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Committed But Not Connected: Platform-Based Job Design and Organizational Commitment Among Gig Workers in India

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study examines how platform-based job design shapes organisational commitment among gig workers in a developing-country context, addressing the limited empirical attention given to commitment in platform-mediated work.

Design/methodology/approach: A mixed-method design was used with 226 gig workers. Survey data from 203 respondents were analysed using SPSS v26, followed by 23 semi-structured interviews analysed in ATLAS.ti. The study examined affective, continuance and normative commitment and integrated quantitative and qualitative findings.

Findings: Autonomy significantly predicts affective and normative commitment, indicating that flexibility and task discretion can strengthen psychological attachment. Continuance commitment is influenced more strongly by economic dependence, limited alternatives and switching costs. Qualitative findings show that gig-worker commitment emerges through a paradoxical combination of flexibility, income necessity, algorithmic control and fragile platform belonging.

Research limitations/implications: The cross-sectional design, geographical concentration and self-reported data limit causal inference and generalisability.

Originality/value: The study extends organisational commitment research into the underexplored context of gig work, showing that commitment can develop even without conventional employment relationships and is shaped by platform-mediated job design.

Keywords: Gig economy; job design; organisational commitment; platform work; algorithmic control; mixed methods.

Introduction

The term Organizational commitment, has traditionally been examined in work settings where employment relationships are relatively stable, formal and long term. In such contexts, workers have been connected to organisations through employment contracts, predictable work routines, career pathways, managerial support and expectations of mutual exchange. Meyer and Allen's three-component model explains commitment through affective, continuance and normative dimensions. Affective commitment reflects emotional attachment to the organisation, continuance commitment refers to the perceived cost of leaving, and normative commitment captures a felt obligation to remain (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002).

So far, contemporary labour markets are moving away from standard, permanent and full-time employment arrangements toward more flexible and insecure forms of work. Digital labour platforms have accelerated this shift by transforming work into task-based, technology-mediated and performance-monitored arrangements (Gandini, 2019; Kuhn & Maleki, 2017; Lancaster & Ingram, 2020). Food delivery workers, ride-hailing drivers and quick-commerce workers are often treated as independent contractors, although their work is assigned, monitored and evaluated through digital platforms (Halliday, 2021; Malos et al., 2018). This creates an ambiguous relationship, gig workers are formally outside the organisation, yet many depend on platforms for income, daily work opportunities and livelihood security. This raises an important theoretical question: How does organizational commitment develop when workers are not formal organizational members?

In conventional employment, commitment is strengthened through support, recognition, career development, supervisor interaction and excessive continuity. Unlike traditional labour relations, regulation is typically non-existent or weak in platform work. For Gig workers earnings are uncertain, organisational support is limited and there is algorithmic supervision of work. Benefits to employment security are weak especially when benefit systems crossover from wage-employee work arrangements into gig forms, with relatively few formal mechanisms for voice or progression (Duggan et al., 2020; Hajiheydari & Delgosha, 2024; Sutherland et al., 2020). As a result, their commitment shall be moulded less by deep organizational identification and more by income interdependence, switching costs, illusion of flexibility, consumer recognition & rich labour market alternatives.

Many studies have tried to elaborate that Job design, offers a preliminary perspective into this issue. Job design

is defined as how job tasks, responsibilities, autonomy, feedback and skill use are organized in a way that affects workers motivation, satisfaction and commitment (Hackman & Oldham 1975; Hackman et al., 1976; Parker et al., 2017). In traditional firms, job design is typically driven by management decisions and human resource policies. Instead, in platform-based gig work, job design is mediated through algorithmic task allocation, customer ratings, app-based feedback and incentive systems and performance tracking (Duggan et al., 2020; Duggan et al., 2023; Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). Thus, platform work is flexible yet requires digital control, uncertainty and performance pressure.

While previous researches have characteristically been painting gig work as flexible since workers can decide when to clock in and out, how long they want to be on a task and how they would like to streamline their day. This flexibility could create independence and promote ongoing engagement with the platform (Lehdonvirta, 2018; Dunn, 2020). At the same time, constrain their choices through algorithmic allocation, incentive rules, customer ratings and demand by location as well as the threat of deactivation (Duggan et al., 2020; Liu et al. Hence, platform job design could engender attachment but also dependence.

The paradox is defining in many developing and semi-urban labour markets where gig work not be selected as aspirational lifestyles or secondary income options. For many workers, platform work may be a replacement for formal employment and an association way of working in contexts where stable jobs are scarce (Sivarajan et al., 2021; Taylor et al., 2023). Commitments to platform work in such circumstances is likely relationship by domestic responsibilities, insecure livelihoods, limited job opportunities and the lack of substantive labour protections (Gerard et al., 2023). Thus, the meaning of autonomy, flexibility and commitment is different to what found in more secured employment conditions.

The present study examines organizational commitment among platform-based gig workers in Uttarakhand, India, with particular reference to job design. The study focuses on food delivery, quick-commerce and ride-hailing workers operating through digital platforms.

The study is guided by two research questions:

RQ1: How is perceived platform-based job design associated with affective, continuance and normative commitment among gig workers?

RQ2: How do qualitative accounts explain the quantitative patterns between job design and organisational commitment?

This study contributes to the literature on job design, organizational commitment and platform work by showing that gig worker commitment is not simply an individual psychological state. Rather, it is shaped through a platform-based work arrangement in which flexibility and autonomy create attachment, while algorithmic control, income dependence and limited organizational support restrict deeper organizational belonging. The study argues that gig workers may be committed to platforms without being fully connected to them as conventional organizational members.

2. Literature Review and Conceptual Synthesis

2.1 Organizational commitment in platform work

Organizational commitment is usually described as the psychological link between workers and an organization, which impacts their association longing to stay aligned with it. One of the most prominent models in this area remains Meyer and Allen's three-component model. It describes commitment that consists of affective commitment, the emotional aspect, continuance commitment, the perceived cost of leaving and normative commitment, which represents an obligation to remain (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002). These dimensions have primarily been studied in standard employment contexts or situations where the worker is formally contracted, has a stable organizational membership, interacts with a supervisor, has defined career paths and experiences long-term reciprocal expectations.

These assumptions come into question when we consider platform-based gig work. Gig workers are frequently designated as independent contractors rather than employees and platforms engage with gig workers through digital systems, not organizational hierarchies (Halliday, 2021; Malos et al., 2018). Although they rely on platforms for income and work, their employment security benefits, career development assistance and welfare protections are often modest (Kuhn et al., 2021; Sutherland et al., 2020). It undermines the traditional bases on which organizational commitment is largely built.

But this does not mean commitment is absent in gig work. Rather, its meaning changes. Platform integration also gigs workers have remained attached to platforms for the value they provided in income, work routines and access to familiar livelihood opportunities (Dunn, 2020; Mousa & Chaouali, 2023). Continuance commitment thus becomes especially relevant, as workers remain in platform jobs by virtue of economic dependence, switching costs and few alternatives. Affective commitment may be in customer appreciation, dignity of earning, the perception of independence, and meaningful service (Wong et al., 2021; Moorman et al., 2024). These normative audiences also exist when workers interpret platform support, incentives or work opportunities as evidence that the company cares about them or has another interest in being reciprocal. However, given the fact that plenty of gig workers perform across different platforms, such obligation tends to be contingent and fragmented (Kuhn & Maleki, 2017; Meijerink & Keegan, 2019).

2.2 Platform-based job design

Job design is how tasks, responsibilities, autonomy, feedback and skills are arranged. Hackman and Oldham's Job Characteristics Model identified five fundamental characteristics of work design: skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback Hackman & Oldham 1975 Hackman & Oldham 1976. Work-design research in more recent remunerative work settings indicates that characteristics of work continue to relationship motivation, well-being and organizational outcomes (Parker et al., 2017).

For gig work, job design is mediated by digital platforms, algorithmic task allocation, ratings and incentive systems, or app-based communication and performance monitoring (Duggan et al., 2020, 2023; Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). Central to the appeal of platform work is the bauble of flexibility, Gig workers are forever led to believe they can choose when to work, how long to work and accept whatever amount of work. Such flexibility can be appealing, particularly in areas lacking formal labour options, and foster a feeling of autonomy (Lehdonvirta, 2018; Dunn, 2020). But the autonomy can also be partial. What an individual worker will do on the platform is determined by algorithmic allocation, customer ratings, deadlines for delivery (in terms of numbers or in minutes), targets for incentives, where they are located and where demand is expected to be highest and the chance that their account may be suspended or deactivated (Duggan et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021).

Thus, platform-based job design should not be interpreted as flexible work design. A digitally mediated work to which autonomy, control, fragmentation and performance monitoring works as one (Gandini 2019; Duggan et al. This highlights the need to study worker perceptions of job design and how such perceptions relationship platform commitment.

2.3 Job design and commitment in gig work

Nevertheless, the existing job design literature indicates that well-designed work can enhance motivation, satisfaction and commitment. As researchers suggest, autonomy, work that is meaningful, feedback on the task itself, a higher level of social contact with other employees, feelings of importance and capability in people allowing them to feel like their capabilities or skills are used (Hackman & Oldham 1976; Parker et al. 2017). In most other types of organisations, these attributes underpin affective commitment wherein workers find themselves recognised, supported and identified with their organisation. Finally, they also contribute to normative commitment when workers feel treated fairly and reciprocate positively (Meyer et al., 2002; Vandenberghe et al., 2007).

However, in the case of gig work frameworks, the connection between job design and commitment is more intricate. Certain characteristics of platform job design facilitate attachment, while others hinder it. Furthermore, flexibility and autonomy foster affective commitment because employees appreciate not only the independence they have but also control over working time (Lehdonvirta, 2018; Wan et al., 2024). The association of task significance also enhance attachment when workers ascribe utility to their work from the perspective of customers or families. Transparency, sound incentives, accurate communication and reliable support can promote trust and obligation (Meijerink & Keegan, 2019; Kuhn et al., 2021).

With this in mind, the study argue that platform job design might redirect commitment to interdependence. Factors such as unstable income, algorithmic control, pressure to perform and low cost of business and limited job options create challenges in leaving the online delivery platform (Duggan et al., 2020; Sutherland et al., 2020; Taylor et al., 2023). When this is the case, to continue to work on a platform seems less an act of loyalty than of survival. Unless they feel particularly strongly about it as an organisation, workers could choose to continue working because they are earning money immediately through the platform.

Empirical research suggests that organizational commitment is typically associated with identification, loyalty, reciprocity and long-term membership (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002) in traditional employment. Similarly, in gig work commitment is relationship by flexibility, income-dependence, platform familiarity and customer recognition (Dunn 2020; Mousa & Chaouali 2023; Wong et al). Job design thus create commitment, but not the kind of commitment that is assumed in classical organizational theory. At the same time, it can get attachment and dependence in action.

It has particular relevance in developing-country and semi-urban labour markets. In this respect, gig work not be simply a lifestyle choice or an additional source of income. It might act rather as an alternative to wage work, especially in contexts of job scarcity (Sivarajan et al., 2021) While gig workers appreciate the lack of entry barriers, daily earning potential and control over their working time, they also become dependent on fast cash, suffer from vulnerability and a lack of bargaining power (Taylor et al., 2023; Wood et al., 2023). Thus, platform work must be understood also as a household good and bad commitment in view of economic pressure of the moment and local labour market conditions.

2.4 Research gap and conceptual synthesis

Previous research on organizational commitment has largely focused on standard employment relationships where workers are formally attached to organisations through contracts, managerial systems, career structures and long-term reciprocity (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002). Platform-based gig work challenges this foundation because gig workers are formally independent but often economically dependent

(Halliday, 2021; Kuhn & Maleki, 2017). Although studies have examined gig work in relation to flexibility, insecurity, algorithmic control and well-being (Duggan et al., 2020; Hajiheydari & Delgosha, 2024; Pilatti et al., 2024), less attention has been given to how platform-based job design shapes affective, continuance and normative commitment.

Building on job design theory and the three-component model of organizational commitment, this study argues that platform-based job design shapes commitment through three interconnected pathways. First, flexibility, autonomy, recognition and meaningful service support affective commitment. Second, income dependence, switching costs, work routines and limited alternatives strengthen continuance commitment. Third, care signals, perceived support and reciprocity create normative commitment, although this obligation remain conditional and divided across platforms (Hackman & Oldham, 1976; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002). The present study addresses this gap by examining platform-based gig workers in Uttarakhand, India. By integrating survey evidence with qualitative interviews, it explains not only whether job design is associated with organizational commitment, but also how workers make sense of attachment, dependence and obligation in platform work. The study therefore conceptualises gig worker commitment as a platform-mediated, conditional and fragile form of attachment rather than as straightforward organizational loyalty.

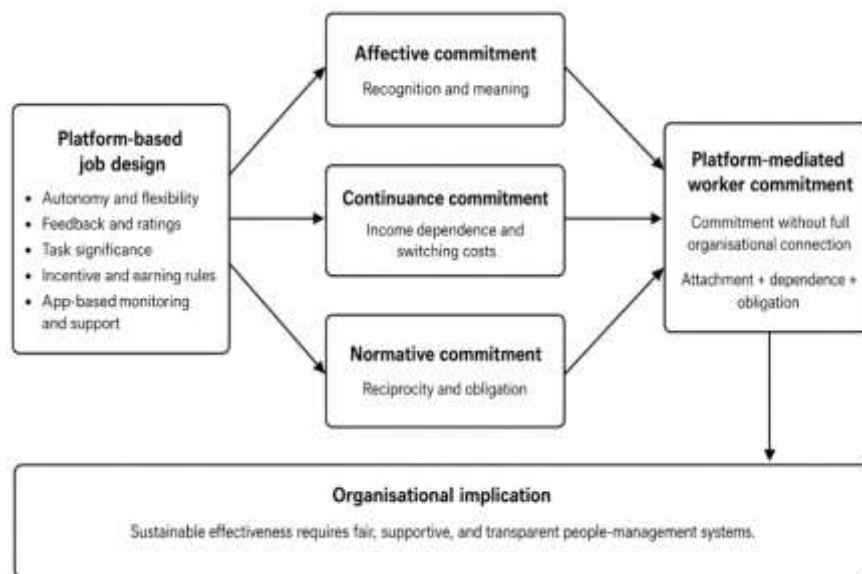


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's own work.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

This study adopted a convergent parallel mixed-method design to examine how platform-based job design was associated with organizational commitment among gig workers. A convergent design was appropriate because the study sought to support and integrate quantitative patterns with qualitative explanations collected during the same phase of the research process (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide were prepared after reviewing the literature on job design, organizational commitment and platform work. The quantitative findings were used to examine the direction and strength of associations among the study constructs, while the qualitative findings were used to contextualise these patterns through workers lived experiences. The two strands were integrated during interpretation through a joint-display approach.

3.2 Study context and participants

The study was conducted among platform-based gig workers engaged in food delivery, quick commerce and ride-hailing work in Uttarakhand, India. This context was selected because platform work has been expanding beyond large metropolitan cities into smaller and semi-urban labour markets, where it often functions not only as flexible supplementary work but also as an important source of livelihood. Participants were associated with platforms such as Swiggy, Zomato, Blinkit, Uber and Ola.

The inclusion criteria required participants to be currently engaged in platform-based gig work and to have direct experience of app-mediated task allocation, customer interaction, platform incentives, ratings or performance monitoring. Before formal data collection, informal field visits were conducted at food pickup points, worker gathering locations and market areas to understand the research context and refine the research tools. These informal interactions were not included in the final analysis.

3.3 Sample size and sampling logic

A purposive sampling approach was used to recruit currently active platform workers, supplemented by convenience and referral-based access at worker gathering points, food pickup locations and local market areas. The final sample consisted of 226 gig workers, including 203 survey respondents and 23 interview participants. Survey and interview participants were separate groups. The sample size was determined in relation to the exploratory nature of the study and the mixed-method aim of combining quantitative breadth with qualitative depth.

The survey sample of 203 respondents was used for an exploratory, quantitative investigation. The purpose of the quantitative strand was not to conduct confirmatory modelling or make statistically representative claims, but to identify preliminary patterns between perceived job design and organizational commitment dimensions. Therefore, the quantitative results are interpreted cautiously as exploratory evidence rather than as generalisable causal findings.

The qualitative sample of 23 participants was used to provide contextual depth and interpretive explanation. Interviews continued until recurring themes became visible across participants and additional accounts were no longer adding substantially new insights into the core dimensions of commitment.

3.4 Measures and scale adaptation

The study used adapted measures of job design and organizational commitment. Job design items were based on the Job Characteristics Model and were modified to reflect platform-based work conditions such as perceived autonomy, app-mediated task allocation, customer feedback, incentive structures and performance monitoring. Organizational commitment items were adapted from the three-component model of affective, continuance and normative commitment.

Minor wording changes were made to ensure that the items were understandable for gig workers while retaining the conceptual meaning of the original constructs. The questionnaire also collected demographic and work-related information, including gender, age, marital status, platform affiliation, work experience and whether platform work was the respondent's primary or secondary income source.

3.5 Quantitative data collection and analysis

The quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise respondents' demographic and work-related characteristics. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the direction and strength of associations between job design and affective, continuance and normative commitment. Controlled regression models were then estimated separately for the three commitment dimensions. In each model, job design was entered as the main independent variable, while gender, age, work experience, primary income source and multi-platform work were included as control variables. Variance inflation factor values were examined to check multicollinearity. Since the data were cross-sectional, the results are interpreted as associations rather than causal associations.

3.6 Qualitative data collection and analysis

Qualitative data were collected through 23 semi-structured interviews with gig workers from food delivery, quick-commerce and ride-hailing platforms. The interview guide was structured around the three dimensions of organizational commitment. Questions related to affective commitment explored emotional connection, pride, dignity and meaningfulness of platform work. Questions related to continuance commitment examined income dependence, switching costs, household responsibilities, alternative employment options and difficulties of leaving platform work. Questions related to normative commitment explored gratitude, perceived support, responsibility, loyalty and obligation toward platforms.

The interviews were conducted in a language comfortable for participants, depending on their preference and ease of expression. Each interview lasted approximately 20–35 minutes. With participants' consent, responses were recorded or documented through detailed field notes. Where necessary, interview material was translated into English for analysis and reporting. To protect confidentiality, participant names were removed and quotations are reported using anonymised participant identifiers.

The qualitative data were analysed thematically with the support of ATLAS.ti. The analysis was guided by the three dimensions of organizational commitment while remaining open to themes emerging from workers' own accounts. Interview responses were read repeatedly to become familiar with the data. Meaningful segments were then coded around recurring ideas such as dignity, recognition, income dependence, switching costs, platform support, gratitude and divided loyalty. Related codes were grouped into broader themes corresponding to affective, continuance and normative commitment.

Network views generated in ATLAS.ti were used to visualise relationships among codes and themes. These visualisations supported the interpretation of qualitative patterns but were not treated as a substitute for thematic analysis. The main interpretation was based on workers' narratives and their connection with the conceptual framework of the study.

3.7 Integration of findings

The quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated during interpretation through a joint-display approach. Quantitative results identified the strength and direction of associations between job design and the three commitment dimensions, while qualitative findings explained why these patterns appeared in workers' everyday platform experiences. For example, the strong quantitative association between job design and continuance commitment was interpreted through interview accounts of income dependence, household expenses, vehicle costs and limited employment alternatives.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, and their identities were kept confidential. Personal identifiers were not disclosed in the analysis. The study followed basic ethical principles of informed participation, anonymity and respectful engagement with workers in the field. Only participants who were eligible and willing to participate were included in the study. Ethical committee approval was taken from the university, Ref no. SOLSM/SSH.

Table 1. Sample Profile of Survey Respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	137	67.5
	Female	66	32.5
Age	18–24 years	31	15.3
	25–30 years	103	50.7
	31–40 years	53	26.1
	Above 40 years	16	7.9
Marital status	Unmarried	125	61.6
	Married	78	38.4
Platform sector	Food delivery	84	41.4
	Quick commerce	63	31.0
	Ride-hailing	56	27.6
Platform-work experience	Less than 1 year	63	31.0
	1–3 years	97	47.8
	More than 3 years	43	21.2
Income status	Primary income source	145	71.4
	Secondary income source	58	28.6
Platform status	Single-platform worker	124	61.1
	Multi-platform worker	79	38.9
Total		203	100.0

Source: Author's own work.

Table 2. Profile of Interview Participants

Platform / company	Number of participants
Swiggy	6
Zomato	5
Blinkit	4
Uber	4

Ola	4
Total	23

Source: Author's own work.

4. Findings

4.1 Quantitative Findings: Preliminary Evidence on Job Design and Organizational Commitment

The quantitative strand examined the preliminary association between perceived job design and the three dimensions of organizational commitment among 203 platform-based gig workers. The analysis included reliability testing, Pearson correlation and controlled regression. Given the exploratory purpose of the study, the findings are interpreted as preliminary evidence rather than as confirmatory or statistically generalizable results.

Table 3. Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Items	Standardized loading range	Cronbach's α / α_a	Composite reliability	AVE
Platform-based job design	13	.61–.82	.903	.918	.520
Affective commitment	3	.76–.85	.846	.859	.671
Continuance commitment	3	.78–.88	.881	.894	.739
Normative commitment	3	.72–.83	.823	.839	.635

Source: Author's analysis

The results show that all four constructs have good reliability and validity. The factor loadings indicate that the items represent their respective constructs well. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values are above .70, showing strong internal consistency. The AVE values are above .50, confirming adequate convergent validity.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Construct	1	2	3	4
1. Platform-based job design	.721			
2. Affective commitment	.548	.819		
3. Continuance commitment	.657	.431	.860	
4. Normative commitment	.503	.487	.461	.797

Source: Author's analysis

The diagonal values represent the square root of AVE for each construct, while the off-diagonal values show correlations between constructs. For every construct, the diagonal value is higher than its correlations with the other constructs. This indicates that each construct is sufficiently different from the others. Therefore, the results support adequate discriminant validity.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Platform-based job design	4.18	.88	1			
2. Affective commitment	3.96	.96	.548***	1		
3. Continuance commitment	4.71	.89	.657***	.431***	1	
4. Normative commitment	4.29	.92	.503***	.487***	.461***	1

Source: Author's analysis

Platform-based job design had a mean of 4.18, while continuance commitment recorded the highest mean of 4.71. Platform-based job design was positively related to affective commitment ($r=.548$), continuance commitment ($r=.657$), and normative commitment ($r=.503$). The strongest relationship was found between platform-based job design and continuance commitment. All correlations were statistically significant,

indicating that favourable job-design perceptions were associated with higher levels of all three commitment dimensions.

Table 6. Hierarchical Regression Results

Predictor	Affective commitment (HC3 SE)	Continuance commitment (HC3 SE)	Normative commitment (HC3 SE)
Female	.063 (.112)	-.041 (.096)	.054 (.108)
Age	-.011 (.018)	.024 (.016)	.018 (.017)
Married	.058 (.109)	.114 (.094)	.087 (.106)
Platform-work experience	.076 (.041)	.137*** (.036)	.069 (.039)
Primary income source	.084 (.128)	.176 (.109)	.096 (.121)
Multi-platform worker	-.073 (.106)	.109 (.091)	.102 (.101)
Platform-based job design	.482*** (.054)	.587*** (.047)	.441*** (.052)
R^2 , controls only model	.081	.146	.074
Final R^2	.338	.492	.309
Adjusted R^2	.314	.474	.284
ΔR^2 after PJD	.257***	.346***	.235***
Final model F	13.96***	26.55***	12.28***
Observations	203	203	203

Source: Author's analysis

The hierarchical regression results show that platform-based job design had a positive and statistically significant association on all three dimensions of organizational commitment. It had the strongest association on continuance commitment ($B=.587$), followed by affective commitment ($B=.482$) and normative commitment ($B=.441$). After adding platform-based job design, the explained variance increased by 34.6% for continuance commitment, 25.7% for affective commitment, and 23.5% for normative commitment. The final models explained 49.2%, 33.8%, and 30.9% of the variance in continuance, affective, and normative commitment, respectively.

Among the control variables, platform-work experience was positively associated with continuance commitment ($B=.137$, $p<.001$), while the other controls were not statistically significant. Overall, the findings indicate that favourable platform-based job design is most strongly associated with workers' practical reasons for continuing with the platform.

Table 7. Standardized Regression associations

Relationship	Standardized β	t-value	p-value
PJD → affective commitment	.442	8.93	<.001
PJD → continuance commitment	.579	12.49	<.001
PJD → normative commitment	.422	8.48	<.001

Source: Author's analysis

The standardized regression results show that platform-based job design had a positive and significant association on all three dimensions of organizational commitment. The strongest association was found for continuance commitment ($\beta=.579$), followed by affective commitment ($\beta=.442$) and normative commitment ($\beta=.422$). All three relationships were statistically significant at $p<.001$.

Table 8. Cross-Equation Comparison of Job-Design Coefficients

Comparison	Difference in unstandardized coefficients	Wald statistic	P value
Continuance – affective commitment	.105	4.84	.028
Continuance – normative commitment	.146	7.36	.007
Affective – normative commitment	.041	.61	.435

Source: Author's analysis

The cross-equation comparison shows that the association of platform-based job design on continuance commitment was significantly stronger than its association on affective commitment ($W=4.84$, $p=.028$) and normative commitment ($W=7.36$, $p=.007$). However, the difference between the associations on affective and normative commitment was not statistically significant ($W=.61$, $p=.435$). These findings confirm that platform-based job design has its strongest relationship on continuance commitment.

Table 9. Robustness Analysis

Outcome	Model without controls B	Model with controls B	HC3 model B	Bootstrap 95% CI
Affective commitment	.598***	.482***	.482***	[.376, .588]
Continuance commitment	.664***	.587***	.587***	[.495, .679]
Normative commitment	.526***	.441***	.441***	[.339, .543]

Source: Author's analysis

4.2 Qualitative Findings: The Meaning of Organizational Commitment in Gig Work

The qualitative strand was used to understand how gig workers were making sense of organizational commitment in their everyday platform-based work. While the quantitative findings showed that perceived job design was positively associated with affective, continuance and normative commitment, the interviews helped explain what these forms of commitment meant for workers who were formally independent but economically and practically connected to platforms. The analysis was organized around the three dimensions of organizational commitment, while remaining open to themes emerging from workers' own accounts. The ATLAS.ti network views were used to visualize the relationships among codes and themes; however, the interpretation was grounded primarily in participant narratives.

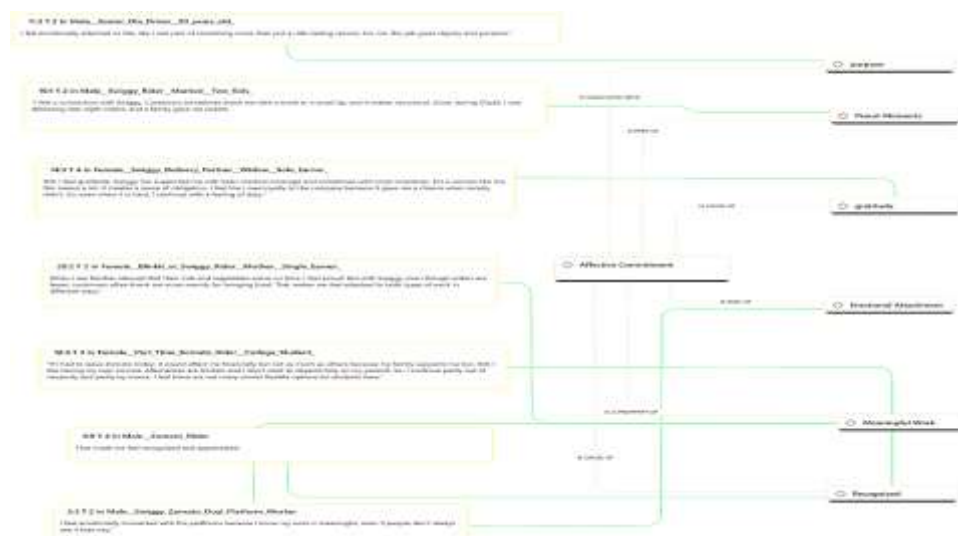


Figure 2. Affective Commitment Network

Source: Author's analysis using ATLAS.ti 25

Affective commitment: recognition, dignity and meaningful work

Figure 2 presents the ATLAS.ti network for affective commitment, showing the relationship among recognition, dignity, pride and meaningful service were interdependent in workers accounts of affiliation to the TI network for affective commitment. Affective commitment seen in the manner in which participants described platform work as more than merely a stream of income. The emotional connection comes from daily experiences of positive feedback, respect and job utility for many workers. But this attachment was typically to the work experience rather than the platform as an organisational form.

As an Ola driver, P1 made an emotional connection in terms of dignity and purpose:

I was invested deeply because they made me feel important, had signed with Ola and not just any ride-hailing service. It gives dignity and a purpose job for me.

Also, P2, whose profession is that of a Swiggy Rider spoke about how appreciation from customers developed not only pride but also an emotional meaning:

Have a sense of attachment with Swiggy. At times I get a smile or small tip from customers and they say thank you. It fills me with pride. Once I was out delivering at night on Diwali late orders and a family sent sweets to me.

This evidence implies that affective commitment in gig work was neither primarily created via formal organisational membership or career progression, nor by long-term job security. Rather, it came about through the connection of little but significant interactions, customer acknowledgement and workers themselves attributing value to their work. Workers could experience an emotional connection with their work and sometimes the platform itself, but this connection was tenuous since it largely relied on daily acknowledgment instead of durable organizational support.

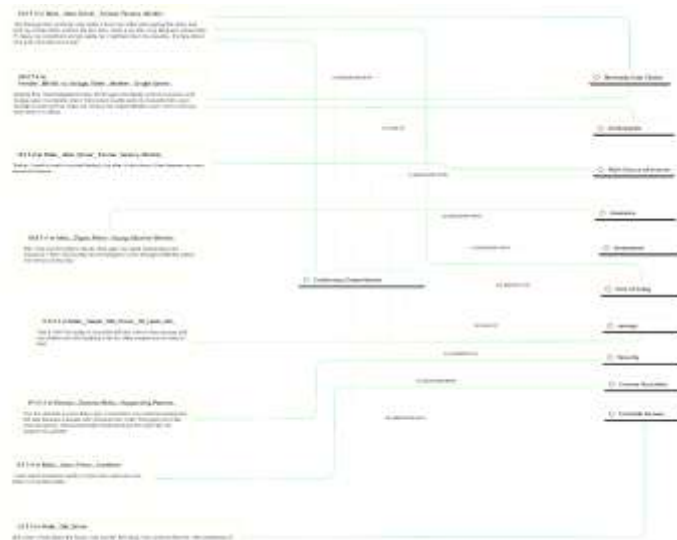


Figure 3: Continuance Commitment Network

Source: Author's analysis using ATLAS.ti 25

Continuance commitment: income dependence and the cost of leaving

Figure 3 presents the ATLAS.ti network for continuance commitment and has a positive relationship with income dependence, little alternatives and household expenses investment, savings and essential. Qualitatively continuance commitment was the most prevalent theme. Their accounts revealed just how entrenched platform work had become in household survival, daily earnings and investments, vehicles, smartphones and work-related equipment.

P3, an Uber driver and ex-factory worker also illustrates the material challenge of leaving platform work:

"To leave Uber would mean sacrificing a large chunk of that payout," the executive opined. With my lack of skills, the options decrease significantly, and I don't know of other jobs that pay what I do. I only took a car loan because I started working through Uber as well. My investment will be lost if I am leaving. Hence, I am bound out of necessity. This is not so much about love as its survival".

In a related claim, an Ola driver P4 connected continued work on the platform with obligations to support his family and limited alternative options:

"It would be hard for me, because if I left Ola today. My children are still studying. I have no savings. More than a few jobs for the elderly will be easy to find."

Indeed, the accounts given by well-being employees help account for the relatively high levels of continuance commitment reported in the quantitative findings. The workers were not always describing loyalty or feelings of emotional belonging. Rather, they were talking about dependency, commitment and exit costs. Even if the job itself was fraught with uncertainty or laborious conditions, it stood for an immediate stream of earnings through platform work. What we derived from livelihood vulnerability, however, was more continuance

commitment than it was deep attachment to the organization.

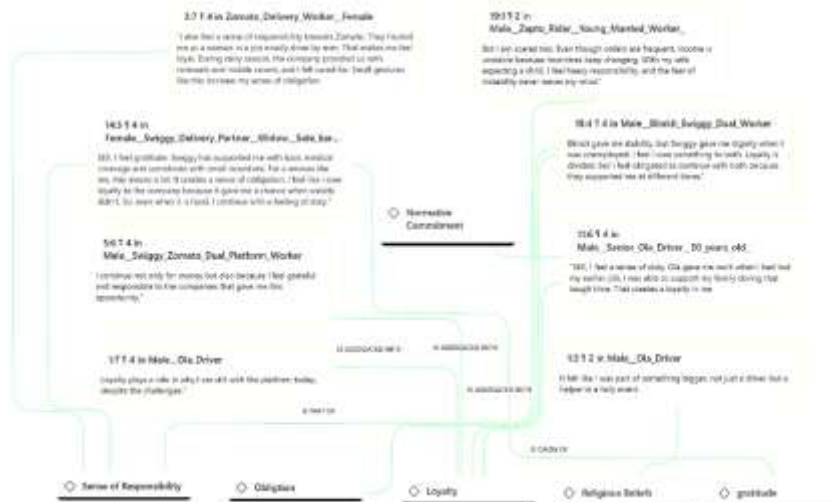


Figure 4. Normative Commitment Network

Source: Author's analysis using ATLAS.ti 25

Normative commitment: care signals, gratitude and divided loyalty

Figure 4 presents the ATLAS. Results explored a wider variety of behaviours such as gratitude, responsibility, support, care signals and loyalty within divided obligation in their platform study. Workers felt a sense of obligation or responsibility when they had the perception that platforms provided opportunities, onboarding assistance, performance-based incentives, insurance, raincoats and even basic utility items. But since a lot of workers were linked to more than one platform, this obligation was not always towards one employer.

P5, a Zomato delivery worker, described normative commitment as resulting from trust and minimal support: *"I feel responsible for Zomato, too. And they were prepared to trust me as a woman filling a role largely occupied by men. That makes me feel loyal. Each rainy season the company provided us with raincoats and covers for our mobiles, I felt taken care of. It made me feel more obligated."*

Loyalty was scattered across apps, said a worker who worked for both Blinkit and Swiggy."

P6, another delivery worker said,

"My job with Blinkit gave me stability but Swiggy also helped keep my head held high through it all when I was jobless. I know that I owe something to both. Loyalty is split, but I feel duty-bound to persist with both as they stood by me at various points in time."

The remit of these accounts is that normative commitment in gig work was based less on permanent socialisation into an organisational context and more based on a perceived reciprocity. Workers experienced a sense of duty when they perceived the platforms as supportive, equitable, or helpful in challenging times. However, this obligation was tenuous based on current actions of platforms, opportunities for income and worker presence on multiple platforms.

Integrated qualitative interpretation

Taken together, the qualitative findings show that organizational commitment among gig workers was present, but it was layered and conditional. Affective commitment was shaped through dignity, customer recognition and meaningful work. Continuance commitment was shaped through income dependence, investment, household responsibility and limited alternatives. Normative commitment was shaped through gratitude, care signals and divided loyalty.

The strongest qualitative pattern was continuance commitment. Many workers remained with platforms because leaving would create financial difficulty. However, this did not mean that emotional or moral forms of commitment were absent. Workers also felt proud when customers appreciated them, grateful when platforms provided support and responsible when platform work helped them support their families. These forms of commitment were overlapping rather than separate.

Overall, the qualitative findings support the central argument of the study:

Gig workers committed to platforms without being fully connected to them as conventional organizational members. Their commitment is real, but it is fragile and platform-mediated. They want to stay because the work provides dignity and recognition, need to stay because platform income supports survival, and feel they ought to stay when platforms provide support or opportunity.

4.3 Integrated Findings: Commitment as Attachment, Dependence and Obligation

The qualitative and quantitative analyses were used together to explore not only whether job design was

related to organizational commitment, but also how in the context of their everyday work on a gig platform those outcomes were being interpreted by gig workers. Quantitative findings revealed a positive link between perceived job design and affective, continuance and normative commitment with the relationship being strongest for continuance commitment. Qualitative findings illustrated this pattern with the link between income dependency, household duties, sunk costs to platform work, routines and scarce job options.

Joint Display of Integrated Findings is presented in Table 10. It demonstrates that continuance commitment was the most prevalent type of commitment across both strands of study. Similarly, affective and normative commitment were also present. Dignity, appreciation and meaningful services were the sources of affective commitment while gratitude, care signals and conditional reciprocity informed normative commitment. But few forms of commitment were solid because they lacked formal organizational membership, career pathways or job security.

Table 10: Joint Display of Integrated Findings

Quantitative pattern	Qualitative explanation	Integrated interpretation
Job design had the strongest association with continuance commitment.	Workers described family expenses, vehicle loans, fuel costs, lack of savings, limited employment alternatives and dependence on platform income.	Gig workers often remained with platforms because leaving was financially and practically costly. Commitment was strongly shaped by economic dependence and the cost of exit.
Job design was positively associated with affective commitment.	Workers described dignity, customer appreciation, pride, meaningful service and the ability to support their families.	Emotional attachment existed, but it was formed through everyday recognition and the meaningfulness of work rather than through formal organizational membership.
Job design was positively associated with normative commitment.	Workers described gratitude, responsibility and obligation when platforms provided onboarding, incentives, raincoats, insurance or other forms of support.	Obligation-based commitment existed, but it was conditional and often divided across multiple platforms.
All three forms of commitment were present in the findings.	Workers expressed wanting to stay, needing to stay and feeling they ought to stay.	Gig worker commitment was layered, fragile and platform-mediated rather than a simple expression of organizational loyalty.

Source: Author's analysis

The integrated inference is that platform-based job design operates through a dual mechanism. On the one hand, flexibility, autonomy, recognition and meaningful service support emotional and moral attachment. On the other hand, income dependence, switching costs, vehicle investments and limited alternatives strengthen continuance commitment. Thus, job design in platform work generates commitment not only through motivation and identification, but also through dependence and constrained choice.

5. Discussion

This study shows that gig workers develop organizational commitment, although its basis differs from traditional employment relationships. In platform work, formal membership, career development and long-term reciprocity are weak because workers remain digitally managed and only partially integrated into platform organisations (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 2002; Halliday, 2021). Continuance commitment is shaped mainly by dependence on daily income, household responsibilities, vehicle-related costs and limited employment alternatives, while affective commitment emerges through meaningful work, customer recognition and dignity of earning (Dunn, 2020; Mousa & Chaouali, 2023). Normative commitment is more conditional and arises when platforms provide support, incentives, insurance or basic assistance, although loyalty is often divided across multiple platforms (Kuhn & Maleki, 2017; Meijerink & Keegan, 2019). Therefore, sustainable worker attachment cannot rely only on economic dependence; platforms also need fair, supportive and recognition-based people-management systems.

5.1 Theoretical contributions

This study extends job design and organizational commitment theories to platform-mediated work by showing that autonomy, feedback, task significance and flexibility remain important but are experienced alongside algorithmic control, uncertainty and dependence (Hackman & Oldham, 1975, 1976; Duggan et al., 2020). It also reinterprets Meyer and Allen's (1991) three-component model by showing that affective commitment is shaped by dignity and recognition, continuance commitment by income dependence and limited alternatives,

and normative commitment by gratitude and conditional reciprocity. Overall, gig workers occupy a middle position in which they remain attached to platforms despite weak organizational integration; therefore, their commitment is best understood as a platform-mediated combination of attachment, dependence and obligation.

5.2 Managerial and policy implications

Although gig workers are classified as independent contractors, they often develop attachment, dependence and obligation toward digital platforms. Therefore, platforms should treat job design as both an operational and a people-management issue by ensuring transparent task allocation, fair incentives, understandable rating systems and clear deactivation procedures. Accessible grievance mechanisms, timely support, insurance, safety equipment, skill development and recognition can strengthen affective and normative commitment. Minimum earning guarantees, equitable incentives and protection against arbitrary suspension can also reduce dependence-based vulnerability. At the policy level, stronger provisions for earnings, occupational safety, accident insurance, social security and fair deactivation procedures are necessary, particularly where gig work substitutes for formal employment.

5.3 Limitations and future research

Lastly, several significant limitations must be noted. First, the cross-sectional nature of the research design prohibits causal assertions to be made regarding the relationship between job design and organizational commitment.

Second, the study used data based on self-reporting, which is subject to potential bias due to recall or through social desirability. Third, this study was limited to a few platform workers in Uttarakhand and experiences are likely different across bigger metropolitan centres, other platform industries or within varied regional labour markets.

Larger, multi city surveys; longitudinal designs and studies that comparatively analyse the food delivery (such as Uber Eats), ride-hailing (such as Uber), quick commerce and online freelancing industries could extend this study in future research. More future research is also likely on how changes to algorithmic rules or incentive systems and practices for deactivating workers matter for sustainability. Qualitative methods of inquiry indicate in greater depth how platform workers negotiate autonomy, fairness, recognition and identity as labouring subjects within the everyday work performed on platforms (e.g. digital ethnography or worker diaries).

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that gig workers develop organizational commitment differently from workers in conventional employment. Flexibility, autonomy, dignity and recognition support emotional attachment, while income dependence, switching costs, limited alternatives and algorithmic control strengthen continuance commitment. Gig workers may therefore remain attached to platforms without being fully integrated into them. Their commitment is best understood as a fragile, platform-mediated combination of attachment, dependence and obligation

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