

REMOTE WORK ENVIRONMENT AND WORK MOTIVATION IN
RELATION TO JOB SATISFACTION AMONG INDONESIAN GIG
WORKERS ON INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL PLATFORMSTessalonika Gabriela Rotty¹, David P.E. Saerang², Emilia Margareth Gunawan³

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Abstract

This study examines the relationships between remote work environment, work motivation, and job satisfaction among Indonesian gig workers on international digital platforms. A quantitative correlational design was used with 100 gig workers who had at least six months of platform work experience. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Spearman's rank correlation. The findings showed significant positive relationships among all three variables, with work motivation having the strongest relationship with job satisfaction. Respondents also reported very high levels of remote work environment, work motivation, and job satisfaction. The study highlights the importance of work motivation and a supportive remote work environment in relation to job satisfaction among Indonesian gig workers.

Keywords: Remote Work Environment; Work Motivation; Job Satisfaction; Platform Work; Indonesian Gig Workers

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara lingkungan kerja jarak jauh, motivasi kerja, dan kepuasan kerja pada pekerja gig asal Indonesia di platform digital internasional. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuantitatif korelasional dengan 100 pekerja gig yang telah memiliki pengalaman bekerja di platform digital selama minimal enam bulan. Data dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan korelasi Spearman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya hubungan positif yang signifikan antara ketiga variabel, dengan motivasi kerja memiliki hubungan paling kuat dengan kepuasan kerja. Responden juga menunjukkan tingkat lingkungan kerja jarak jauh, motivasi kerja, dan kepuasan kerja yang sangat tinggi. Penelitian ini menyoroti pentingnya motivasi kerja dan lingkungan kerja jarak jauh yang mendukung dalam kaitannya dengan kepuasan kerja pekerja gig di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Lingkungan Kerja Jarak Jauh; Motivasi Kerja; Kepuasan Kerja; Pekerjaan Berbasis Platform; Pekerja Gig Indonesia

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1. Introduction

Over the past decade, the global gig economy has evolved from a niche trend into a defining feature of the international labor market. Digital platforms such as Upwork, Fiverr, and Freelancer.com have enabled millions of freelancers worldwide to offer their skills directly to international clients on a project or task basis, outside the traditional employment framework. This platform-based model has given rise to digital freelancers who work from their own spaces, set their own hours, collaborate across borders, and are frequently paid in foreign currencies. For many Indonesian workers, particularly in cities where formal employment opportunities are

limited, gig platforms represent a path to financial mobility, since compensation in US dollars from international clients creates an income advantage.

The scale of this phenomenon is reflected in the Upwork Research Institute (2025), which reports that web, mobile, and software development account for the largest share of platform freelance skills (34%), followed by writing (18%) and administration and support (11%). The same report documents that 60% of platform freelancers work entirely remotely, compared with only 32% of non-freelance professionals, and estimates total global freelance earnings for 2024 at USD 1.5 trillion. Domestically, Indonesia's labor market remains dominated by informal arrangements. Badan Pusat Statistik (2025) recorded 146.54 million employed workers as of August 2025, of whom approximately 57.80% work informally, while Permana (2023) estimates that around 2.3 million Indonesian workers rely on gig platforms as their primary source of income.

Although gig and freelance work are often associated with structural informality and income uncertainty, survey evidence consistently shows that gig workers report higher job satisfaction and well-being than traditionally employed counterparts. The PEW Research Center (2024) found that 60% of gig workers report satisfaction with their jobs compared with 49% of traditional workers, the Upwork Research Institute (2025) found that 75% of gig workers report greater freedom at work compared with 61% of non-freelance workers, and MBO Partners (2024) found that 82% of gig workers report being satisfied with their work overall, with 48% citing autonomy as their primary motivation for entering freelance work. This pattern is consistent with self-determination theory, which positions autonomy as a fundamental driver of intrinsic motivation and well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Despite these contributions, limited empirical study has yet comprehensively examined the simultaneous, reciprocal relationships between remote work environment, work motivation, and job satisfaction specifically among Indonesian gig workers on international digital platforms. Existing studies have largely focused on employees in organizational settings, where institutional support systems and employment contracts fundamentally shape workers' experiences, a condition that does not apply to independent platform workers whose entire professional and financial existence is mediated by cross-border platforms. This study addresses that gap by proposing reciprocal relationships among the three variables, using an integrated correlation framework that has not previously been applied to this population. Accordingly, this study aims to examine (1) the relationship between remote work environment and job satisfaction, (2) the relationship between work motivation and job satisfaction, and (3) the relationship between remote work environment and work motivation, each considered bidirectionally, among Indonesian gig workers on international digital platforms.

2. Literature Review

Remote Work Environment

Remote work environment refers to the full set of conditions that allow employees to perform their jobs outside a traditional office setting, encompassing both physical aspects such as digital

tools and internet connectivity, and organizational aspects such as task delegation, communication, and autonomy (Robbins & Judge, 2017). This study draws on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker & Leiter, 2010; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which distinguishes job demands, the pressures employees face, from job resources, such as autonomy, technology access, and communication structures, that help employees cope with those demands. The model proposes that sufficient job resources mitigate the negative impact of high demands and help employees remain engaged rather than burning out.

Work Motivation

Work motivation refers to the internal and external forces that drive an individual to direct and sustain effort toward work-related goals (Robbins & Judge, 2017). This study applies Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan (1985) and elaborated by Ryan and Deci (2017), which proposes that motivation ranges from extrinsic, driven by external rewards, to intrinsic, driven by genuine interest and inherent satisfaction. This is complemented by Herzberg's (1966) Two-Factor Theory, which holds that intrinsic factors such as achievement and recognition are closely tied to motivation and satisfaction, while extrinsic factors such as salary primarily prevent dissatisfaction.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as the positive feelings toward a job that arise from an evaluation of its characteristics, reflecting the extent to which a job aligns with an individual's expectations, needs, and values (Robbins & Judge, 2017). For gig workers, job satisfaction is shaped not only by the nature of tasks but also by platform systems and client interactions, which tend to be more flexible yet less structured than in conventional employment.

Hypothesis and Research Model

Building on the JD-R Model, a more supportive remote work environment is expected to reduce job demands and improve workers' evaluations of their jobs, while satisfied workers are, in turn, expected to invest more in shaping and sustaining that environment. Similarly, Self-Determination Theory suggests that motivated workers evaluate their jobs more positively, while satisfied workers tend to sustain higher motivation over time, and motivated workers proactively reshape their environment to better meet their psychological needs (a process termed "need crafting" by Olafsen et al., 2025). Prior studies support these directional patterns in remote and platform-based work settings, including Jawabri et al. (2022), Orešković et al. (2023), Brunelle and Fortin (2021), Costantini and Weintraub (2022), Lay-Raby et al. (2025), Ong et al. (2026), Aljumah (2023), Stenling et al. (2026), and R. Emmaniel et al. (2025). Since platform-based gig workers exercise a comparatively high degree of agency over their platforms, clients, and schedules, this study proposes that each pair of variables is reciprocally related, as summarized in the hypotheses below.

H1 Remote work environment has a significant relationship with job satisfaction among Indonesian gig workers on international digital platforms.

H2 Job satisfaction has a significant relationship with remote work environment among Indonesian gig workers on international digital platforms.

H3 Work motivation has a significant relationship with job satisfaction among Indonesian gig workers on international digital platforms.

H4 Job satisfaction has a significant relationship with work motivation among Indonesian gig workers on international digital platforms.

H5 Remote work environment has a significant relationship with work motivation among Indonesian gig workers on international digital platforms.

H6 Work motivation has a significant relationship with remote work environment among Indonesian gig workers on international digital platforms.

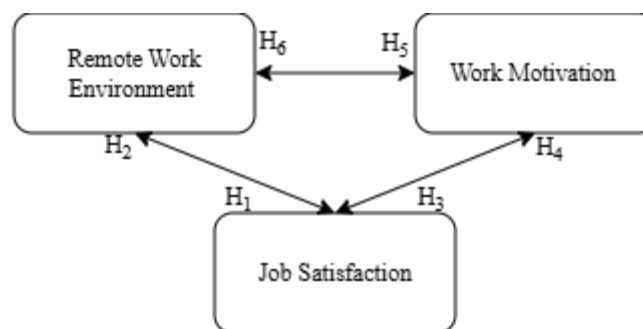


Figure 2.1 Research Model

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach with a correlational design to examine the reciprocal relationships among remote work environment, work motivation, and job satisfaction (Creswell, 2014). A correlational design was chosen because the study aims to determine how closely the variables are related. (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

The target population consists of Indonesian workers who work, or previously worked, fully remotely for digital service platforms, including virtual assistance, data entry, content moderation, customer support, and digital marketing. Because this population is geographically dispersed and not listed in any single registry, the population size is treated as unknown. The sample size was therefore determined using the Lemeshow formula ($n = Z^2 \times P(1 - P) / d^2$), with a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$), an estimated proportion of $P = 0.5$, and a margin of error of $d = 0.10$, yielding a minimum required sample of 97 respondents, rounded up to 100 to allow for data-quality issues (Lemeshow et al., 1990). Respondents were selected through purposive sampling (Etikan, 2016), applying three inclusion criteria: (1) Indonesian citizens who currently or previously worked remotely on international digital platforms for at least six months; (2) engagement in digital service activities such as virtual assistance, data entry, customer support, digital marketing, or content-related tasks; and (3) freelancing as their primary source of income.

Primary data were collected through a self-administered online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms between 26 June and 6 July 2026, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A total of 100 valid responses were obtained.

Secondary data supporting the literature review and theoretical framework were drawn from academic journals, books, and institutional reports.

4. Result and Discussion

Respondent Profile

Table 4.1 Respondent Characteristics (N = 100)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Female	58	58.0
	Male	42	42.0
Age	18-24 years	39	39.0
	25-34 years	58	58.0
	35-44 years	3	3.0
Education	Bachelor's degree	79	79.0
	High school / equivalent	17	17.0
	Master's degree / Diploma	4	4.0
Primary platform	Upwork	82	82.0
	Fiverr / Invisible / other	18	18.0
Experience	6 months - <1 year	40	40.0
	1-3 years	48	48.0
	>3 years	12	12.0
Weekly hours	<10 hours	14	14.0
	10-20 hours	41	41.0
	21-40 hours	45	45.0

Source: Data Processed (2026)

Most respondents were female (58%), aged 25-34 years (58%), and held a bachelor's degree (79%). Upwork was the dominant platform (82%), and nearly half of respondents had 1-3 years of gig-work experience (48%), spending 21-40 hours per week on platform work (45%). Overall, respondents were generally young, well-educated adults with experience in platform-based gig work.

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Category
Remote Work Environment (RWE)	4.36	Very High
Work Motivation (WM)	4.28	Very High
Job Satisfaction (JS)	4.33	Very High

All three variables fell in the Very High category. For Remote Work Environment, the highest

rated items concerned location flexibility and internet or device readiness, while platform-side problem support scored comparatively lower. For Work Motivation, items WM1 ("I feel free to decide how I complete my work") and WM3 ("I feel capable when completing projects") were excluded from the final composite score due to weak item-total correlations, leaving a seven-item scale with a mean of 4.28. For Job Satisfaction, satisfaction with income received the highest mean score of all 27 indicators across the three variables, underscoring compensation as a particularly strong driver of positive work evaluations.

Validity, Reliability, and Normality Test

All 27 questionnaire items produced Pearson r -count values above the r -table threshold of 0.197 ($n = 100$, $df = 98$, $\alpha = 0.05$), confirming item validity. Reliability testing produced Cronbach's alpha values of 0.831 for Remote Work Environment and 0.748 for Job Satisfaction, both indicating good internal consistency. The initial nine-item Work Motivation scale produced an alpha of only 0.610, however after removing WM1 and WM3, the final seven-item scale achieved an alpha of 0.621, considered acceptable for exploratory research (Hair et al., 2019). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test indicated that all three variables deviated significantly from normality ($p < .001$), warranting the use of Spearman's rank-order correlation for hypothesis testing.

Correlation and Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 4.3 Spearman's rho correlation results (interpretation follows Schober et al., 2018).

Variable Pair	ρ (rho)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Strength	Direction
RWE $\leftrightarrow$ JS	0.222	0.026	Weak	Positive
WM $\leftrightarrow$ JS	0.400	0.000	Moderate	Positive
RWE $\leftrightarrow$ WM	0.380	0.000	Weak	Positive

Table 4.4 Summary of hypothesis testing results

Hypothesis	Relationship	ρ (rho)	Sig.	Result
H1	RWE $\rightarrow$ JS	0.222	0.026	Supported
H2	JS $\rightarrow$ RWE	0.222	0.026	Supported
H3	WM $\rightarrow$ JS	0.400	0.000	Supported
H4	JS $\rightarrow$ WM	0.400	0.000	Supported
H5	RWE $\rightarrow$ WM	0.380	0.000	Supported
H6	WM $\rightarrow$ RWE	0.380	0.000	Supported

All six hypotheses were supported at $p < 0.05$, indicating that remote work environment, work motivation, and job satisfaction are significantly and positively associated with one another. Because Spearman's correlation measures association, a significant coefficient was interpreted as supporting both directional hypotheses within each pair, consistent with the theoretical justification for reciprocity rather than statistical evidence of causality alone.

Discussion

H1. Remote Work Environment and Job Satisfaction

H1 is supported, although the correlation is weak ($p = .222$, $p = .026$). This means that a better remote work environment is related to higher job satisfaction, but the relationship is not very strong. This result can be explained using the JD-R Theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), which states that job resources such as tools, support, and autonomy help produce positive outcomes for workers, including job satisfaction. This finding is also in line with R. Emmaniel et al. (2025) and Jawabri et al. (2022), who found similar positive relationships between remote work environment and job satisfaction. The weak correlation in this study may happen because most respondents already rated their remote work environment as Very High, with 82% of them working through Upwork, a platform that already provides good support features. Because most respondents already had a good environment, there was not much difference left to explain differences in job satisfaction.

H2. Job Satisfaction and Remote Work Environment

H2 is also supported by the same result. This suggests that workers who are more satisfied with their jobs also tend to take better care of their work environment, for example by upgrading their equipment or improving their workspace. This is supported by Orešković et al. (2023), who found that more satisfied employees were more willing to improve their home working setup. Most previous studies only look at remote work environment as something that affects job satisfaction, not the other way around. However, since gig workers have more freedom to choose their platform, clients, and how they work compared to regular employees, it is reasonable that satisfaction can also influence how they build their environment.

H3. Work Motivation and Job Satisfaction

H3 shows the strongest relationship among the three variable pairs ($p = .400$, $p < .001$). This means workers who are more motivated also tend to feel more satisfied with their jobs. This can be explained by Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which says that when people do meaningful work by their own choice, they tend to evaluate their job more positively. This finding matches Ong et al. (2026) and Aljumah (2023), who also found a positive relationship between motivation and job satisfaction among gig and remote workers. In this study, the highest-rated motivation items were both extrinsic, having control over work schedules and receiving good pay. Income satisfaction was also the highest-rated item out of all indicators in the questionnaire. This suggests that pay and flexibility are the two things that matter most for job satisfaction in this sample.

H4. Job Satisfaction and Work Motivation

H4 is supported with the same result, showing that job satisfaction can also increase work motivation. This is consistent with Ryan and Deci (2017), who explain that satisfying work experiences help maintain motivation over time. Aljumah (2023) and Ong et al. (2026) also found that satisfaction and motivation can affect each other, not only in one direction. Most previous research only tests motivation as something that leads to satisfaction, so this reciprocal finding adds a new perspective. Respondents who worked as virtual assistants or in

administrative roles, where they often get feedback from clients, reported the highest satisfaction, which may explain why this group also tends to stay motivated.

H5. Remote Work Environment and Work Motivation

H5 is supported ($p = .380$, $p < .001$), meaning a better work environment is related to higher motivation. This can be explained by both JD-R Theory and Self-Determination Theory, since a supportive environment gives workers the resources and freedom they need to stay motivated (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Deci & Ryan, 2000). This is also supported by Jawabri et al. (2022) and Stenling et al. (2026), who found that a good remote work environment can increase motivation. In this study, respondents who worked longer hours per week scored higher on both variables. The most valued items in the remote work environment variable were the freedom to choose working hours and location, which shows that flexibility plays an important role in keeping gig workers motivated.

H6. Work Motivation and Remote Work Environment

H6 is also supported, showing that motivation can influence how workers shape their environment. Motivated workers do not only adjust to their environment, but they also try to improve it to fit their needs, a concept known as need crafting (Olafsen et al., 2025). This is supported by Stenling et al. (2026) and Costantini and Weintraub (2022), who found that motivated workers tend to take more initiative in changing their work conditions. This relationship is not commonly discussed in previous studies, but it makes sense for gig workers since they do not have a fixed employer and have more freedom to change how they work. In this study, respondents working in creative fields and those with more than three years of experience scored highest in both motivation and remote work environment, suggesting that this ability to shape one's environment may develop over time.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Remote Work Environment and Job Satisfaction are positively related among Indonesian platform-based gig workers, supporting H1 and H2.
2. Work Motivation and Job Satisfaction are positively related among Indonesian platform-based gig workers, supporting H3 and H4.
3. Remote Work Environment and Work Motivation are positively related among Indonesian platform-based gig workers, supporting H5 and H6.
4. Respondents generally reported very high perceptions of their Remote Work Environment, Work Motivation, and Job Satisfaction, reflecting positive experiences in platform-based gig work.
5. Overall, these findings suggest that Remote Work Environment, Work Motivation, and Job Satisfaction are closely interconnected among Indonesian platform-based gig workers.

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