

**International Journal of Human Resource Management**  
**Special Issue Call for Papers**

**“Gig work: Implications for the Employment Relationship and Human Resource Management”**

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Paper Submission Deadline: 20 March 2019

**Background**

The 'gig economy' refers to an economic system that uses digital platforms to connect workers with consumers and clients (Harris, 2017). More than 7.6 million individuals are expected to undertake gig work in the US by 2020 which would be double the numbers in 2015 (Sharpe, 2015). Some of the household organisational names in the gig economy include Uber, Lyft, and Deliveroo which are increasingly important players across multiple countries worldwide.

**Aim of this Special Issue**

It appears that gig workers hold similarities with other forms of contingent labour but the role of technology appears especially pervasive in this new economy (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016). Arguably, the gig economy is being used by some as a catch-all term for contingent labor rather than something different and new. We consider it timely to address this lack of conceptual clarity and invite papers that provide a nuanced understanding of what gig work is and how it is both similar and different to other forms of non-standard work. In addition, it is worth considering if all gig work is the same or are there different manifestations of work arrangements in this domain. To date, there has been a lack of clarity around the parameters of the gig economy and how it is taken to mean very different things for people.

The gig economy is disruptive to our understanding of the employment relationship with major concern that it provides too great an exposure to individuals to financial risk, along with social insecurities and inequalities (Friedman, 2014). Conversely, the gig economy has been cited as providing people with the opportunity to take back control on their work life with the individual deciding to work when they want (Kirven, 2018). It appears to be viewed as an especially welcome development by the younger working population who desire greater work-life balance. However, there is significant potential for this working arrangement to deprive a generation of short-medium and long-term employment security. The lack of a secure job has implications for one's capacity to rent or own a home, the lack of social benefits, and pensions. While there is much public discourse on the positives and negatives we have little empirical research to help inform us.

Much debate has occurred around whether gig workers are employees or independent contractors with legal challenges taking place in multiple jurisdictions (Fabo, Karanovic & Dukova, 2017). Regardless of the type of employment relationship that exists between gig workers and the organization, there are significant implications and questions for the HR function and our

knowledge of HRM. Recruitment and selection appears to be markedly different to traditional work with the focus very much on fulfilling operational criteria and if satisfied, you are available to undertake gigs. There appears to be little competition between candidates for gig work as we have come to expect with more conventional recruitment methods; meeting the criteria gives you access to work gigs. Performance management appears to be a central element of gig work, although the role of technology and the customer in facilitating this process may differ to most types of traditional employment. Given the role of technology in particular, some gig work may provide for a level of significant monitoring (e.g. GPS tracking). Research questions around these, and related HR issues include:

- The conceptualization and understanding of gig work
- The existence of a psychological contract and the extent to which it is transactional or relational in nature
- The profiles and experiences of gig workers
- The implications of gig work for traditional HRM functions such as recruitment; training; performance management; reward systems
- The labour use strategies associated with the deployment of gig workers such as their position within the organization, the terms of their employment and their access to standard employment conditions
- The conditions contributing to the growth in gig work
- The placement of gig work within traditional systems of labour regulation and industrial relations
- The extent to which gig work is a feasible and flexible alternative to traditional employment and what challenges do individuals face

The above topics are in no way meant to be an exhaustive or desired list that papers must address in the special issue. Instead, they represent what we see as some critical areas that appear to raise important questions for HR researchers. We are open to conceptual, empirical and methodological papers that will help advance knowledge and understanding on gig work and the challenges and implications for the HR function and individual workers. We are especially interested in contributions that stem from different national contexts as there is emerging evidence that suggests variation in the proliferation of gig work across countries (e.g. Bamber, Lansbury, Wailes & Wright, 2017).

## References

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Sharpe, S. (2015). Intuit Forecast: 7.6 Million People in On-Demand Economy by 2020. *Intuit Inc.* Available: <http://investors.intuit.com/Press-Releases/Press-Release-Details/2015/Intuit-Forecast-76-Million-People-in-On-Demand-Economy-by-2020/default.aspx>.

### **Submission Guidelines**

Contributions for this special issue must be original research not under consideration by any other journal or publishing outlet. All papers will be subject to a double-blind peer review in accordance with the journal guidelines. The guest editors will select and include as many papers as possible in the special issue according to the relevance and quality of the submissions, but manuscripts not included in this special issue may be considered as regular submissions to the journal. The format of the paper must follow the guidelines of IJHRM <http://www.tandfonline.com/action/authorSubmission?journalCode=rijh20&page=instructions>

Manuscripts must be submitted online using *International Journal of Human Resource Management* Scholar One Manuscripts site (<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/rijh>) and in accordance with the author guidelines on the journal's home page. New users should first create an account. Once a user is logged on to the site submissions should be made via the Author Centre.

To submit your manuscript to the Special Issue on "*Gig work: Implications for the Employment Relationship and Human Resource Management*", choose the title of the Special Issue from the Manuscript Type list. When you arrive at the 'Details and Comments' page, answer 'yes' to the question 'Is this manuscript a candidate for a special issue' and insert the title of the special issue in the text field provided.

Authors of prospective papers are welcome to discuss their ideas with any of the guest editors in advance:

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### **Important Dates**

Paper submission deadline: 27 March 2019

Anticipated publication date: April 2020