher levels of perceived work flexibility are associated with higher levels of job satisfaction. This supports the argument that work flexibility—particularly individuals' perceptions of autonomy and control—serves as a relevant psychological resource for digital platform workers whose jobs are characterized by nonformal and dynamic work structures (Boccoli, Sestino, Gastaldi, & Corso, 2022).

This positive relationship is consistent with theoretical perspectives that conceptualize flexible work arrangements as a form of job resource capable of enhancing individuals' psychological well-being. Flexible work arrangements provide greater control over working

time and activities, enabling individuals to align work demands with personal needs (Allen & Shockley, 2009; Purnawan, Sudarmaji, & Widyastuti, 2025). Higher levels of control and autonomy have long been identified as important determinants of job satisfaction, as they foster a sense of empowerment and influence over the work environment (Böckerman, Bryson, Kauhanen, & Kangasniemi, 2020). Thus, perceived work flexibility may enhance job satisfaction by increasing perceived control, self-efficacy, and individuals' capacity to manage work demands effectively.

The present findings are also aligned with prior empirical studies reporting a positive association between flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction (Aziz-Ur-Rehman & Siddiqui, 2019; Davidescu, Apostu, Paul, & Casuneanu, 2020b). Davidescu et al. (2020b), for instance, found that work flexibility significantly contributes to job satisfaction through improvements in work–life balance and psychological well-being. Similarly, Becker et al. (2022) demonstrated that flexible work arrangements are associated with enhanced well-being and job satisfaction due to increased autonomy in managing working time. Furthermore, Chen and Fulmer (2018) emphasized that perceptions of flexibility, rather than objective flexibility alone, play a critical role in shaping employees' work attitudes. The consistency between the present findings and previous literature suggests that work flexibility is a relevant psychological factor across diverse occupational contexts, including gig work such as online motorcycle taxi driving.

Nevertheless, the relatively low strength of the relationship indicates that flexible work arrangements are not the sole determinant of job satisfaction among online ride-hailing drivers. This is understandable given the inherent characteristics of gig work, which are marked by high levels of uncertainty, particularly regarding income stability, job security, and social protection (G, 2024). Although flexibility provides autonomy, unstable working conditions may limit its overall positive impact on job satisfaction (Nikmah & Martdianty, 2021). Online ride-hailing drivers must not only manage their own working schedules but also navigate competition among drivers, fluctuating demand, and economic pressures, all of which may shape their overall evaluation of their job. Therefore, while work flexibility may enhance job satisfaction, its influence may remain limited if not accompanied by other supportive factors such as income stability, platform support, and adequate working conditions.

The findings of this study also have practical implications for policies and strategies aimed at promoting the well-being of gig workers. Although this study did not examine specific interventions, the results indicate that perceived work flexibility represents a relevant psychological aspect in enhancing job satisfaction. Digital platform providers may therefore consider strategies that strengthen drivers' perceptions of flexibility, such as increasing transparency in algorithmic systems, offering more adaptable scheduling options, and providing support mechanisms that enhance drivers' sense of control over their work. Approaches that enhance perceived autonomy and control have been consistently linked to improved job satisfaction and psychological well-being across various work settings.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal conclusions regarding the relationship between flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction. The study demonstrates an association but cannot determine whether perceived flexibility leads to higher job satisfaction or vice versa. Second, the study did not account for other potential determinants of job satisfaction, such as income level, organizational or platform support, workload, job insecurity, and work motivation. These factors may function as additional predictors of job satisfaction among gig workers. Third, the sample was restricted to online ride-hailing drivers in Yogyakarta; therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to gig workers in other regions or to workers with different characteristics.

Future research is recommended to employ longitudinal or experimental designs to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction. Subsequent studies may also incorporate additional variables, such as work–life balance, income level, job insecurity, and organizational or platform support, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing job satisfaction among gig workers. Moreover, research involving more diverse populations and geographical contexts would enhance the generalizability of the findings.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates a positive and statistically significant relationship between perceived flexible work arrangements and job satisfaction among online ride-hailing drivers in Yogyakarta, although the strength of the association is relatively low. The findings affirm that perceived work flexibility represents a psychological factor contributing to job satisfaction, particularly through enhancing individuals' sense of autonomy, control, and ability to align work with personal needs. However, the relatively modest contribution of flexible work arrangements indicates that job satisfaction among gig workers is also influenced by other factors, such as income stability, job security, and overall working conditions. Thus, flexible work arrangements may be understood as a relevant psychological resource, but not the sole determinant of job satisfaction. This study provides empirical contributions to the understanding of the psychological dynamics of gig workers and highlights the importance of considering perceived work flexibility in efforts to promote the well-being and job satisfaction of digital platform workers.

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