A relationship between Work-Related Factors, Job Stress and job performance among App-Based Food Delivery Executives in India

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Abstract

The emergence and expansion of app-based food delivery services have rapidly transformed the structure and operation of the gig economy and its workers, particularly in developing countries such as India. While these platforms provide alternative forms of income through flexibility associated with gig work, evidence is mounting that delivery work leads to greater job stress levels due to the unpredictability associated with gig employment and the algorithmic-based management processes used. The present article provides a systematic review of the existing literature concerning the factors contributing to job stress for app-based food delivery workers in India. The research was carried out using a systematic review method as prescribed in PRISMA 2020 guidelines, and 5 primary academic databases (Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, Taylor and Francis) were utilized. Following a rigorous screening process to determine the studies' eligibility, 65 studies were identified as suitable for qualitative synthesis based on being peer-reviewed and published during the years 2015-2025. The resulting findings yield four primary sources of workplace stress: (a) excessive workloads, (b) algorithmically imposed time pressure, (c) unpredictable income, and (d) an unsafe working environment. Using the Job Demands-Resources (JDR) model and precarious employment theory, the review highlights that job-related stress associated with app-based food delivery work occurs largely due to algorithmic governance and precarious employment rather than an individual issue. This research contributes to the body of knowledge surrounding gig work and occupational health by providing an overarching summary of workplace stressors in app-based food delivery and emphasises the requirement for policy reform and platform-level interventions to better support the well-being of the workers involved in app-based food delivery in India.

Keywords: *Gig economy; App-based food delivery; Job stress; Algorithmic management; Precarious employment; Platform work; India*

1. Introduction

Through digitized platforms, App-Work, a subset of the gig economy, has exploited the rise in app-based work opportunities against traditional paradigms of employment, creating an all-new form of contingent employment/work ("Jacobides, Cennamo, & Gawer, 2018; Duggan, Sherman, Carbery, & McDonnell, 2020; Cropanzano, Keplinger, Lambert, Caza, & Ashford, 2023"). This form of contingent work operates as an intermediary hiring system, giving workers and customers very little control over where the jobs are allocated and how they will be allocated. The spread of app-based work is global, especially within sectors such as ride-hailing and food delivery, due to the utilisation of algorithmic technologies in these services, which enhances the efficiency of service delivery whilst also providing considerable levels of management over the workforce. There are also major concerns surrounding worker autonomy and provision of social protection, as app-based work involves the use of precarious employment with the use of algorithmic management, digital monitoring, or surveillance (Fleming 2017; Chen, Chevalier, Rossi, and Oehlsen 2019; Duggan et al 2020). Algorithms control everything from how work is performed, the tasks performed, and how workers are assessed, all while utilising different data points (e.g., peers' location, demand, weather) to calculate wages (Griesbach, Reich, Elliott-Negri, & Milkman, 2019; Amorim & Moda, 2020; Dubal, 2023). Although algorithmic management promotes efficiency, it has also been heavily criticized for limiting worker control (Galiere, 2020) and therefore decreasing levels of job satisfaction, while increasing stress, anxiety, and ultimately worker burnout (Hafeez, Gupta, & Sprajcer, 2022). Workers are now dealing with the financial instability created by COVID-19, managing their own health and safety, and ensuring their vehicle is safe to drive to and from work every day (Hall & Krueger,2018; Tassinari & Maccarone 2020; Muszyński, Pulignano, & Marà, 2022). These aspects associated with app-based employment lead to significant questions regarding whether those working will have an adequate work experience that is satisfying and fulfilling. As a result of the rise of app-based food delivery services, numerous changes have occurred regarding jobs in the services industry, especially in low and middle-income countries like India. Digital labour platforms like Zomato, Swiggy, Uber Eats, and others are providing employment opportunities through flexible on-demand job creation, but there is also growing evidence that app-based food delivery work has increased job stress levels due to insecure employment conditions and heavy workload (Wood et al., 2019; Anwar & Graham, 2021).

The Fourth Industrial Revolution and the rise of digital platforms are transforming the e-commerce logistics sector and creating new opportunities (Gao et al., 2022; Kuhn and Galloway, 2019). According to Ződi & Török (2021), an Online-to-Offline (O2O) digital platform provides a virtual space that connects users and service providers for content and information, commercial transactions, and value creation activities. Since startup companies operate digitally using gig employment on a digital platform, they have the opportunity to compete with larger traditional companies with lower cost entry barriers (Kuhn & Galloway, 2019). Gig employment is a non-standard form of work that reflects new types of labor that exist in the digitized workplace; gig employees perform non-standard work forms or produce labor income through a digital platform without any formal employee employment contract (Wang & Chaolu, 2022). Food delivery through apps such as Zomato, Swiggy, and Uber Eats, etc. has completely changed the way workers do their jobs in a service industry setting, especially in developing economies like India. There are now many thousands of people employed at a very low cost as workers (drivers) for digital food delivery platforms because of their availability to provide customers with food on demand, 24 hours a day. Unfortunately, although the numbers of jobs have increased for people providing food delivery services through apps, there is also some evidence that food delivery workers are experiencing significantly higher levels of job stress due to the high turnover (unstable employment), increased demands of work and lack of adequate work-related protections (i.e., security and/or benefits) as highlighted by various researchers (Wood et al., 2019; Anwar & Graham, 2021). Delivery drivers for app-based platforms are managed by a computer-based model of operation (supervised by a computer, as opposed to human supervisors) in terms of performance evaluation, assignment of work (tasks), and compensation. Because delivery drivers are classified as independent contractors rather than traditional employees, they do not have access to various rights and protections typically afforded to employees, including paid time off (PTO), guaranteed minimum wage, social security benefits, and workers' compensation coverage (Kalleberg, 2009). These aspects of delivery jobs raise concerns about their psychological well-being as well as the viability of the platform-based labor model in the long run.Job-related stress is a recognized issue in the field of occupational health that can harm employee well-being, job satisfaction, and work performance. Theories related to occupational stress posit that if individuals are exposed over time to high levels of job demands with insufficient job resources to help cope, they may experience emotional exhaustion or anxiety, or have lower levels of work engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Income instability, variable hours of work, a lack of organizational support, and the constant monitoring of performance lead to heightened risk for gig and platform workers (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016; Apouey et al., 2020).Interest in gig economy workers has markedly risen over the last several years, resulting in growing investigations into employment precarity, working conditions, and psychosocial hazards related to the labor provided through online platforms. The existing research on the job stressors associated with the food delivery workers that perform their work through applications includes: Workload intensity, rigid delivery timelines, the customer rating system, algorithmic monitoring, and workplace safety (Wood et al., 2019; Mohlmann & Zalmanson, 2017). Nevertheless, the existing literature remains fragmented across multiple disciplines and geographic areas, and therefore, it is difficult to make broad conclusions about the causes of job stress for gig workers.The development of a research project within the context of India is essential as the growth of app-based food delivery platforms has been significant, and the majority of workers in this space are positioned in the informal sector. India is one of the largest and most rapidly growing markets for food delivery services and, as a result, employs millions of food delivery workers. Yet, regulatory oversight of platform work remains limited, and access to social protection mechanisms is

minimal. These conditions may intensify job stress among Indian delivery executives compared to workers in more regulated labor markets (Anwar & Graham, 2021).Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodologies provide an organized method to gather and analyze relevant published data to summarize previous findings, evaluate generalized themes in the literature, and point out missing aspects of prior studies. The systematic framework for conducting SLRs according to the "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)" 2020 will improve the validity and reliability of performing an SLR because it allows for the clear documentation of the process of conducting an SLR, including the study identification, study screening, study eligibility, study inclusion, etc. As a result of this methodological improvement and addition to previous systematic reviews of gig work in general, up to date, there have not been any PRISMA-based SLRs that have researched the relationship between work-related issues and job stress within the context of gig work among food delivery app workers in India. Consequently, this study aims to fill this research gap by utilizing the PRISMA protocol to conduct a systematic literature review on work-related issues associated with job stress among food delivery app workers. Specifically, this systematic literature review intends to identify and summarize (a) the major work-related stresses found in prior studies, (b) how work structures in the gig economy affect job stress, and (c) suggestions for future research opportunities, platform practices, and public policy developments in India.

2.   Theoretical Background

Addressing job stress for food delivery workers through an app requires advanced theory that can account for the relationship between work factors and psychological health. Previous studies stress that stress occurs when job demands exceed the ability of a person to deal with them. This is particularly the case in environments where there is sometimes no control over how much work is performed, a degree of uncertainty about how much will be paid, and insufficient resources to complete the tasks assigned. Platform work has made it necessary to change traditional definitions of organizational boundaries and apply more current research into work stress, such as the Job Demands-Job Resources (JD-R) model and precarious employment.

2.1   Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Model:

The JD-R model is one of the most frequently used in the literature regarding workplace stress in a variety of workplace settings. It proposes that jobs can be classified according to the two broad categories of 'job demand' versus 'job resource'. Job demands consist of "physical, psychological, social, and/or organizational aspects" of the job that require sustained exertion and may create psychological and physiological costs (e.g., stress and fatigue). Job resources help employees achieve their work goals, increase their ability to cope with and decrease job demands, and help improve their personal growth and well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Job demands are extremely high for workers who deliver food using apps. Delivery workers have higher workloads, face time constraints because of demanding delivery deadlines, constantly receive ratings from customers, and are evaluated based on their performance being monitored using algorithms. All of these job demands necessitate that workers continue to apply physical effort and be aware of their surroundings, without any downtime between tasks. If the demands placed on delivery workers by an app provider are not matched by sufficient resources for the delivery worker for example, stable income, support from the app provider, and control over decision-making there is an increased risk of experiencing job-related stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Empirical studies applying the JD–R model in gig and platform work contexts have demonstrated that excessive job demands are strongly associated with emotional exhaustion, anxiety, and reduced well-being. Conversely, the absence of traditional job resources, such as supervisor support and employment security, exacerbates stress outcomes among platform workers (Wood et al., 2019; Apouey et al., 2020). Thus, the JD–R model provides a robust theoretical lens for understanding how work-related factors contribute to job stress app-based food delivery executives.

2.2   Precarious Employment and Gig Work

Precarious employment is another major theoretical framework applicable to app-based food delivery work. Precarious work includes characteristics such as job insecurity, income insecurity, lack of legal protections, and limited social benefits. Many researchers have suggested that workers with poor quality, precarious employment arrangements are exposed to long-term stress due to the lack of certainty around their income, how many hours they will be able to work, and what future opportunities will exist (Kalleberg 2009). Most app-based delivery workers are classified as independent contractors as opposed to employees, making them ineligible for many formal labour protective measures. This classification leads to significant fluctuations in earnings that result from factors including demand for deliveries, bonuses from the food delivery app in use, the algorithms used to determine how many deliveries each delivery person will be assigned, and the ratings assigned to them by customers. Studies suggest that instability in income from one's work is one of the most significant psychosocial stressors and that workers who earn their entire livelihood through this platform work arrangement are likely to be at a particularly high risk of experiencing significant negative mental health outcomes (Anwar and Graham 2021). In addition, precarious employment often limits workers' ability to voice concerns regarding unsafe working conditions or unfair practices. For delivery executives, exposure to traffic hazards, adverse weather conditions, and unsafe urban environments further compounds stress levels. Studies suggest that the combination of physical risk and economic insecurity significantly contributes to psychological strain among gig workers (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016).

2.3   Algorithmic Management and Work Stress

One of the fundamental characteristics for app-based food delivery companies is algorithmic management. Algorithms are used by these platforms to carry out a variety of things, such as assigning tasks, tracking worker performance, determining worker incentives, and applying penalties. While algorithmic management can improve the efficiency and scalability of a business, it is also a considerable source of work-related stress for the worker. In many cases, food delivery workers have very little transparency into how the algorithms work, leading to feelings of being unfairly treated, losing their ability to determine their own pace of work or the honor of completing a task, and being subject to constant monitoring of their work by the companies (Möhlmann & Zalmanson, 2017). Theoretical evidence suggests that work stress develops as a result of reducing the control that workers have over their work environment. Stress responses are more likely to occur when a worker cannot make decisions concerning the pacing of work, determining the allocation of work, or determining how much income they will earn. In the case of food delivery executives, the use of time limits and the use of rating systems in addition to the use of algorithms will yield higher levels of anxiety and emotional distress (Wood et al., 2019).

2.4   Conceptualization of Work-Related Factors and Job Stress

The integration of various types of stressors can be illustrated within a theoretical framework, as made evident using the JD-R model, precarious employment theory, and the literature regarding algorithmic management in the lives of food delivery executives who work on app-based platforms. Job demands include high workload and time constraints, while economic and contextual stressors result from the uncertainty surrounding earnings, as well as poor working conditions. Job-related stress can also increase due to the lack of stabilizing factors in the workplace. Theoretical insights will play a key role in providing evidence for the effect of app-based food delivery executives during the literature review phase. The literature has consistently identified four sources of work-related stress for food delivery executives who are engaged in delivering for an app-based delivery service; these include: high workload / high rate of delivery over a short period of time, job insecurity (low income), and poor working conditions (Apouey et al, 2020; Anwar; Graham, 2021). In view of this, these areas will provide the basis to develop a conceptual framework from theory that links the different types of work-related stressors and is associated with job-related stress of app-based food delivery executives.

3.   Research Methodology

The present study uses a PRISMA 2020-guided "systematic literature review (SLR)" of existing studies about the effect of work-related factors on job stress for app-based food delivery executives. Systematic review methodology was adopted to provide transparency, reproducibility, and methodological rigour in identifying and analysing relevant published research literature. The full literature search was conducted from five major academic databases, namely "Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, and Taylor and Francis". The five databases were selected for their extensive coverage of high-quality, peer-reviewed research in the fields of management, sociology, labour studies, and occupational health. The search strategy included a mixture of keywords: gig work, platform work, app-based food delivery, job stress, work stress, algorithmic management, and India, in addition to using Boolean operators (and/or) to narrow the search results.
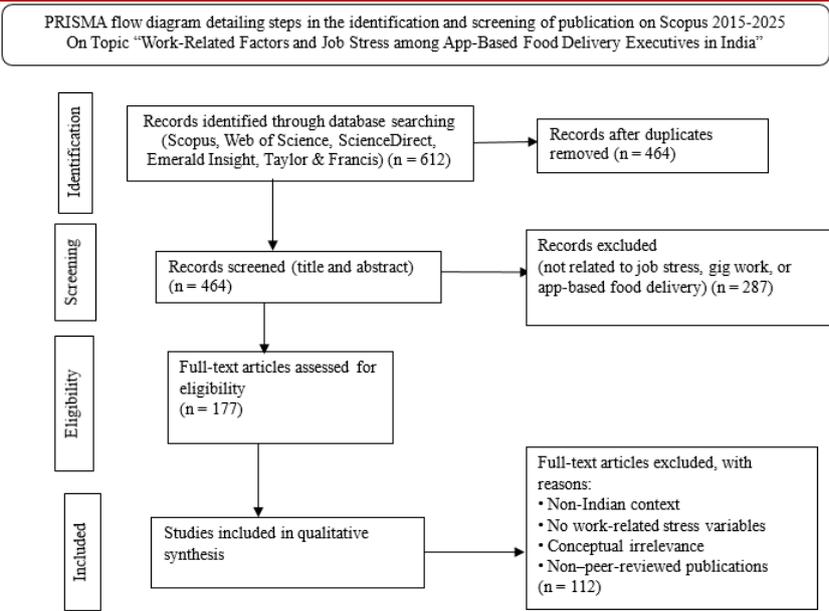
Figure 1: Methods for Data Collection Using PRISMA Guidance
Source: Designed by Author

Figure 1 displays the PRISMA flow diagram process that highlights the systematic steps in tracing, screening, and identifying relevant studies that examine the work-related factors and job stress of app-based food delivery drivers in India. The results of the initial search of the five databases "Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, Emerald Insight, and Taylor & Francis" yielded 612 published records that were published between 2015-2025. The identification phase revealed 148 duplicate articles, leaving 464 unique articles for further screening.

The screening phase consisted of reviewing the titles and abstracts to assess if they met the aim of the study. Therefore, 287 articles were removed from consideration, as they did not focus on job stress in the gig work or app-based food delivery context. The remaining 177 articles were retrieved for full-text evaluation. 112 studies were excluded at the eligibility stage because they did not meet criteria for inclusion, including the authorship location outside of India, there were no work stress variables in the study, the study was conceptually unrelated to the aim of the study, or the article was not a peer-reviewed item. The 65 studies ultimately selected for qualitative synthesis after review, these studies served as the foundation for a systematic examination of workload, speed of completion, uncertainty in income, and conditions of the working environment as significant factors in app-based food delivery executive job stress. The systematic selection process allowed for methodological transparency and provided reliable and robust results according to PRISMA 2020 guidelines.

3.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

To ensure relevance and quality, explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied during the screening process.

Table no. 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Peer-reviewed journal articles	Conference papers, editorials, book chapters, and dissertations
Studies published in English	Studies unrelated to work stress or occupational well-being
Research focusing on gig workers, platform workers, or app-based food delivery executives	Articles focusing exclusively on customers or platform technology without a worker perspective
Studies examining job stress, work stress, or related psychosocial outcomes	Non-English publications
Articles published between 2015 and 2025	Non-English publications

3.2 Inclusion Dates:
All research for the systematic review consisted of peer-reviewed journals published from 2015 to 2025. This date range was chosen to encompass recent research that reflects the growth of food application-based delivery systems and the nature of gig economy work as it grows and changes rapidly.

3.3 Inclusion Document Type :
To ensure that the synthesis contains reliable, solid, and rigorous academic evidence, only peer-reviewed articles in all formats were included in this systematic review. All other forms of published research used in systematic reviews were excluded, including conference proceedings, book chapters, editorials, reports, and dissertations.

3.4 Inclusion Language Type:
Including the term "language type" is most frequently used to refer to the process of selecting papers, articles, or other sources for research to guarantee variety and thoroughness in language representation. Research papers, articles, and other publications that are only published in English are chosen for the study.

4.   Results

This report highlights and discusses the results of a systematic literature review according to PRISMA. After undergoing the PRISMA 2020 selection process, 65 peer-reviewed studies were ultimately included in the synthesis. While studies reviewed cover many locations around the world, a large number of studies on some aspect of stress experience relied on data from India. Studies published on app-based food delivery employees in India have shown that they operate primarily in informal markets, which have minimal regulations and little or no provisions for employee social protection. Frequent exposure to heavy traffic, poor road conditions, and inclement weather greatly increases both physical and mental demands put on Indian delivery personnel. The lack of guaranteed minimum wage and/or social security programs exacerbates concern over income, particularly for employees who rely primarily on platform work. These situational variables demonstrate that the underlying causes of stressful working conditions experienced by Indian delivery personnel are driven by both the design of the platforms as well as larger socio-economic and infrastructure issues.

4.1 Characteristics of the Included Studies

The studies included were published between 2015 and 2025. They represent various geographical contexts, with the majority of research emanating from developing countries, most notably India. Most studies were qualitative, survey, and/or mixed methodology in approach, which reflects the exploratory and evolving nature of research on platform-based employment.

Table 2. Characteristics of Included Studies

Author(s)	Year	Country/Region	Study Context	Methodology	Key Focus
Wood et al.	2019	UK/Europe	Platform workers	Qualitative	Workload, algorithmic control
Apouey et al.	2020	France	Gig workers	Survey	Income instability, stress
Möhlmann & Zalmanson	2017	Global	Platform work	Conceptual	Algorithmic management
Rani & Furrer	2021	India	Platform workers	Qualitative	Working conditions
Anwar & Graham	2021	India	Delivery executives	Mixed methods	Job insecurity, stress

Job stress in platform work has been studied in a variety of different methodological and contextual settings, as shown in the table below. Studies were conducted in both developed and developing countries, with a growing focus on the Indian context. Qualitative/mixed-method studies focused on lived experiences related to workload, working conditions, and job insecurity; however, survey-based studies mostly examined how income instability contributes to stress in platform work. Through all studies, there are three common factors contributing to job stress in platform work (i.e., workload, algorithmic control, and income uncertainty), suggesting that structural/organizational factors largely drive stress experienced in this form of employment.

4.2   Identification of Core Work-Related Stressors

The thematic analysis revealed four core work-related factors that repeatedly emerged across the reviewed literature. These factors represent structurally embedded characteristics of app-based food delivery work rather than individual-level issues.

Table 3. Thematic Synthesis of Work-Related Factors and Job Stress

Theme	Description	Supporting Studies
Workload	Long working hours, high delivery volume, and incentive-driven overwork	Wood et al. (2019); Anwar & Graham (2021)
Time Pressure	Strict delivery deadlines, rating-based monitoring	Möhlmann & Zalmanson (2017); Rosenblat & Stark (2016)
Income Uncertainty	Variable earnings, lack of minimum pay guarantees	Kalleberg (2009); Apouey et al. (2020)
Work Environment Conditions	Traffic risks, weather exposure, lack of safety support	Rani & Furrer (2021); Apouey et al. (2020)

4.3   Workload and Job Stress

In all of the studies examined, there was consistent evidence that workload was the most significant cause of stress at work. Due to incentive pay systems, which are based on delivery volume, delivery drivers typically work long hours to meet their income demands. Various studies found that the high level of pressure involved in maximizing delivery volume contributes to physical and emotional fatigue and exhaustion, especially in urban delivery areas (Wood et al. 2019). The fact that there are no regulated working hours further exacerbates the stress associated with workload for app-based delivery workers (Anwar & Graham, 2021).

4.4   Time Pressure and Algorithmic Control

The connection between high levels of stress and time pressure, which is largely caused by algorithmic management systems, was established. Literature indicates that deadlines are automatically generated and constantly monitored, allowing limited discretion for the worker. If the deadlines are not met, the worker's rating and future availability for work will be negatively impacted. Therefore, the resulting psychological strain is ongoing (Möhlmann & Zalmanson, 2017). In addition, studies showed that time pressure encourages behaviours that are riskier, so the amount of stress will increase (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016).

4.5   Income Uncertainty and Financial Stress

Income uncertainty represents a greatly significant risk factor that can affect the psychological health of many individuals, especially those who use food delivery platforms as a primary source of income. Earnings, based on demand patterns as well as the customer rating system, can change frequently, which makes long-term income planning difficult for these individuals. The research reviewed demonstrates that chronic financial stress resulting from unpredictable incomes creates issues related to the mental well-being of those individuals (Kalleberg, 2009; Apouey et al., 2020).

4.6   Work Environment Conditions

Job stress for app-based food delivery executives was exacerbated by adverse environmental conditions at work. Studies showing frequent exposure to heavy traffic, bad weather, unsafe roads, and a lack of personal protective equipment have identified many contributors to job stress. Studies conducted in India indicated that stress levels can be further exacerbated by poor infrastructure and a lack of occupational safety measures (Rani & Furrer, 2021; Anwar & Graham, 2021).

4.7   Mapping of Stress Factors to Job Stress Outcomes

To synthesize outcomes reported across studies, stress factors were mapped to commonly identified job stress consequences.

Table 4. Work-Related Stress Factors and Reported Job Stress Outcomes

Stress Factor	Reported Outcomes
High workload	Fatigue, emotional exhaustion
Time pressure	Anxiety, reduced job control
Income uncertainty	Financial stress, insecurity
Poor work environment	Psychological strain, stress

5.   Discussion

In accordance with the PRISMA guidelines, this systematic literature review provides an overview of the various factors related to work that can contribute to the level of stress experienced by app-based food delivery drivers. The research findings indicate that job-related stress experienced in delivery jobs mediated by a platform has a fundamentally structural origin and is not an individual problem. The four main types of job-related stress that were documented throughout the studies were workload intensity, algorithm-induced pressure to deliver on time according to specified delivery windows, income uncertainty, and unsafe work conditions. According to the Job Demands–Resources framework, there is an imbalance between the often increase demands placed on a worker and the potential lack of resources available to workers in meeting these increasing demands (Bakker and Demerouti,2007). The workload assigned based on incentives and long hours increases levels of fatigue and emotional exhaustion, particularly in urban delivery environments (Wood et al., 2019). Algorithmic management also increases stress by limiting worker autonomy due to continuous monitoring and vague performance assessment systems, which exacerbate individuals' feelings of lack of control and undue negativity (Möhlmann & Zalmanson, 2017; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016). Income uncertainty is a major cause of stress and, as such, fits with what are known as the 'precarious work' theorists. In places where, like the United States, we see high levels of income volatility and little

to no job stability for many low-wage working-class people who depend on platform income (e.g., Uber and DoorDash), there is an extended period of anxiety due to financial instability (Kalleberg, 2009; Apouey et al., 2020). Moreover, the regulatory environment in India, coupled with the limited availability of social welfare programs serve as an additional stressor for many gig workers (Anwar & Graham, 2021).The results of the review further the academic literature on gig work by demonstrating that the job stress that food delivery executives experience can be attributed to the broader systemic role of algorithmic governance and employment insecurity, indicating a need for more structural and policy-oriented interventions.

6.   Conclusion

The evidence compiled through this PRISMA-based Systematic Literature Review provides insights into how work-related factors contribute to job stress amongst app-based food delivery drivers. The review suggests that job stress stemming from platform-mediated delivery jobs is primarily due to structural conditions created by algorithmic management and precarious employment arrangements, rather than being an individual-level issue. The dominant sources of stress identified through analysis of the overall literature are high workloads, tight time constraints, uncertain earnings, and unsafe working conditions. As a result, this study integrates the Job Demands–Resources Framework and Precarious Employment framework to provide a basis for a better understanding of work-related stress within the gig economy as a result of high demand for work with very little stabilising resources for continued employment. The results of these findings are especially significant when looking at both weak regulatory constraints and inadequate social protection systems within India; these factors further exacerbate the stress-related experiences of delivery workers. By providing a structured synthesis of stress factors affecting app-based food delivery workers in terms of the gig economy and the literature on occupational health, this paper contributes to both bodies of knowledge. In order to address stress in the gig economy, platforms must implement reforms to improve algorithmic transparency, create income security measures, and strengthen workplace safety; while policy interventions need to provide basic labor protections to gig workers.

7.   Implications

7.1   Theoretical Implications

This systematic review has adopted the Job Demands-Resources model to show that intensified job demands are not balanced out by stabilising job resources in food delivery work using platforms; likewise, this integration of the precarious employment theory highlights that income uncertainty is a central structural stressor in gig work. Future empirical testing will be enabled by the conceptual framework to be built from this review in contexts of work carried out in the platform-mediated labour market.

7.2   Practical Implications

Food delivery apps must prioritize managing excessive workloads and unrealistic delivery timelines as their top priority. Reducing job stress for food delivery drivers is possible not only with reasonable paychecks but also through determining how much an employee's income will be calculated and introducing minimum wage legislation. Additionally, job stress can also be reduced by improving safety provisions that are already present on the job site. These worker-centred interventions can lead to better service quality and sustainability on behalf of the delivery platform operator.

8.   Future Research Directions

Future research related to app-based food delivery workers has to go beyond descriptive and qualitative approaches and focus on collecting longitudinal, empirical, and comparative data. First, future studies should address the relationship between algorithmic management, job requirements, job resources, and worker psychological well-being by using quantitative methods, such as structural equation modeling (SEM), or multilevel modeling to test these relationships. Second, future studies should utilize a comparative, cross-national approach to examine how gig worker regulatory frameworks and labor protections differ between developing and developed economies, and how this influences the experience of stress for gig workers. The delivery executive's use of coping mechanisms, finding support systems and using personal resilience as tools for managing their day-to-day stressors needs further research. Finally, the impact of new pandemic technology on delivery platform work policies and sustainable gig work models need to be examined in future research in order to provide evidence-based policy recommendations to improve the protection of worker's mental health and wellness.

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