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EFFECTS OF GIG ECONOMY ON EMPLOYMENT

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ABSTRACT

The gig economy, which is predicted to be among the business models of the future and which is the subject of economic and political debate in the media, is quite new in the literature. The gig economy, which is an independent way of working, is growing rapidly in the changing business world. It is thought that the gig economy, which extends from digital-based platforms to location-based platforms, from local markets to international markets, will directly affect employment with its adoption by employers and employees. In this study, the effects of the gig economy on employment are discussed by considering both positive and negative aspects. In order for countries to hold power economically, politically and technologically, employers and employees in the gig economy need to make decisions that will benefit the economy and employment and find remedies for the negative aspects of the model. While the gig economy continues to grow rapidly, it is understood that different problems will increase from different perspectives such as employment, human resources and legal issues and the discussions will continue for a long time. The aim of the study is to investigate the effects of the gig economy on employment and to reveal how it will affect employment as a new business model and to contribute to the literature. In addition, it is aimed to guide governments, employers and employees by revealing what problems the gig economy may cause and what benefits it can provide in the future, with a structured conceptual-theoretical review.

KEYWORDS: Gig Economy, Employment, Labor Market, Gig Workers.

1. INTRODUCTION

The gig economy emerged as an alternative service delivery to traditional business models, workforce management practices and regulations, and was quickly accepted by employers and employees. The practice that exists in the field of human resources as contingent work, sharing economy, agile talent, non-traditional business relations or alternative employment forms is growing rapidly in the business world as the 'gig economy' (Horney, 2016: 20). The gig economy, which is still little understood as a concept, can be defined as a model that includes labor exchange between individuals or companies in the short run and in return for pay per task (Lepanjuuri, Wishart and Cornick, 2019:9). One of the most researched businesses of this new economic model, which includes ground-based and digital-based businesses, is the Uber service. People who wanted to be Uber drivers were employed by private



rental taxi companies, so that independent work was carried out within the framework of a short-term and flexible agreement between the employer and the employee (Broughton et al., 2018: 22). In addition, location-based jobs in the gig economy include food delivery, courier, shipping, house cleaning, manual labor, etc. While it covers jobs such as digital platforms, Amazon, Mechanical Turk (MTurk), Fiverr, Freelancer.com and Upwork, it includes jobs where there is the opportunity to work remotely from data entry to software programming (Wood et al., 2019: 57).

The rapid rise of gig economy platforms, regulatory and legal loopholes, providing unilateral flexibility to employees, etc. It has caused an intense debate on economic and public policy decisions for various reasons (Schwellnus et al., 2019: 5). The gig economy, which is in demand as an important model in increasing productivity and efficiency, has taken its place in the business world, media and academia as an issue that country governments cannot ignore. However, it can be stated that these discussions will continue for a long time with the growth of the gig economy. Because this model reveals different problems for employers and employees from different aspects such as employment, human resources and legal aspects.

In terms of the effects of the gig economy on employment, it is noteworthy that the platforms in the gig economy facilitate 'fake contract' by enabling businesses to hide employment as independent contracts and avoid employee rights such as retirement (Bornstein, 2015). Without analyzing the positive aspects of the model by companies and employees, the negative aspects of the model are discussed and each discussion causes new problems, causing governments and public institutions to be prejudiced against the model expressed as 'gig'. Governments and public institutions, which have to make and implement decisions about the employment of a country, should not ignore the gig economy, which is directly related to employment. In this direction, there is a need for academics, business analysts and experts to conduct more research and to examine the positive and negative aspects of the gig economy in depth. While the rapid rise of the gig economy continues and it is predicted that it will be one of the important business models of the future, decisions that will benefit the economy and employment of the country should be taken on all platforms in the gig economy.

In this study, the effects of the gig economy on employment are revealed and how it will affect employment (positive and negative) as a new business model is discussed. In addition, it is aimed to contribute to the literature by considering the gig economy, which is an emerging concept in the literature, in terms of employment, and to guide governments, employers and employees by revealing with a structured conceptual-theoretical review what problems the gig economy may cause and what benefits it can provide in the future.

2. GIG ECONOMY

It is known that the meaning of 'gig' in the term gig economy, which has no precise definition, comes from the live performance or participation of a musician or group, in other words, a short-term performance show and the fee they receive for this show (Woodcock and Graham, 2020: 9). Today, the gig economy, which includes many different sectors, has developed differently from traditional working models and has become increasingly popular in recent years. Companies such as Uber, Lyft, TaskRabbit or Upwork are the best examples of this model in the world, which eliminates working five days a week, from nine in the morning to five in the evening, as in traditional working models, and allows the employee to be paid only for the time they work (Kess et al., 2018, p. 68).

The gig economy, which is expressed as an 'independent working model', brings together companies that demand employees for a certain wage and people who want to work independently. Different sectors are involved in the gig economy, which is a working model. In a study by Mastercard and Kaiser Associates (2019), gig economy sectors are explained as in table 1.

Table 1: Gig Economy Sectors

Sector	Definition	Included Sub-sectors	Example Platforms
Asset Based Services	Digital platforms that facilitate short-term P2P leases of an owner's (or "freelance") property to another person	House sharing, car sharing, boat sharing, parking lot sharing, P2P equipment sharing	HomeAway / airbnb / TURO
Transportation Based Services	Digital platforms that require free drives to complete the desired migration service	Ride-sharing, car-sharing, restaurant delivery and goods delivery	BlaBlaCar / Uber / Doordash
Professional Services	Digital platforms connecting freelancers directly to businesses to complete the project	Business studies, microwave, design, technology/coding, writing/translation, administrative	Upwork / CATALANT
Handmade Goods, Home and Other Services	Digital platforms for freelancers to sell homemade crafts or provide on-demand services for household tasks	Home-services babysitting, handmade crafts, tutoring, pet services, and misc. (DJ, events, etc.)	Care.com / Airtasker / Etsy

Source: Mastercard Gig Economy Industry Outlook and Needs Assessment, by Mastercard and Kaiser Associates May 2019.

In addition to the diversity of the sector, different platforms are emerging in the sectors day by day and these platforms are demanded by companies and individuals. In general, gig economy platforms; (1) Crowded platforms, (2) Shipping platforms, (3) Delivery / home duty platforms, (4) Digital free platforms (Kalleberg and Dunn, 2016: 11). Crowded platforms traditionally consist of outsourcing by one employee, indefinitely and often in the form of an open call to a large number of people. Companies, in theory, match only one customer (demand) with a worker who will perform the task (supply). In fact, such outsourcing was not possible before the development of new technologies. However, through digital freelance platforms, these companies have started to create and use an online platform (web, applications, etc.) where they can find employees directly (Todoli, 2017: 194). Thus, digital platforms have been effective in the rapid growth of the gig economy. Although there is a demand for shipping, delivery / home business platforms, digital platforms have become more accepted and have incorporated many industries. Table 2 lists some digital platform companies that can be an example of the gig economy. Although the majority of these companies are in the United States, there are examples in other countries, including our country. These companies are located in different sectors, mostly in the service sector. Examples of gig economy sectors include accommodation, babysitting, delivery, food, education services, knowledge-based freelance jobs, commercial, technical, creative services, home services, healthcare, legal, retail, transportation and parking services.

Table 2: Examples of Gig Economy Digital Platforms

Şirket Adı	Tanımı	Menşei
Airbnb	Accommodation: Online house rental service	United States
Turo	Transportation: Online car sharing service	United States
OpenAirPlane	Commercial and technical service: Pilot service	United States
Talkspace	Health care: Online therapist service	United States
Helping	Household services: Cleaning service	England
AmazonFlex	Delivery: Online delivery service	United States

Expert360	Commercial and technical services: Independent business consultant service	Australia
Tolgal	Creativity service: Media and entertainment service	United States
Delivery Hero	Food: Online food delivery	Germany
Postmates	Food: Distribution of meals prepared in the restaurant	United States
Care.com	Care service: Babysitting service	United States
Fiverr	Knowledge-based freelance jobs: Design, software development, writing, video editing, music production, etc.	Israel
DolapKolektifi	Clothing: Used clothing service	Turkey
Udemy	Education: Online learning service	Turkey

Source: Basumallick, 2020.

With the gig economy, individuals' skills are gaining traction in unskilled labor markets and professional companies. It is claimed that 85% of the employment increase between 2005 and 2013 is due to the gig economy (Green et al., 2018: 104). There are 1.1 billion gig workers worldwide (Zgola, 2021) in the sector, where there is a 33% growth in 2020. The independent working style of the gig economy attracts individuals who do not want to work for hours and do not want to be tied to a single profession in their career. They are attracted to the fact that they agree to pay wages for the time they work, that individuals are responsible for their own career, in other words, that employers are not responsible for this situation (Sen and Tüm, 2021: 109). In addition, it enables individuals who want to earn additional income to work happily for certain periods in the sector they have determined (Zgola, 2021).

The rapid growth in the gig economy is at a level that country governments cannot ignore. Conditions such as the way of working in the gig economy, the rights gained, the quality of the work; It is claimed that it can cause problems in the economic, political and legal arrangements of countries. The



acceptance of the new model by both employers and employees reveals the seriousness of the situation. The issues that will be discussed for a long time by evaluating the gig economy as positive and negative are explained under two headings below. The positive aspects of the gig economy are discussed under the titles of the benefits of the gig economy, and the negative aspects of the gig economy are discussed under the topics discussed.

2.1. Benefits of the Gig Economy

In order to understand the benefits of the gig economy, it is important to understand the factors that affect the transition from traditional business models to today's business models, in other words, the factors that change traditional business models. These factors (Volkin, 2020):

Internet: Now a person can apply and find a job without ever being near the company. A gig worker can train anywhere in the world to specialize in almost any business area they choose. The Internet has not only given us the power to find opportunities, it has also enhanced opportunities for education.
Brain Science: It is now known that people do not have to work for eight hours. Studies have proven that working with short breaks makes people more productive and efficient.

Competition: Companies feel the pressure of ever-increasing competition. In particular, it makes us think that companies have to spend every penny carefully in order to maximize their profits. Accordingly, it is easier and cheaper for a company to hire a freelancer to work remotely instead of hiring an employee and the additional costs.

With the development of technology, the media and business world see the gig economy as a win-win for both employers and employees. With the flexible working model, employees can control their own schedules and work remotely, while employers get rid of overhead and employee expenses (Thompson, 2018: 5). According to the OECD report, the important reasons for individuals to be gig workers are; to earn additional income and to have job flexibility. According to McKinsey studies, self-employed people are divided into four groups in terms of the reasons why individuals prefer the gig economy. These are (Charlton, 2021);

- Freelancers who choose to work independently and derive their primary income from it.
- Temporary earners who selectively use self-employment for additional income.
- Primary livelihood from independent work; however, they are individuals who prefer traditional jobs.
- Individuals who are financially distressed and who do additional independent work out of necessity.



Deloitte's most recent millennial research found that 64% of full-time workers want to do "side jobs" to earn extra money. The flexible working style of the gig economy offers the opportunity to earn additional income, and this is one of the most important reasons for the industry's worldwide acceptance. The gig economy gives workers formal flexibility to choose where to work, when to work, and what work to do. In addition, in the study by Kost, Fieseler, and Wong (2017), they revealed that individuals can develop their careers through non-organizational networks or knowledge, providing unlimited career opportunities. In addition, with the replacement of full-time jobs with short-term jobs, the lifetime career period has been left behind and temporary jobs and processes have gained importance.

2.1. Discussed Topics of the Gig Economy

Independent and flexible working, industry to develop skills and the diversity of jobs available are seen as some of the benefits of the gig economy. Despite this, there are always risks and challenges that those who choose to be self-employed may face (Gigonomy, 2020). Not always being able to find a job, not receiving the wage immediately, pension insurance, health insurance, etc. problems are encountered. In addition to these problems, with the digitalization of jobs, there are situations where competition is high in the digital environment, keeping up with the rapidly changing digital environment, the necessity of learning new tools and techniques, the lack of socialization environment, and the motivation source of the person is mostly himself (Uifalean, 2019).

With the inclusion of digitalization in almost all sectors, the economic and political concerns of the gig economy, whose growth rate is increasing, are being discussed more and more day by day. Digitization significantly changes employment relations and causes significant legal uncertainty about which rules apply in cyberspace. The most important issue arising from the gig economy and discussed today is the lack of adherence to the law, in other words, the company is not liable for losses. In traditional markets, employees have no responsibility in this regard, because they act as their employer's agent, carrying out instructions. But in the gig economy, increased freedom in the way work is done means greater responsibilities. This liability includes the damage to the customers as well as the damage to the reputation of the online platform (Todoli, 2017: 201-202).

Although the gig economy provides tangible benefits such as flexibility and the opportunity to earn additional income with short-term work, it is criticized in terms of employment quality in terms of wages and conditions (Montgomery and Baglioni, 2020: 1012). Geographical distribution in job performance, interruptions in service delivery and high employee turnover make it difficult for employees to exercise their rights. Especially in digital gig platforms, the fact that service providers are not subject to minimum working hours does not comply with the legal regulations in the labor markets and the extremely flexible working feature leads to an increase in job insecurity (Fabrellas,



2019).

It is predicted that the spread of the gig economy day by day may cause organizational and cultural problems. There may be a cultural problem in adapting to the organizational culture of gig workers who want to establish a long-term relationship. It is important that the organizational culture also appeals to gig workers and that these employees are included in group activities. This situation should not be ignored in terms of businesses, in order to evaluate the performance of employees, to make compensation at the individual level and to determine strategies for retaining successful people (Deloitte, 2021).

In the gig economy, unlike gig workers, there are significant strategic challenges for individuals or institutions that will receive services from gig markets. There may be difficulties such as buyers not choosing the right gig worker, gig workers demanding high fees and additional costs to the buyer, widespread risks of fraud in the market, commission fees, fake reviews, too many options to choose from, lack of information about past performance, communication breakdown (Kumari). , 2021). In the digital gig economy, however, there is a risk of selecting the right gig worker, as there are many suppliers in their markets around the world, suppliers are globally distributed and independent heterogeneous intermediaries. In addition, these markets are often characterized by a lack of formal procedures or service level agreements. There is a high risk of opportunism, as the digital nature of the platform limits personal contact and prevents buyers from verifying suppliers' processes and quality of work in progress (Kathuria, Saldanha, Khuntia, 2021: 6583).

3. EMPLOYMENT EFFECTS OF THE GIG ECONOMY

Most of the workers who entered the employment system in the 20th century were in the modern form of contract labor, typical of wage or salary work. On the basis of existing rules in labor laws, works were carried out according to contracts and supply and demand in the labor market (Bögenhold, Klinglmair and Kandutsch, 2017: 24). However, with the transition to the information society in the 21st century and the impact of globalization in the field of employment, flexible working forms in the job markets; periodical and temporary working forms (Doğan, 2005: 94) began to be seen intensively. New business models that emerged with the advancement of technology have eliminated the need for permanent employment, in addition, non-standard employment forms have come to the fore and practices for the flexibility of labor markets have become widespread (Uyanık, 2008: 215).

While one-time jobs in business are not new, the increasing use of technology has contributed to the rapid spread of such jobs. The gig economy has led to the growth of certain forms of non-standard employment through the creation of digitally mediated labor markets or labor platforms (Johnston and Land-Kazlauskas, 2018: 3). Therefore, the gig economy as an independent and flexible working model



has also gained importance.

The benefits of the gig economy for employees and employers, as well as legally debated issues, will shape the future direction of the industry. However, considering the sectors, employers and individuals included in the gig economy business model today, it can be stated that there are statistically significant increases. Research shows that the new business model is accepted all over the world, especially in the United States. According to the January 2021 report of the Statista Research Department, it is stated that gig studies will increase by 53% in 2020 and generate 455 billion dollars in 2023 (Statista, 2021). Gallup (2018) revealed that approximately 36% of US workers are involved in the gig economy and this rate is increasing day by day (Mcfeely and Pendell, 2021). According to a survey commissioned by Upwork and Freelancers Union and published in Forbes, it has been suggested that the gig workforce will exceed the full-time workforce rate by 2027 (Deloitte, 2021).

While platforms such as Uber, BlablaCar and Upwork are accepted as new employment areas, they have been subject to public reaction and court cases for years. The European Union on the subject has argued that action is necessary due to conflicting results regarding the employment status of platform workers (Haeck, 2021). First of all, it is useful to examine some specific questions posed by Healy, Nicholson, and Pekarek (2017) in order to understand the effects of the gig economy on employment. These questions are listed as follows (Healy, Nicholson, & Pekarek, 2017: 242-243);

- How do Gig workers negotiate their identities at work and outside of work? How important are these identities in the fight for respect, representation and fair conditions in and around platform companies?
- What is the scope for Gig workers to represent themselves before employers and government, both individually and collectively?
- How can unions be reorganized to represent gig workers?

When the academic studies on the effects of the gig economy on employment are examined, the economic and social effects from platform design and user response to the impact on labor movements have been felt very strongly (Burtch, Carnahan, & Greenwood, 2018: 5). Görmüş (2021) addressed the challenges of the gig economy arising from employment status as (1) difficulties in maintaining employment (2) difficulties in terms of freedom of association (3) difficulties in terms of collective bargaining and the obstacles and difficulties encountered are to provide decent working conditions for gig-based workers and It has been revealed that some policies, including legal regulations and interventions, are needed in order to minimize any negative effects arising from employment status. He stated that accepting the employment status of Gig workers as “employee” would enable them to benefit from the employment protections of the labor law.



With the gig economy, it is stated that there are significant decreases in full-time and regular employment; It is thought that the gig economy has fundamentally changed the nature of work, with an increase in people classified as self-employed, more jobs, more business owners, contingent work, self-employed (but defined) work (Brinkley, 2016). In addition, it is often discussed that the criteria determining tax and employment status should be harmonized in order to reduce compliance and administrative costs. Taylor (2017) recommends that “being self-employed” should mean the same thing for both employment rights and tax purposes (Taylor, 2017: 38). In theory, alignment could lead to a much simpler system; however, businesses and individual taxpayers only need to consider and determine the categorization once for all purposes. So, in principle, there are reasons to support such reform, and when it comes to employment determination criteria, the case law governing classification is mostly the same for both systems (Adams, Freedman, Prassl, 2018: 487).

In studies on the effects of the gig economy on employment, the European Union Commission took action before the United States, and announced the draft rules that will especially reclassify digital platforms as employers and that are thought to affect approximately 4.1 million gig workers (Haeck, 2021). The Commission aims to convert between 1.7 and 4.1 million temporary workers in the sector into ordinary workers, while considering the rest as truly self-employed. The final number will depend on whether platforms meet at least two of the five criteria to be considered employers, including pay, supervision, hours of work, and appearance rules. Reclassified workers will immediately receive a range of rights, including guaranteed holidays, parental leave, minimum wage, old-age pension, security protections and collective bargaining. They will also benefit from allowing workers to claim unemployment, sickness and health benefits, and being insured against frequent work injuries for carriers who have to cycle through heavy city traffic. All these newly discovered rights will be aligned with the local legislation of the member state in which gig workers operate. For example, some countries such as Denmark, Austria and Italy do not have a legal minimum wage. In addition, with this practice, it has come to the fore that up to 250,000 couriers across the European Union may lose their jobs and income of up to 800 million Euros may be jeopardized (Liboreiro, 2021). The negative side of the gig economy's effects on employment is prioritized by the public.

CONCLUSION

It is thought that the gig economy, which extends from digital-based platforms to location-based platforms, from local markets to international markets, will directly affect employment with its adoption by employers and employees. In this study, the effects of the gig economy on employment are discussed by considering both positive and negative aspects. While the rise of the gig economy offers new opportunities for employment relations, it also brings some problems. These possibilities and problems are explained by considering the positive and negative aspects of the gig economy in the literature. The rapid acceptance of the new model by employers and employees has proven that



the gig economy is a model that cannot be ignored in the changing business world. The increase in the number of businesses that take their place among the gig platforms and people who prefer to work independently has led to the discussion of the negative aspects of the model rather than its positive aspects.

In order for countries to hold power economically, politically and technologically, employers and employees in the gig economy need to make decisions that will benefit the economy and employment and find remedies for the negative aspects of the model. Although the studies carried out in the United States of America and the European Commission on this subject gain momentum, human resources, tax applications, etc. It is understood that legal, political and economic problems will increase and discussions will continue for a long time. As a developing concept in the literature, which is predicted to be among the business models of the future, the gig economy encourages the growth of independent working day by day and is growing rapidly in the changing business world. The seamless connectivity of digital technologies across borders will continue to shape the future of the gig economy.

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