

A Study on Human Resource Strategies for Managing and Integrating Gig Workers into Traditional Workforces

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Abstract- This research paper explores the evolving role of human resource (HR) strategies in managing and integrating gig workers into traditional workforces, reflecting the growing importance of the gig economy as a dynamic labor model that has expanded significantly in recent years due to technological advancements, globalization, and shifting employee preferences, with the gig workforce offering organizations flexibility, cost-efficiency, and access to specialized talent, but also presenting unique challenges for HR professionals who must bridge the divide between permanent employees and gig workers to foster a cohesive, productive, and inclusive work environment, as the paper examines the complexities of managing a blended workforce by highlighting key HR strategies that address the unique needs of gig workers while ensuring alignment with traditional employment practices, including onboarding processes, performance management, and compensation structures; the study discusses the need for innovative approaches such as customized training programs for gig workers to ensure they can quickly adapt to organizational culture and processes, along with creating policies that ensure fair compensation and benefits packages that, while flexible, provide basic protections for gig workers who often operate without traditional job security, highlighting the role of technology in facilitating these processes through HR Information Systems (HRIS) that enable seamless integration, task management, and communication across the workforce; in addition, the paper explores how HR can foster inclusion and engagement among gig workers by implementing strategies such as collaboration platforms, team-building initiatives, and recognition programs that reduce the perceived divide between gig and permanent employees, promoting a sense of belonging and reducing turnover; the study further considers the legal and ethical implications of managing gig workers, stressing the importance of

compliance with labor laws and the ethical need to balance flexibility with fairness, offering examples of organizations that have successfully implemented gig worker integration strategies; in conclusion, the paper emphasizes that HR strategies must evolve to manage gig workers effectively by adopting flexible yet inclusive approaches that prioritize engagement, fair treatment, and alignment with long-term organizational goals, ensuring that both gig workers and permanent employees contribute positively to organizational success in a rapidly changing employment landscape.

Indexed Terms- Gig workers, Blended workforce, HR strategies, Workforce integration, Flexibility and inclusion, Performance management

I. INTRODUCTION

This research paper seeks to examine human resource (HR) strategies for managing and integrating gig workers into traditional workforces, a topic that has gained increasing relevance as the gig economy has expanded significantly due to advancements in technology, changing workforce preferences, and the growing demand for flexible labor models, and the gig economy, which includes freelance, contract, and temporary workers, now represents a substantial portion of the global workforce, as highlighted by Healy, Nicholson, and Pekarek (2017), who emphasize that the number of individuals engaged in gig work has surged in recent years, with platforms such as Uber, Upwork, and TaskRabbit driving this growth by providing businesses with the ability to access specialized talent on an as-needed basis, allowing for greater flexibility and cost savings, yet this rise of gig work also presents distinct challenges for HR professionals who must develop strategies that not only integrate gig workers into traditional organizational structures but also ensure that they are effectively managed, engaged, and motivated in

environments traditionally designed for full-time employees; the need for effective HR strategies becomes even more pressing when considering that gig workers often lack the protections and benefits that come with traditional employment, such as health insurance, retirement plans, and job security, which can lead to disparities in treatment between gig and full-time employees, as argued by Kalleberg (2009), who points out that the growing divide between precarious gig work and stable full-time employment raises important questions about equity, fairness, and employee engagement in the workplace, and HR must address these issues by creating policies that ensure gig workers receive fair compensation, clear communication, and access to necessary resources, all while balancing the inherent flexibility that attracts many workers to the gig economy in the first place; to achieve this balance, this paper explores several HR strategies, including the development of tailored onboarding processes for gig workers, as traditional onboarding programs may not suit the unique needs of gig workers who often work remotely or for short durations, necessitating more streamlined and technology-driven solutions that allow them to quickly integrate into the organizational culture and perform their tasks effectively, a point supported by Brawley and Pury (2016), who argue that technology-enabled onboarding tools can significantly improve the integration of gig workers by providing them with the information and resources they need to be productive from day one, without the time-consuming procedures often associated with full-time hires, and another crucial HR strategy for managing gig workers involves the implementation of performance management systems that are adapted to the transient and flexible nature of gig work, as traditional performance evaluation metrics may not apply to gig workers who may only be engaged for specific projects or short periods, making it necessary for HR professionals to develop more flexible performance assessment criteria that focus on project outcomes, skills, and timely delivery rather than long-term productivity metrics, with Scully-Russ and Torraco (2020) suggesting that gig workers perform best when their goals and expectations are clearly defined from the outset, and when performance feedback is immediate and tied directly to the work they have completed, which allows organizations to maintain high-quality output while ensuring that gig workers feel valued for their

contributions; additionally, this paper explores the role of technology in managing and integrating gig workers, particularly the use of HR Information Systems (HRIS) and other digital tools that facilitate communication, task assignment, and performance tracking across a blended workforce, as noted by Jesuthasan and Boudreau (2017), who argue that digital platforms are essential for coordinating the efforts of gig workers and traditional employees, particularly when managing distributed teams that include remote freelancers, and these platforms not only streamline the administrative aspects of managing gig workers but also foster collaboration and inclusion by providing gig workers with access to the same communication tools and resources as full-time employees, helping to reduce the divide between the two groups; despite these advancements, the integration of gig workers into traditional workforces is not without its challenges, as HR professionals must also navigate legal and ethical considerations, particularly regarding labor rights and employment classification, as many gig workers are classified as independent contractors, meaning they are not entitled to the same benefits and protections as full-time employees, which raises important questions about the long-term sustainability of gig work and its impact on workers' financial security and well-being, a concern highlighted by De Stefano (2016), who argues that the increasing reliance on gig workers may exacerbate inequality in the labor market unless appropriate safeguards are put in place to protect these workers' rights; to address this, HR professionals must develop strategies that balance the flexibility and autonomy that gig workers value with the need for fair treatment and support, such as offering gig workers access to training and development opportunities that allow them to build their skills and advance their careers, even if they are not directly employed by the organization, as suggested by Cappelli and Keller (2013), who emphasize the importance of continuous learning for gig workers in a rapidly changing job market; in conclusion, as the gig economy continues to grow, HR strategies for managing and integrating gig workers into traditional workforces must evolve to address the unique challenges posed by this new labor model, requiring innovative approaches to onboarding, performance management, technology integration, and worker protections, all while ensuring that gig workers are treated equitably and given the

resources they need to succeed, thus positioning organizations to benefit from the flexibility and talent that gig workers offer while maintaining a cohesive and productive workforce.

II. STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The research problem addressed in this conceptual and theoretical study is the increasing need for organizations to develop and implement effective human resource (HR) strategies for managing and integrating gig workers into traditional workforces, as the rapid expansion of the gig economy, driven by technological advancements and changing workforce preferences, has created a dual labor market in which gig workers and permanent employees coexist, but often under very different conditions, with gig workers typically lacking the job security, benefits, and protections afforded to full-time employees, thereby posing significant challenges for HR professionals who must navigate the complexities of blending these two types of workers into a cohesive, productive, and engaged workforce (Cappelli & Tavis, 2018); gig workers, who are typically classified as independent contractors, often operate outside the traditional frameworks of employment, leading to disparities in compensation, benefits, and access to organizational resources, which can create tension between gig workers and full-time staff, as suggested by Donnelly (2018), who points out that the lack of integration between these two groups can undermine collaboration, loyalty, and performance, particularly in organizations where gig workers are brought in for critical projects or tasks; moreover, this issue is compounded by the fact that HR practices traditionally designed for permanent employees, such as performance management, training, and onboarding, may not be well-suited for gig workers, leading to gaps in communication, engagement, and productivity, as noted by Duggan, Sherman, Carbery, and McDonnell (2018), who argue that without targeted HR strategies, gig workers may feel disconnected from the organization, resulting in higher turnover and lower quality work; therefore, the central problem this research seeks to address is how HR can develop integrated strategies that bridge the divide between gig workers and permanent employees, ensuring fair treatment, effective collaboration, and the alignment

of gig workers' contributions with organizational goals while maintaining flexibility and autonomy for gig workers, as highlighted by Adler and Heckscher (2018), who emphasize the need for organizations to rethink their HR approaches to accommodate the growing gig economy.

III. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The significance of this conceptual and theoretical research study on human resource (HR) strategies for managing and integrating gig workers into traditional workforces lies in its potential to address a critical gap in the understanding of how organizations can effectively adapt to the rise of the gig economy, a trend that has seen substantial growth due to technological advances and evolving employment preferences, with gig workers now constituting a significant portion of the global workforce, as noted by Kalleberg and Vallas (2018), who highlight that organizations are increasingly relying on gig workers to maintain operational flexibility, reduce costs, and access specialized talent on demand, yet despite these benefits, the integration of gig workers into traditional work environments presents a range of challenges for HR, including the need to bridge the disparities in job security, compensation, and benefits that exist between gig workers and full-time employees, which can lead to feelings of alienation, lower engagement, and higher turnover among gig workers, as illustrated by Spurk and Straub (2018), who argue that without proper HR strategies, gig workers may feel undervalued and disconnected from the organizational culture, resulting in decreased productivity and loyalty; this research is significant because it provides a framework for HR professionals to develop more inclusive and flexible strategies that not only support the integration of gig workers into the traditional workforce but also ensure that gig workers are treated equitably, given access to necessary resources, and engaged in ways that maximize their contributions to the organization, as supported by Veen, Barratt, and Goods (2018), who emphasize the importance of fair management practices in sustaining the gig workforce, particularly in industries that rely heavily on freelance and contract labor, such as technology, media, and logistics, and by addressing these issues, the study contributes to a growing body of literature on

workforce diversity, inclusion, and the future of work, offering practical insights that can help organizations navigate the complexities of managing a blended workforce while enhancing overall performance and employee satisfaction.

IV. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE RELATED TO THE STUDY

The review of relevant literature related to human resource (HR) strategies for managing and integrating gig workers into traditional workforces reveals a growing body of research that addresses the complexities of the gig economy and the need for organizations to adapt their HR practices to accommodate this increasingly prevalent workforce segment, with Kalleberg and Dunn (2016) highlighting that the rise of gig work, characterized by flexible, on-demand labor, has disrupted traditional employment models by providing organizations with the ability to access specialized talent while reducing costs associated with full-time employment, yet this shift also presents significant challenges for HR professionals tasked with ensuring that gig workers are not only efficiently integrated into the existing workforce but also managed in a way that maintains equity, fairness, and engagement, which is particularly difficult given the contractual and often short-term nature of gig work, as noted by Wood, Graham, Lehdonvirta, and Hjorth (2018), who argue that gig workers often lack the benefits, job security, and organizational support afforded to full-time employees, leading to potential alienation and decreased job satisfaction among gig workers who may feel disconnected from the organizational culture, with Spurk, Hirschi, and Dries (2019) further emphasizing that this lack of integration can result in high turnover rates, reduced productivity, and challenges in maintaining a cohesive organizational environment; this disconnect between gig and full-time employees is further exacerbated by traditional HR practices, such as performance management, onboarding, and compensation models, which are often ill-suited for the unique needs of gig workers, as Cappelli and Keller (2013) note that gig workers require more flexible HR approaches that take into account the transient and project-based nature of their work, suggesting that organizations must rethink their performance evaluation metrics, shifting from long-

term productivity assessments to more immediate, outcome-driven evaluations that reflect the short-term nature of gig assignments, while also ensuring that gig workers receive clear communication regarding their roles, expectations, and contributions to the organization, which is critical for fostering engagement and reducing turnover; in addition to performance management, onboarding strategies must also be adapted for gig workers, as traditional onboarding processes, which are often designed for permanent employees, may not provide gig workers with the tools, resources, or information they need to succeed quickly, particularly when working remotely or in temporary roles, and Brawley and Pury (2016) suggest that organizations should implement streamlined, technology-driven onboarding solutions that allow gig workers to access critical resources and integrate into the organizational culture from the outset, thereby improving their ability to contribute effectively without the need for extensive in-person training, which is often impractical for short-term roles; another key area of HR management that requires adaptation is compensation and benefits, as traditional compensation models may not align with the expectations of gig workers, who often prioritize flexibility and autonomy over job security and benefits, with Donnelly (2018) arguing that organizations must strike a balance between offering competitive pay and ensuring that gig workers feel valued, without creating disparities between gig workers and full-time employees that could lead to resentment or disengagement; this literature also highlights the role of technology in managing gig workers, with Jesuthasan and Boudreau (2017) noting that digital platforms, such as HR Information Systems (HRIS), are critical for facilitating communication, task management, and performance tracking across blended workforces, allowing organizations to manage both gig and full-time employees seamlessly, while also providing gig workers with access to the same tools and resources as their full-time counterparts, which fosters a sense of inclusion and collaboration, and De Stefano (2016) adds that the gig economy's reliance on digital platforms not only transforms the way gig workers are managed but also presents new challenges for HR, particularly in terms of legal and ethical concerns, such as labor rights, worker classification, and compliance with labor regulations, as many gig

workers are classified as independent contractors, which means they are often excluded from traditional employee protections and benefits, raising important questions about the sustainability of gig work and its impact on workforce inequality, and this has led to calls for organizations to develop HR policies that ensure gig workers are treated fairly, while also maintaining the flexibility that makes gig work appealing to both workers and employers; for example, Veen, Barratt, and Goods (2018) illustrate how platform-based companies, such as Uber and Deliveroo, have struggled with these issues, as their reliance on gig workers has led to legal challenges and concerns about worker exploitation, with scholars like Adler and Heckscher (2018) arguing that HR professionals must play a central role in developing ethical management practices that address the needs of gig workers while maintaining organizational performance, particularly in sectors that rely heavily on gig labor, such as technology, media, and logistics, and this literature review suggests that while the gig economy offers significant opportunities for organizational flexibility and cost savings, it also requires a rethinking of traditional HR strategies, particularly in areas like performance management, onboarding, compensation, and worker rights, to ensure that gig workers are effectively integrated into the workforce and given the support they need to succeed, with organizations that fail to adapt likely to face challenges in engagement, retention, and legal compliance, as the gig economy continues to evolve and expand.

V. RESEARCH GAP RELATED TO THE STUDY

The research gap identified in this study on human resource (HR) strategies for managing and integrating gig workers into traditional workforces lies in the limited understanding of how organizations can systematically design HR practices that effectively balance the unique needs of gig workers—such as flexibility, autonomy, and short-term project focus—with the structural and cultural frameworks typically associated with full-time employees, as traditional HR models are predominantly designed to cater to permanent workers, and there is a paucity of empirical research on how gig workers can be fully integrated into an organization's culture, training, performance

management, and compensation systems without exacerbating disparities between gig and full-time staff (Ashford, Caza, & Reid, 2018); while existing literature, including that by Caza, Moss, and Vough (2018), has explored the benefits of gig work in terms of flexibility and cost savings, there is a noticeable gap in understanding how gig workers can receive equitable treatment, maintain engagement, and contribute to organizational goals in ways that ensure both their satisfaction and the company's long-term success, particularly in industries that heavily rely on freelance or contract labor, and this gap is further exacerbated by the lack of research on the legal, ethical, and operational challenges that arise from managing a blended workforce, where gig workers often fall outside the purview of traditional employee protections and benefits, as noted by McKeown (2016), who suggests that HR strategies must evolve to address these discrepancies without sacrificing the agility and innovation that gig work can provide; therefore, this study seeks to address this research gap by exploring how HR professionals can create integrated systems that support gig workers' development and well-being while ensuring alignment with the broader organizational culture, values, and goals, offering a comprehensive framework for managing a blended workforce in a rapidly evolving employment landscape.

VI. METHODOLOGY ADOPTED FOR THE STUDY

The methodology adopted for this study is based entirely on secondary data, focusing on a comprehensive review of existing literature, case studies, industry reports, and academic research articles published between 2007 and April 2018 to analyze the current HR practices, trends, and challenges associated with managing gig workers in a blended workforce; the study relies on secondary sources to identify key HR strategies such as flexible onboarding, performance management, and compensation systems that are necessary for effectively integrating gig workers, while also exploring the legal and ethical concerns surrounding gig worker classification, autonomy, and benefits, with specific attention given to research that highlights the disparities between gig workers and permanent employees, as illustrated by the work of Kalleberg and

Dunn (2016), who examine the precariousness of gig work and its implications for HR management; in addition, the study draws on case examples from industries such as technology and media, where gig work has become increasingly prevalent, to explore how leading organizations have successfully integrated gig workers into their traditional workforces through digital platforms, innovative HR systems, and inclusive workplace practices, as noted by Donnelly (2018), who discusses the role of technology in facilitating the management of gig workers across different sectors, and the research methodology involves synthesizing insights from various academic sources, reports, and case studies to provide a theoretical framework for understanding how HR strategies can be adapted to accommodate the growing gig economy, ensuring that both gig workers and traditional employees are managed equitably, productively, and in alignment with organizational goals, while also ensuring legal compliance and ethical treatment.

Major objectives related to the study:

1. To examine the HR challenges and opportunities associated with integrating gig workers into traditional workforces
2. To analyze the effectiveness of existing HR strategies for onboarding and managing gig workers
3. To investigate the role of technology in facilitating the management of gig workers
4. To evaluate the legal and ethical implications of gig worker classification and treatment in a traditional workforce setting
5. To propose a theoretical framework for developing HR strategies that balance flexibility for gig workers with organizational needs

VII. HR CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES ASSOCIATED WITH INTEGRATING GIG WORKERS INTO TRADITIONAL WORKFORCES

The integration of gig workers into traditional workforces presents several human resource (HR) challenges and opportunities, as organizations increasingly rely on the flexibility and specialized skills offered by gig workers while simultaneously needing to ensure that these workers can be effectively

managed alongside permanent employees, with Kalleberg and Dunn (2016) highlighting that one of the major HR challenges is addressing the disparities between gig workers and traditional employees in terms of benefits, job security, and organizational inclusion, as gig workers are often classified as independent contractors, which means they lack access to the benefits and protections available to full-time employees, creating a divide that can lead to feelings of alienation, lower engagement, and decreased loyalty among gig workers, particularly if they perceive that their contributions are not valued at the same level as those of permanent staff, and this challenge is further compounded by the difficulty in implementing traditional HR practices such as performance management, onboarding, and training for gig workers, who may only be engaged on a short-term basis, necessitating the development of more flexible and adaptive HR strategies that can accommodate the transient and project-based nature of gig work, with Jesuthasan and Boudreau (2017) arguing that organizations must shift from rigid performance evaluation frameworks to more outcome-based assessments that focus on the completion of specific tasks or projects, rather than long-term performance metrics typically used for permanent employees; however, while these challenges are significant, the integration of gig workers also presents unique opportunities for organizations to enhance their operational flexibility, reduce labor costs, and tap into a broader pool of talent, as illustrated by the technology and media sectors, where gig workers play a critical role in providing specialized skills on demand, allowing companies to scale their workforce up or down as needed without the long-term commitments associated with traditional hiring, and Brawley and Pury (2016) suggest that by leveraging digital platforms and HR Information Systems (HRIS), organizations can more effectively manage the logistics of integrating gig workers, including task assignment, communication, and performance tracking, thereby streamlining the management of a blended workforce and reducing administrative burdens, and in addition to technological solutions, there is also an opportunity for HR professionals to foster a more inclusive organizational culture by developing engagement strategies that specifically address the needs of gig workers, such as offering them access to relevant resources, professional

development opportunities, and collaborative platforms that allow them to feel more connected to the organization and its goals, with Donnelly (2018) emphasizing that organizations that invest in creating a more supportive environment for gig workers tend to see higher levels of engagement and productivity, as gig workers are more likely to remain committed to the organization and contribute to its success if they feel that their work is valued and aligned with broader organizational objectives; another significant opportunity for HR lies in rethinking compensation models to ensure that gig workers are compensated fairly for their contributions while also maintaining flexibility, with Cappelli and Keller (2013) arguing that gig workers are often motivated by the autonomy and flexibility that gig work provides, and organizations can capitalize on this by offering compensation packages that are tied to project outcomes, rather than traditional salary-based models, which may not be appropriate for short-term engagements; however, the legal and ethical implications of gig worker classification remain a critical challenge, as many gig workers fall outside the scope of labor laws that protect full-time employees, raising questions about fairness and compliance, particularly in industries that rely heavily on gig work, such as logistics and media, where Adler and Heckscher (2018) suggest that HR professionals must carefully navigate the balance between maintaining the flexibility that gig work offers and ensuring that gig workers are treated ethically, receiving fair compensation and recognition for their contributions without being exploited due to their precarious employment status; in conclusion, while integrating gig workers into traditional workforces presents a number of challenges related to benefits, performance management, and legal compliance, it also offers significant opportunities for organizations to enhance flexibility, tap into specialized talent, and foster a more inclusive and dynamic workforce, provided that HR strategies are adapted to meet the unique needs of gig workers in ways that align with organizational goals and ethical standards.

VIII. EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING HR STRATEGIES FOR ONBOARDING AND MANAGING GIG WORKERS

The effectiveness of existing HR strategies for onboarding and managing gig workers within traditional workforces has been met with varying degrees of success, as organizations increasingly rely on gig workers for their flexibility and specialized skills, but often struggle to implement onboarding and management practices that fully align with the transient, project-based nature of gig work, with Brawley and Pury (2016) noting that one of the primary challenges is that traditional onboarding processes, which are designed for long-term employees, do not adequately accommodate gig workers, who may be working remotely or for short periods, thus requiring more streamlined, technology-driven approaches that provide immediate access to the tools, resources, and information they need to be productive from the outset, and this gap in onboarding effectiveness is particularly evident in industries such as technology and media, where gig workers are often brought in on a project-by-project basis, leading to difficulties in fully integrating them into the organizational culture or providing them with sufficient context about the company's goals and processes, as Jesuthasan and Boudreau (2017) argue that digital onboarding platforms, including HR Information Systems (HRIS), can improve the effectiveness of gig worker onboarding by automating many of the administrative tasks associated with bringing new workers on board, such as paperwork, training modules, and access to company systems, thus allowing gig workers to begin contributing more quickly and with greater efficiency; however, despite these advancements, the success of HR strategies for managing gig workers beyond the onboarding phase remains inconsistent, particularly in terms of performance management, as traditional performance evaluation methods, which focus on long-term productivity and career development, may not be appropriate for gig workers, who are often hired to complete specific tasks within a limited timeframe, and Kalleberg and Dunn (2016) suggest that organizations must adopt more flexible performance management systems that assess gig workers based on project outcomes and the quality of their deliverables, rather than long-term performance metrics, which may

not be relevant in a gig work context; moreover, the lack of engagement strategies tailored to gig workers further limits the effectiveness of HR management, as gig workers often feel disconnected from the organization and its goals, leading to lower levels of engagement and productivity, with Donnelly (2018) highlighting that gig workers are less likely to feel motivated to contribute fully to an organization if they perceive that they are not valued or supported in the same way as permanent employees, thus necessitating the development of engagement strategies that foster a sense of belonging and inclusion for gig workers, such as offering them access to collaborative platforms, professional development opportunities, and feedback mechanisms that allow them to participate more fully in the organization's activities; another critical area of HR management for gig workers is compensation, as traditional salary-based models may not align with the expectations of gig workers, who often prioritize flexibility and autonomy over job security, and Ashford, Caza, and Reid (2018) argue that organizations must rethink their compensation models to offer competitive, outcome-based payments that reflect the specific contributions of gig workers, while still ensuring fairness and equity across the workforce; despite these challenges, organizations that have successfully integrated gig workers into their traditional workforces have done so by leveraging technology, flexible management systems, and inclusive engagement strategies, as demonstrated by companies such as Google, which uses a combination of remote onboarding tools, outcome-based performance assessments, and collaborative platforms to manage its large pool of gig workers, ensuring that they are integrated into the company's culture while still maintaining the flexibility that gig work provides, and in conclusion, while existing HR strategies for onboarding and managing gig workers have shown potential, their effectiveness is limited by the need for more tailored approaches that recognize the unique characteristics of gig work, requiring HR professionals to develop flexible, technology-driven solutions that enhance gig worker integration, engagement, and performance in ways that align with organizational goals and values.

IX. ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN FACILITATING THE MANAGEMENT OF GIG WORKERS

The role of technology in facilitating the management of gig workers has become increasingly significant as organizations rely on digital platforms and HR Information Systems (HRIS) to streamline the integration and oversight of gig workers within traditional workforces, with Jesuthasan and Boudreau (2017) highlighting that technology is essential in managing the unique needs of gig workers by automating administrative tasks such as onboarding, payroll, and performance tracking, allowing HR professionals to focus on more strategic functions, as gig workers typically operate on short-term, project-based contracts and may be geographically dispersed, making it difficult for traditional HR systems to adequately address their needs without the use of digital tools; one of the primary ways in which technology facilitates gig worker management is through the use of cloud-based HR platforms that provide gig workers with immediate access to company resources, training modules, and project-specific information, ensuring that they can quickly integrate into the organization and begin contributing, as noted by Brawley and Pury (2016), who argue that such platforms not only streamline the onboarding process but also ensure that gig workers have access to the same resources as full-time employees, reducing the sense of isolation or detachment that often characterizes gig work; in addition to onboarding, technology plays a critical role in managing gig workers' performance and task assignments, with digital platforms enabling organizations to monitor project milestones, communicate expectations, and provide real-time feedback, which is particularly important for gig workers who may not have the opportunity to engage in traditional performance reviews due to the short-term nature of their work, and Donnelly (2018) suggests that the use of performance management software tailored to gig workers allows HR to assess project outcomes and deliverables, rather than relying on metrics designed for long-term employees, thus ensuring that gig workers are evaluated fairly based on their contributions while maintaining flexibility; moreover, technology also facilitates collaboration between gig workers and traditional employees by providing platforms for

communication and knowledge sharing, as digital collaboration tools such as Slack, Microsoft Teams, and Trello have proven effective in creating virtual workspaces where gig workers can engage with full-time employees, participate in team discussions, and contribute to organizational goals, fostering a sense of inclusion and teamwork, which is crucial for maintaining gig worker engagement and motivation, as emphasized by Jesuthasan and Boudreau (2017), who argue that these tools help bridge the gap between gig and full-time employees, creating a more cohesive work environment; another critical function of technology in gig worker management is the automation of compensation and benefits, with HRIS platforms streamlining payroll processes by automatically calculating payments based on project milestones or hours worked, ensuring that gig workers are compensated promptly and accurately without the administrative burden typically associated with managing a diverse workforce, and Cappelli and Keller (2013) point out that technology not only simplifies payment processing but also allows organizations to offer more flexible compensation models, such as outcome-based payments or milestone-driven bonuses, which are often more appealing to gig workers who prioritize flexibility and autonomy in their work arrangements; despite these advantages, however, the use of technology in managing gig workers is not without challenges, as Ashford, Caza, and Reid (2018) argue that reliance on digital platforms can sometimes exacerbate feelings of alienation among gig workers, particularly if they are not given sufficient opportunities for in-person interaction or if the technology is perceived as a barrier to meaningful engagement with the organization, necessitating that HR professionals strike a balance between leveraging technology for efficiency and ensuring that gig workers feel valued and included within the broader organizational culture; in conclusion, technology plays a pivotal role in facilitating the management of gig workers by streamlining onboarding, performance management, collaboration, and compensation, enabling organizations to effectively integrate gig workers into traditional workforces while maintaining the flexibility and autonomy that gig workers value, yet HR must carefully manage the use of these tools to ensure that gig workers remain engaged and connected to the organization.

X. LEGAL AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS OF GIG WORKER CLASSIFICATION AND TREATMENT IN A TRADITIONAL WORKFORCE SETTING

The legal and ethical implications of gig worker classification and treatment in a traditional workforce setting have become increasingly significant as organizations navigate the complexities of managing gig workers who, unlike traditional employees, are typically classified as independent contractors, a distinction that has profound legal and ethical consequences, particularly concerning labor protections, benefits, and job security, with Kalleberg (2011) noting that gig workers often lack access to fundamental employee rights such as health insurance, paid leave, and retirement benefits, which can lead to disparities in treatment and raise questions about fairness and equity in the workplace, as these workers are frequently excluded from the legal protections provided by labor laws that govern full-time employees, leading to a precarious work environment where gig workers bear the brunt of economic risk without the safeguards typically associated with employment, and this classification issue is further complicated by the fact that many gig workers perform tasks that are indistinguishable from those of traditional employees, blurring the lines between independent contractor and employee, and prompting legal challenges, as seen in the case of companies like Uber and Lyft, which have faced lawsuits from gig workers seeking employee status and the associated benefits, highlighting the legal grey area in which gig workers operate (Cherry & Aloisi, 2017); beyond the legal implications, there are also significant ethical concerns regarding the treatment of gig workers in traditional workforce settings, particularly with regard to issues of inclusion, engagement, and respect, as Ashford, Caza, and Reid (2018) argue that gig workers often feel marginalized within organizations, as they are frequently excluded from company events, decision-making processes, and opportunities for career advancement, creating a two-tiered workforce that undermines the principles of fairness and equality, and these ethical concerns are particularly acute in industries that rely heavily on gig work, such as the tech and logistics sectors, where gig workers are often essential to the company's operations but receive little in the way of long-term security or recognition, as

illustrated by the case of Amazon’s delivery network, which relies on gig workers for last-mile delivery but has been criticized for its lack of protections and benefits for these workers (Vallas & Schor, 2020); in response to these legal and ethical challenges, many scholars and HR practitioners have called for a re-evaluation of gig worker classification, suggesting that organizations adopt more flexible employment models that offer gig workers a hybrid status, combining the flexibility of gig work with some of the protections and benefits of traditional employment, as Donnelly (2018) suggests that such hybrid models could help address the inequities associated with gig work by providing gig workers with access to pro-rated benefits, health insurance, and legal protections, while still allowing them to maintain the autonomy and flexibility that are often central to their work preferences; furthermore, the ethical treatment of gig workers also necessitates that organizations foster a more inclusive work environment where gig workers feel valued and respected, with Cappelli and Keller (2013) advocating for the development of HR strategies that integrate gig workers into organizational culture, offering them opportunities for feedback, recognition, and professional development, thus ensuring that they are not treated as second-class workers but are instead regarded as integral contributors to the organization’s success; in conclusion, the legal and ethical implications of gig worker classification and treatment in traditional workforce settings pose significant challenges for HR professionals, as they must navigate the legal complexities of labor classification while also addressing the ethical concerns of fairness, inclusion, and equity, requiring a rethinking of HR strategies to ensure that gig workers are treated justly while maintaining the flexibility that makes gig work attractive to both workers and employers.

XI. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING HR STRATEGIES THAT BALANCE FLEXIBILITY FOR GIG WORKERS WITH ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS

The theoretical framework for developing human resource (HR) strategies that balance flexibility for gig workers with organizational needs must account for the unique nature of gig work, which prioritizes

autonomy, flexibility, and short-term project engagement, while simultaneously ensuring that organizational goals—such as productivity, compliance, and cohesion—are met, with Kalleberg (2011) emphasizing that one of the central challenges of this framework is reconciling the differing expectations of gig workers, who often seek flexibility and control over their work schedules, with the organization’s need for consistent performance, alignment with corporate culture, and legal compliance, and a key component of this framework involves developing flexible onboarding and training programs tailored to gig workers, as noted by Ashford, Caza, and Reid (2018), who argue that gig workers require fast, technology-driven onboarding processes that provide them with the necessary tools and information without the lengthy procedures designed for long-term employees, which ensures that gig workers can begin contributing to the organization quickly while maintaining the flexibility they expect, and this is particularly important in sectors like technology and media, where gig workers often need to integrate rapidly into project teams and start delivering results immediately; furthermore, the framework must include flexible performance management systems that evaluate gig workers based on project-specific deliverables and short-term objectives, rather than the traditional long-term performance metrics used for full-time employees, as Jesuthasan and Boudreau (2017) suggest that outcome-based assessments are more suitable for gig workers, allowing HR to measure the quality and timeliness of work without imposing the same rigid performance criteria used for permanent employees, thus aligning organizational goals of productivity with the gig worker’s need for autonomy; additionally, compensation strategies play a critical role in balancing flexibility and organizational needs, with Cappelli and Keller (2013) highlighting that gig workers are often motivated by outcome-based compensation structures that reward them for completing specific tasks or projects, as opposed to traditional salary-based models, and organizations can use this approach to ensure that gig workers remain motivated to deliver high-quality work while still maintaining the flexibility that makes gig work attractive to them; the framework must also address the legal and ethical challenges associated with managing gig workers, particularly in relation to

worker classification, labor rights, and equity, as Cherry and Aloisi (2017) argue that HR must carefully navigate the legal complexities of classifying gig workers as independent contractors while ensuring that they receive fair treatment, appropriate compensation, and protections, even if they are not full-time employees, with examples such as Uber's evolving approach to providing certain benefits to gig workers while maintaining flexibility demonstrating the potential for HR strategies to balance both organizational and worker needs in a legally compliant manner; finally, this framework must incorporate strategies for fostering inclusion and engagement among gig workers, as gig workers often feel disconnected from the organizational culture and excluded from decision-making processes, with Donnelly (2018) suggesting that organizations can leverage digital platforms and collaborative tools to create virtual workspaces that allow gig workers to interact with full-time employees, participate in team discussions, and engage more fully with the organization's mission, thereby ensuring that gig workers feel valued and connected to the organization, while also contributing to its long-term goals; in conclusion, the theoretical framework for developing HR strategies that balance flexibility for gig workers with organizational needs must incorporate flexible onboarding, performance management, compensation, and engagement strategies that cater to the specific characteristics of gig work while ensuring that organizational objectives—such as productivity, compliance, and worker integration—are met, ultimately creating a balanced approach that benefits both gig workers and the organizations that employ them.

XII. DISCUSSION RELATED TO THE STUDY

The discussion surrounding the human resource (HR) strategies for managing and integrating gig workers into traditional workforces highlights both the complexities and potential of creating a balanced approach that meets the needs of gig workers—who prioritize flexibility, autonomy, and project-based work—while aligning these characteristics with the organization's long-term goals of productivity, inclusion, and legal compliance, with Kalleberg (2011) emphasizing that the central challenge for HR professionals lies in developing adaptive strategies

that bridge the gap between the transient nature of gig work and the stability required by traditional full-time employment, and one of the key elements of this discussion revolves around the need for flexible HR practices that cater to the short-term, task-oriented nature of gig work, as noted by Jesuthasan and Boudreau (2017), who argue that onboarding, performance management, and compensation strategies must be designed to allow gig workers to quickly integrate into the organization and deliver project outcomes without the bureaucratic hurdles faced by permanent employees, which necessitates the use of technology-driven solutions like HR Information Systems (HRIS) to streamline these processes and ensure gig workers can access the necessary resources, communication platforms, and task assignments from day one, thus facilitating rapid productivity; however, the integration of gig workers into traditional workforces is also fraught with ethical and legal challenges, particularly regarding worker classification, as Cherry and Aloisi (2017) point out that gig workers are often classified as independent contractors, which excludes them from many of the protections and benefits afforded to traditional employees, such as health insurance, retirement plans, and paid leave, raising critical ethical concerns about equity, fairness, and exploitation, especially in industries where gig workers perform tasks that are similar to those of full-time employees but receive far fewer protections, as exemplified by the ongoing legal battles involving gig economy giants like Uber and Lyft, and these challenges highlight the importance of HR strategies that not only manage gig workers effectively but also ensure that they are treated fairly within the broader organizational structure, with Donnelly (2018) suggesting that hybrid employment models, which offer gig workers some of the benefits and protections typically associated with traditional employment, may be a viable solution to this issue, allowing organizations to maintain the flexibility that gig work provides while addressing concerns related to worker welfare and rights; another critical aspect of the discussion centers on the engagement and inclusion of gig workers within the organizational culture, as gig workers often feel disconnected from the company's mission, goals, and social fabric, leading to lower levels of engagement and productivity, and Brawley and Pury (2016) argue that HR professionals must develop strategies to foster

inclusion by offering gig workers access to collaborative platforms, team-building activities, and professional development opportunities that enable them to interact with full-time employees and contribute to the organization's success on a deeper level, thus creating a more cohesive workforce; in addition to inclusion, compensation models for gig workers must also be reconsidered, with Cappelli and Keller (2013) emphasizing that gig workers are often more motivated by outcome-based compensation tied to project completion than by traditional salary models, and HR must ensure that these compensation structures are fair, competitive, and reflective of the gig worker's contributions to the organization, particularly in industries that heavily rely on freelance and contract labor; in conclusion, the discussion on HR strategies for managing and integrating gig workers into traditional workforces underscores the need for flexible, inclusive, and legally compliant approaches that balance the autonomy and flexibility desired by gig workers with the organization's need for stability, productivity, and long-term sustainability, and it is through the careful development of adaptive HR practices that organizations can successfully navigate the challenges posed by the gig economy while ensuring that both gig workers and full-time employees are treated fairly and contribute to the organization's overall success.

XIII. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS AND HR IMPLICATIONS RELATED TO THE STUDY

The managerial and HR implications of integrating gig workers into traditional workforces, as highlighted in this conceptual and theoretical study, are critical in reshaping organizational strategies to accommodate the growing gig economy, which offers flexibility and access to specialized talent but requires significant adaptations in workforce management, particularly concerning employee engagement, performance evaluation, and legal compliance, with Kalleberg (2011) noting that one of the primary managerial challenges is developing systems that effectively integrate gig workers into the organizational structure without undermining the stability and cohesion of the full-time workforce, as managers must balance the flexibility gig workers require with the need for consistency, productivity, and alignment with long-

term business goals, and this challenge is further compounded by the need for new performance management systems that evaluate gig workers based on project outcomes rather than long-term metrics traditionally used for permanent employees, as suggested by Donnelly (2018), who argues that managers must adopt more flexible and immediate feedback mechanisms that recognize the short-term nature of gig work while ensuring that organizational standards are met; from an HR perspective, the implications are equally significant, as HR departments must rethink traditional practices like onboarding, training, and benefits administration to accommodate gig workers who may only be engaged for a limited period, with Jesuthasan and Boudreau (2017) emphasizing that HR must utilize technology-driven platforms to streamline these processes, such as HR Information Systems (HRIS), which can provide gig workers with instant access to resources and onboarding materials, ensuring they are quickly integrated into the company without the need for time-intensive training procedures, while also enabling HR to track performance and manage contracts more efficiently; additionally, the legal implications of managing gig workers are substantial, particularly regarding worker classification, as Cherry and Aloisi (2017) point out that many gig workers are classified as independent contractors, which means they do not receive the same protections or benefits as traditional employees, raising potential ethical and legal concerns about fairness, especially in industries where gig workers perform tasks similar to those of full-time staff, and HR must carefully navigate this classification to ensure compliance with labor laws while also addressing the ethical considerations of providing fair compensation, job security, and benefits for gig workers, as seen in the case of companies like Uber and Deliveroo, which have faced legal challenges related to gig worker classification; furthermore, the managerial implications extend to fostering inclusion and engagement among gig workers, as Brawley and Pury (2016) argue that one of the key challenges for managers is creating a work environment that makes gig workers feel valued and included, despite their temporary status, and this can be achieved by offering gig workers opportunities to engage with full-time employees through collaborative platforms and team-building initiatives, which not only foster a sense of belonging but also

ensure that gig workers remain motivated and productive during their tenure with the company; finally, from an HR perspective, the implications also involve developing compensation models that reward gig workers fairly and competitively, with Cappelli and Keller (2013) suggesting that outcome-based compensation structures, which tie payments to the successful completion of specific tasks or projects, are more suitable for gig workers than traditional salary-based models, ensuring that they are compensated fairly while maintaining the flexibility they desire; in conclusion, the managerial and HR implications of integrating gig workers into traditional workforces require a rethinking of existing systems and practices to ensure that gig workers are effectively managed, engaged, and compensated in ways that align with organizational goals while also addressing the legal, ethical, and practical challenges posed by the gig economy.

CONCLUSION

The study on human resource (HR) strategies for managing and integrating gig workers into traditional workforces underscores the necessity for organizations to rethink and adapt their HR practices to accommodate the growing prevalence of gig work, a labor model characterized by flexibility, autonomy, and project-based engagements, with Kalleberg (2011) emphasizing that gig work challenges the traditional structures of employment by introducing a dual workforce, where gig workers and permanent employees operate under different sets of expectations, legal protections, and benefits, thereby necessitating the development of innovative HR strategies that balance the flexibility desired by gig workers with the stability, cohesion, and productivity required by organizations, and one of the key insights from the study is the need for flexible onboarding and performance management systems that are tailored to the specific needs of gig workers, who often require rapid integration into the organization and immediate access to resources to contribute effectively, as suggested by Jesuthasan and Boudreau (2017), who highlight the role of technology, such as HR Information Systems (HRIS), in streamlining these processes and enabling gig workers to perform at optimal levels without the lengthy onboarding typically associated with full-time employees, and

further, the study identifies the critical importance of developing fair and competitive compensation models that reflect the unique contributions of gig workers, with Cappelli and Keller (2013) arguing that outcome-based compensation structures, which tie payments to project completion or deliverables, are particularly effective in motivating gig workers while maintaining organizational flexibility; however, the study also reveals significant legal and ethical challenges, particularly regarding the classification of gig workers as independent contractors, which often excludes them from traditional labor protections, as noted by Cherry and Aloisi (2017), who argue that HR strategies must address these concerns by finding a balance between offering gig workers autonomy and ensuring that they receive fair compensation, protections, and benefits where applicable, thus mitigating potential exploitation and fostering a more inclusive workforce, and finally, the study concludes that the successful integration of gig workers into traditional workforces requires HR professionals to adopt a holistic approach that combines flexible, technology-driven management practices with ethical and legal safeguards that protect gig workers while aligning their contributions with the long-term goals of the organization, ultimately ensuring that both gig workers and permanent employees can thrive in a rapidly evolving employment landscape.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The scope for further research on human resource strategies for managing and integrating gig workers into traditional workforces is broad and holds significant potential, particularly in exploring how organizations can develop more nuanced and adaptive HR practices that address the evolving dynamics of the gig economy, as future research could focus on understanding the long-term impacts of integrating gig workers on organizational culture, productivity, and employee engagement, with particular attention to how gig workers and full-time employees can collaborate effectively in environments that traditionally favor permanent roles, and this research could also delve deeper into the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, in optimizing the management of gig workers, specifically by automating processes like

recruitment, performance evaluation, and compensation, thereby reducing the administrative burden on HR departments while enhancing the overall gig worker experience, and another potential avenue for future studies is the examination of sector-specific HR strategies, where researchers can investigate how industries like technology, healthcare, and logistics, which rely heavily on gig labor, can adapt their HR models to maintain a competitive advantage while ensuring that gig workers are treated equitably, with research also needed to assess the legal and ethical implications of evolving employment models, particularly in light of changing labor laws and the growing pressure to extend employee benefits and protections to gig workers, which remains a contentious issue; however, the study is not without limitations, as the conceptual and theoretical nature of the research restricts its findings to a more generalized framework, which may not fully account for the real-world complexities that organizations face in integrating gig workers into traditional workforces, and the absence of empirical data limits the ability to assess the effectiveness of the proposed HR strategies in practical settings, leaving room for future studies that employ qualitative and quantitative methodologies to validate these concepts across diverse organizational contexts, and another limitation is the focus on data up to April 2018, which may not reflect recent trends and technological advancements in workforce management, particularly in relation to the rapidly evolving nature of the gig economy and the increasing use of digital platforms to manage gig workers, suggesting that future research should incorporate more contemporary data and case studies to provide a deeper understanding of the current challenges and opportunities associated with managing a blended workforce.

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