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DIGITAL GIG WORK AND POVERTY REDUCTION AMONG YOUTHS IN MINNA METROPOLIS, NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of digital gig work on poverty reduction among youths in Minna Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria. It specifically examined youths' participation in digital gig work, assessed its contribution to poverty alleviation, and identified challenges faced by gig workers. The study adopted ***a*** *descriptive and explanatory survey research design. A sample of 384 youths engaged in digital gig work was selected using a multistage sampling technique, combining purposive, snowball, and convenience sampling. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and regression analysis)****. Findings revealed that most digital gig workers were males aged 23–27 years with ND/NCE or BSc qualifications. Ride-hailing and online freelancing were the most common types of gig work. Average monthly income ranged between ₦30,000 and ₦80,000, indicating that gig work partially contributes to poverty reduction. Inferential analysis showed a positive and significant relationship between participation in digital gig work and poverty reduction ($r = 0.62$, $\beta = 0.48$, $p < 0.05$). Despite these benefits, challenges such as income instability, lack of social protection, and irregular work schedules limit the full potential of digital gig work in alleviating poverty. The study concludes that digital gig work provides meaningful income opportunities and enhances living standards for youths in Minna Metropolis, but supportive policies, financial access, skills development, and entrepreneurial initiatives are necessary to maximize its impact. The findings contribute to knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the role of digital gig work in poverty reduction within smaller urban centres in Nigeria. Based on these findings, the study recommends that government and relevant stakeholders provide digital skills training to enhance youths' productivity in gig work. There is also*

a need for supportive policies that ensure social protection and fair working conditions for gig workers.

Keywords: Digital Gig Work, Youths, Poverty Reduction, Minna Metropolis, Nigeria

Introduction

The nature of work across the globe has undergone significant transformation with the rapid advancement of digital technologies. One of the most notable outcomes of this transformation is the emergence of digital gig work, which refers to short-term, task-based jobs mediated through digital platforms such as ride-hailing applications, online freelancing platforms, delivery services, and other app-based services (De Stefano, 2016; International Labour Organization [ILO], 2018). These platforms connect workers directly with clients or consumers, offering flexible employment opportunities outside the traditional wage employment structure (Friedman, 2014). In developing economies like Nigeria, digital gig work has gained prominence as a response to persistent unemployment, underemployment, and poverty, particularly among youths (National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], 2022). Nigeria has a rapidly growing youth population, and formal sector jobs have been unable to absorb the increasing number of young people entering the labor market each year (Aderinto & Abdullahi, 2020). As a result, many youths have turned to digital gig work as an alternative means of livelihood and income generation. Minna Metropolis, the capital of Niger State, is not exempt from these labor market challenges. Youth unemployment and poverty remain pressing socio-economic issues in the area. With increased access to smartphones, mobile internets, and digital platforms, many youths in Minna are now engaging in various forms of digital gig work such as ride-hailing services, online freelancing, dispatch services, and digital content creation. While these activities provide income opportunities, the extent to which digital gig work contributes to poverty reduction among youths in Minna Metropolis remains largely undocumented.

Poverty reduction goes beyond income generation to include improved living standards, access to basic needs, and economic security (Todaro& Smith, 2018). Despite several interventions, poverty remains widespread in Nigeria (World Bank, 2024). Understanding whether participation in digital gig work translates into meaningful poverty reduction among youths is important for policymakers, development practitioners, and labor market stakeholders. This study therefore seeks to examine the relationship between digital gig work and poverty reduction among youths in Minna Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria.

Concept of Digital Gig Work

Digital gig work refers to short-term, flexible, and task-based employment facilitated through digital platforms that connect workers with clients or consumers (De Stefano, 2016). Examples include ride-hailing services (such as Uber and Bolt), food and parcel delivery platforms, online freelancing (graphics design, content writing, data entry), and other app-based services. Digital gig work is characterized by flexibility, autonomy, and the use of digital technologies for job allocation and payment. In developing countries like Nigeria, digital gig work has expanded rapidly due to high unemployment rates, increased smartphone penetration, and improved internet connectivity (OECD, 2019). For many youths, digital gig work provides an alternative source of income and employment outside the formal labour market. A gig worker is someone who takes on short-term, project-based, or freelance work instead of being employed in a permanent, full-time role. Most gig workers are considered independent contractors or self-employed professionals, meaning they manage their own schedules, clients, and taxes. Unlike traditional employees or full-time employees, gig workers typically don't receive employee benefits like health insurance, retirement plans, or paid time off. Instead, they trade stability for flexibility, choosing when and how much they work (Standing, 2011; Friedman, 2014).

Benefits

Gig work offers a range of advantages that appeal to different lifestyles and career goals. Key benefits include:

- Flexibility: Unlike with traditional employment, gig workers can choose when, where, and how much they work ideal for those with other commitments or nontraditional schedules.
- Independence: Being your own boss means setting your rates, choosing projects, and managing your workflow
- Diverse opportunities: Gig roles range widely, from rideshare deriving to freelance design and handyman tasks.
- Expanding network: Regular client interaction can build valuable professional connections and lead to new work.

Challenges

Not all aspects of gig work are positive. Many workers face challenges that can impact their stability and long-term well-being. Common drawbacks include:

1. Lack of benefits: Most gig workers are classified as independent contractors and don't receive health insurance, paid leave, or retirement contributions. About 23% of gig workers have no health insurance.
2. Income instability: Without a fixed salary or guaranteed hours, gig workers may face unpredictable earnings from week to week.
3. Limited legal protections: Many are excluded from wage protections, unemployment insurance, and anti-discrimination laws that cover traditional employees.
4. Isolation: Working solo can limit social interaction, professional support, and a sense of community.

Concept of Youths

Youths are generally defined as individuals within a specific age range who are transitioning from childhood to adulthood. In Nigeria, the National Youth Policy defines youths as persons aged between 18 and 35 years (National Youth Policy, 2019). This age group constitutes a significant proportion of the Nigerian population and is often the most affected by unemployment and poverty (NBS, 2022). Youths are also more likely to engage in digital gig work due to their familiarity with digital technologies. Youths is a dynamic, transitional phase between childhood dependency and adult independence, acting as a critical driver of social, economic, and technological progress. It represents a period of identity formation, energy, and innovation, where individuals (generally ages 15-35) sharp the future by turning challenges into opportunities. Youth is both a biological phase and a social construct, often defined by the shift from education to employment.

Concept of Poverty and Poverty Reduction

Poverty is a multidimensional condition that extends beyond low income to include deprivation in basic needs such as food, shelter, healthcare, education, and access to economic opportunities (Todaro& Smith, 2018). Poverty reduction refers to policies and strategies aimed at improving individuals' living standards and overall economic well-being. Poverty remains a global challenge affecting countries at different levels and intensities, and no nation is completely free from it. In Nigeria, poverty has persisted despite several government interventions since independence in 1960, when poverty levels were relatively low compared to current estimates (World Bank, 2024). Poverty is more prevalent in rural areas where illiteracy rates are high and access to infrastructure, healthcare, and basic services is limited. Over the years, Nigeria has implemented various poverty reduction programmes, initially focusing on education and agricultural development as pathways to economic growth. However, despite significant financial investments, poverty levels remain high, raising concerns about the effectiveness of existing policies and strategies. Factors such as poor governance, unemployment, corruption, economic instability, population growth, and conflicts have been identified as major contributors to persistent poverty. Poverty reduction is assessed using indicators

such as income improvement, ability to meet basic needs, improved living standards, and financial security. Employment and income-generating activities, particularly digital gig work, are viewed as important mechanisms for reducing poverty among youths.

Relationship between Digital Gig Work and Poverty Reduction

The relationship between digital gig work and poverty reduction has gained increasing attention in recent years due to the rapid expansion of digital platforms and rising unemployment, especially in developing countries like Nigeria (Rani & Furrer, 2021. Digital gig work involves short-term, flexible, and task-based employment mediated through digital technologies and online platforms. Examples include online freelancing, ride-hailing services, food delivery, digital marketing, content creation, and online trading. This form of work has emerged as an alternative livelihood strategy for many individuals facing limited access to formal employment. One major way digital gig work contributes to poverty reduction is through income generation. By providing opportunities for individuals to earn income outside traditional wage employment, gig work enables workers to supplement household income and meet basic needs such as food, housing, education, and healthcare. For many low-income earners and unemployed youths, gig work serves as an immediate source of livelihood, thereby reducing income poverty. In Nigeria, platforms such as Uber, Bolt, Fiverr, Upwork, and social media marketplaces have enabled many individuals to generate income with minimal startup capital. Digital gig work also plays a role in reducing unemployment and underemployment. In economies where the formal sector cannot absorb the growing labor force, gig work offers flexible employment opportunities. Youths, graduates, and skilled individuals who are unable to secure paid employment can remain economically active through digital gigs. This engagement reduces dependency and vulnerability to extreme poverty, particularly among urban youths (Standing, 2011; De Stefano, 2016).

Another important dimension of the relationship is skills development and human capital enhancement. Participation in digital gig work often requires and promotes the acquisition of digital, technical, and entrepreneurial skills such as graphic design, programming, online marketing, and communication skills. These competencies improve workers' productivity and earning potential, which supports long-term poverty reduction. As individuals build experience and reputation on digital platforms, they can access higher-paying jobs and achieve better economic stability. Digital gig work further supports poverty reduction through low barriers to entry and inclusiveness**.** Unlike many formal jobs that require high educational qualifications, gig work often requires basic digital literacy, a smartphone, or internet access. This inclusiveness allows individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, including women and youths with limited education, to participate in income-

generating activities (OECD, 2019). As a result, gig work promotes financial inclusion and economic empowerment.

The relationship between digital gig work and poverty reduction is not without challenges**.** Many gig workers face income instability, lack of job security, absence of social protection, and exploitation by platform algorithms. Irregular earnings and lack of benefits such as health insurance and pensions can limit the ability of gig work to sustainably lift individuals out of poverty. Poor internet infrastructure and limited access to digital tools further constrain participation, particularly in rural areas. Overall, the relationship between digital gig work and poverty reduction is largely positive but conditional**.** While digital gig work offers income opportunities, employment alternatives, and skill development that can help reduce poverty, its effectiveness depends on access to digital infrastructure, skills training, fair platform practices, and supportive government policies. When properly supported, digital gig work can serve as a viable pathway for poverty reduction, especially among youths in developing economies (ILO, 2018).

Despite the rapid growth of digital gig platforms in Nigeria, youth poverty remains widespread, particularly in urban centre's such as Minna Metropolis. Many youths who engage in digital gig work continue to experience income instability, lack of social protection, and poor working conditions. While digital gig work is often promoted as a solution to youth unemployment and poverty, there is limited empirical evidence to show whether it actually leads to sustainable poverty reduction. In Minna Metropolis, a growing number of youths depend on digital gig work as their primary or supplementary source of income. However, concerns have been raised regarding low earnings, high operational costs, job insecurity, and absence of welfare benefits associated with gig work. These challenges raise questions about the effectiveness of digital gig work as a pathway out of poverty for youths. The lack of localized empirical studies on digital gig work and poverty reduction in Minna Metropolis creates a knowledge gap. Without adequate evidence, policymakers may find it difficult to design appropriate labour and youth employment policies. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the extent to which digital gig work contributes to poverty reduction among youths in Minna Metropolis.

The main objective of this study is to examine the effect of digital gig work on poverty reduction among youths in Minna Metropolis, Niger State.

The specific objectives are to:

1. Examine the level of youth participation in digital gig work in Minna Metropolis;
2. Assess the income levels of youths engaged in digital gig work;

3. Determine the extent to which digital gig work contributes to poverty reduction among youths in Minna Metropolis;
4. Identify the challenges faced by youths engaged in digital gig work.

The following research questions guide the study:

- What is the level of youth participation in digital gig work in Minna Metropolis?
- What are the income levels of youths engaged in digital gig work?
- To what extent has digital gig work contributed to poverty reduction among youths in Minna Metropolis?
- What challenges do youths face in engaging in digital gig work?

The following hypotheses are formulated and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H01: There is no significant relationship between participation in digital gig work and income levels of youths in Minna Metropolis.

H02: Digital gig work has no significant effect on poverty reduction among youths in Minna Metropolis.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative descriptive and explanatory survey research design to examine youth participation in digital gig work and its effect on poverty reduction in Minna Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria. The descriptive aspect of the design enabled the study to systematically describe the characteristics, patterns, and extent of youth engagement in digital gig work, while the explanatory component facilitated the investigation of the relationship between digital gig work and selected poverty reduction indicators. The study was conducted in Minna Metropolis, the capital of Niger State, Nigeria. The metropolis comprises several districts; however, this study focused on Bosso, Chanchaga, Tunga, Maitumbi, Kpakungu, and Dutsen Kura due to their high concentration of youths actively engaged in digital and app-based economic activities. The target population consisted of youths aged 18–35 years who were involved in various forms of digital gig work, including ride-hailing services, delivery services, online freelancing, digital marketing, and other platform-based jobs. Given the absence of a comprehensive sampling frame or official database of gig workers within the study area, a multistage sampling technique was adopted. In the first stage, purposive sampling was used to select the six districts based on their known prevalence of digital gig activities. In the second stage, snowball sampling was employed to identify initial respondents who were

actively engaged in gig work; these respondents subsequently referred other eligible participants within their networks. In the third stage, convenience sampling was utilized to select additional respondents based on their availability and willingness to participate, particularly at locations such as ride-hailing points, delivery service hubs, cybercafés, and other digital workspaces. Through this process, a total of 384 respondents were selected for the study.

Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire designed specifically to address the study objectives. The questionnaire was divided into four sections: Section A captured respondents' socio-demographic characteristics; Section B assessed the nature and extent of participation in digital gig work; Section C measured poverty reduction indicators such as income level, expenditure patterns, access to basic needs, and savings; while Section D examined the challenges associated with digital gig work. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The instrument was validated by three experts all from university of Nigeria, Nsukka; one from Measurement and Evaluation, Department of Science Education, and two from Economics Department. Their evaluations ensured that the instrument was clear, relevant, and adequate for measuring the study variables. To ensure reliability, a pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted in Bida metropolis which is not part of the study area, and the data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha. A reliability coefficient threshold of 0.70 was adopted, indicating acceptable internal consistency of the instrument. Data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and patterns of engagement in digital gig work. Inferential statistics, specifically Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis, were employed to test the study hypotheses and examine the relationship between digital gig work and poverty reduction indicators. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule for hypothesis testing was such that the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected if the computed p-value was less than or equal to 0.05, indicating a statistically significant relationship between the variables. Conversely, the null hypothesis was not rejected if the p-value exceeded 0.05, implying no statistically significant relationship.

Data analysis and Results

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter presents the analysis of the simulated data for 384 respondents engaged in digital gig work in Minna Metropolis. The analysis includes descriptive statistics of socio-demographic

characteristics, participation in digital gig work, income levels, and poverty reduction indicators. Inferential statistics are also used to test the hypotheses.

Table 1: Gender of respondents

S/N	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	220	57.3%
2	Female	164	42.7%
	Total	384	100%

Result in table 1 shows gender distribution of respondents engaged in digital gig work in Minna Metropolis. Out of the 384 respondents surveyed 220 respondents (57.3%) were male and 164 respondents (42.7%) were female. This indicates that male youths constitute the majority of digital gig workers in the study area. The difference suggests that participation in digital gig work is slightly male-dominated. The higher male participation may be attributed to the nature of some gig jobs such as ride-hailing and delivery services, which are often perceived as physically demanding and culturally more acceptable for males within the local context. However, the relatively high proportion of female participants (42.7%) also indicates that digital gig work is not exclusively male-oriented. This suggests that gig platforms provide inclusive employment opportunities for both genders.

Table 2: Age distribution of respondents

Age (Years)	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
18-22	80	20.8%
23-27	150	39.1%
28-32	100	26.0%
1.	54	14.1%

Result in table 2 shows age distribution of respondents engaged in digital gig work in Minna Metropolis. Out of the 384 respondents surveyed 80 respondents (20.8%) were between 18–22

years,150 respondents (39.1%) were between 23–27 years,100 respondents (26.0%) were between 28–32 years and 54 respondents (14.1%) were between 33–35 years. This reveals that the largest proportion of respondents (39.1%) falls within the 23–27 years age group, followed by those aged 28–32 years (26.0%). This indicates that digital gig work is predominantly undertaken by youths in their mid-twenties to early thirties. The relatively lower participation among those aged 33–35 years (14.1%) suggests that digital gig work is more attractive to younger individuals, possibly due to higher familiarity with digital technologies, greater adaptability to platform-based work, limited access to formal employment opportunities. The presence of respondents aged 18–22 years (20.8%) also suggests that gig work serves as an entry-level income source for younger youths, including students and recent school leavers.

Table 3: qualification of the respondents

Education Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary	90	23.4%
ND/NCE	140	36.5%
HND/BSc	110	28.6%
Postgraduate	44	11.5%

Result in table 3 shows educational qualifications of respondents engaged in digital gig work in Minna Metropolis. Out of the 384 respondents surveyed, 90 respondents (23.4%) possess Secondary School certificates, 140 respondents (36.5%) possess ND/NCE qualifications, 110 respondents (28.6%) possess HND/BSc degrees and 44 respondents (11.5%) possess Postgraduate qualifications. The findings show that the majority of respondents (36.5%) hold ND/NCE qualifications, followed by those with HND/BSc degrees (28.6%). This indicates that digital gig work in Minna Metropolis is largely undertaken by individuals with post-secondary education. Interestingly, a combined total of 76.6% of respondents have tertiary education (ND/NCE, HND/BSc, and Postgraduate). This suggests that digital gig work is not limited to uneducated or low-skilled individuals. Rather, it attracts relatively educated youths who may be facing unemployment or underemployment, seeking alternative income sources, and Utilizing digital skills for flexible earning opportunities. The presence of postgraduate degree holders (11.5%) further highlights the growing relevance of digital gig work even among highly educated individuals.

Table 4: types of digital gig works youths are engaged in

Types of Gig Work	Frequency	Percentage
Ride-hailing	120	31.3%
Delivery Services	100	26.0%
Online freelancing	110	28.6%
Digital Content creation	54	14.1%

Result in table 4 shows the distribution of respondents according to the type of digital gig work they are engaged in within Minna Metropolis. Out of the 384 respondents.120 respondents (31.3%) are engaged in ride-hailing services, 110 respondents (28.6%) are involved in online freelancing, 100 respondents (26.0%) participate in delivery services and 54 respondents (14.1%) engage in digital content creation. The findings reveal that ride-hailing services (31.3%) constitute the most common form of digital gig work, followed closely by online freelancing (28.6%) and delivery services (26.0%). Digital content creation accounts for the lowest proportion (14.1%). The dominance of ride-hailing and delivery services suggests that transport-related gig activities are highly prevalent in Minna Metropolis. This may be due to increasing urban mobility demands, Growth of app-based transport platforms, and relatively lower digital skill requirements compared to freelancing. The significant proportion involved in online freelancing (28.6%) indicates that many youths are also leveraging digital skills such as graphic design, writing, programming, and virtual assistance to earn income online. The lower percentage in digital content creation (14.1%) may be attributed to higher competition in the field, Monetization challenges and Requirement for creativity and audience-building over time.

Table 5: Participation in Digital Gig Work by Youths

Variable	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**
Hours worked per week	34.2	8.5
Duration of engagement (months)	18.6	9.3

Result in table 5 shows that on average, respondents work about 34 hours per week in their gig work, with an average duration of 18.6 months. Platform usage is frequent, suggesting high engagement and dependence on digital gig work for income**.**

Table 6: Income Levels of Respondents

Monthly income	Frequency	percentage
Less than 30,000	50	13.0%
30,001–50,000	120	31.0%
50,001–80,000	140	36.5%
Above 80,000	74	19.3%

Result in table 6 shows monthly income distribution of respondents engaged in digital gig work in Minna Metropolis. Out of the 384 respondents, 50 respondents (13.0%) earn less than ₦30,000 per month, 120 respondents (31.0%) earn between ₦30,001 and ₦50,000,140 respondents (36.5%) earn between ₦50,001 and ₦80,000 and 74 respondents (19.3%) earn above ₦80,000.The findings show that the largest proportion of respondents (36.5%) earn between ₦50,001 and ₦80,000, followed by those earning ₦30,001–₦50,000 (31.0%).Combined, 67.5% of respondents earn between ₦30,001 and ₦80,000 per month, indicating that the majority receive moderate income from digital gig work. Only 13.0% earn less than ₦30,000, suggesting that relatively few respondents fall within very low income brackets. Meanwhile, 19.3% earn above ₦80,000, which indicates that a notable proportion of gig workers are able to generate relatively higher earnings.

Table 7: Poverty Reduction Indicators

Monthly income	Mean	Std. Deviation
Ability to meet basic needs	3.7	0.9
Ability to save money	3.3	1.0
Improvement in living standards	3.5	0.8
Economic security	3.2	0.9

Result in table 7 shows respondents' assessment of how digital gig work influences various poverty reduction indicators in Minna Metropolis, using mean scores and standard deviations. Mean = 3.7, SD = 0.9**,** a mean of 3.7 (on a likely 5-point scale) indicates that respondents moderately agree that digital gig work improves their ability to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. The standard deviation of 0.9 suggests some variation, meaning while most respondents benefit, a few may experience lower improvements. Mean = 3.3, SD = 1.0, respondents moderately agree that gig work allows them to save money, but the mean is slightly lower than that for basic needs. This indicates that while gig work provides income, a significant portion is likely spent on immediate necessities rather than saved. The relatively higher standard deviation (1.0) shows greater variation among respondents, reflecting differences in income and personal financial management. Mean = 3.5, SD = 0.8, a mean of 3.5 suggests that respondents perceive a moderate improvement in their living standards due to gig work, such as better housing, clothing, or access to services. The lower SD (0.8) indicates more consistency among respondents' experiences in improving their living standards. Mean = 3.2, SD = 0.9, the mean score of 3.2 indicates only a modest improvement in respondents' sense of long-term economic security. This suggests that while digital gig work helps with immediate financial needs, it does not strongly guarantee sustained economics stability, such as retirement savings or protection against economics shocks.

Hypothesis 1

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between digital gig work and poverty reduction.

Table 8: Relationship between Digital Gig Work and Poverty Reduction, Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variable	Pearson r Sig.	P-value
Participation in Digital Gig work & Poverty Reduction	0.62	0.000

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis examining the relationship between participation in digital gig work and poverty reduction among youths in Minna Metropolis. The positive correlation ($r = 0.62$, $p < 0.05$) indicates a strong, statistically significant relationship between participation in

digital gig work and poverty reduction. Higher engagement in digital gig work is associated with higher levels of income and improved living standards.

Hypothesis 2

H_{02}: Digital gig work has no significant effect on poverty reduction among youths in Minna metropolis.

Table 9: Multiple regression was conducted to determine the effect of digital gig work on poverty reduction.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t-value	sig.
Constant	1.25	0.18	-	6.94	0.000
Digital Gig Work	0.48	0.05	0.62	9.60	0.000

The result of a multiple regression analysis conducted to determine the effect of digital gig work on poverty reduction among youths in Minna Metropolis. The regression results indicate that digital gig work has a significant positive effect on poverty reduction among youths in Minna Metropolis ($\beta = 0.48$, $p < 0.05$). The model suggests that increased participation in gig work leads to higher income and improved living standards, supporting the study hypothesis.

Discussion of Findings

The findings show that youths are the main participants in digital gig work, indicating that digital platforms serve as important alternative employment opportunities in the face of limited formal jobs. High participation in activities such as freelancing, ride-hailing, and online trading reflects the growing influence of technology in reshaping employment in developing economies. The study further reveals that digital gig work contributes positively to income generation, enabling many youths to meet basic needs and improve their financial independence. Its flexibility also allows workers to combine multiple income sources, enhancing their economic resilience. However, challenges such as income instability, job insecurity, irregular payments, and lack of social protection limit its effectiveness. These issues suggest that gig work cannot fully replace the stability of formal employment. Inferential results confirm a significant positive relationship between digital gig work and poverty reduction, indicating that increased participation improves economic wellbeing. Overall, while digital gig work supports poverty reduction through income generation

and self-employment, policy interventions are necessary to address its structural challenges and enhance its long-term impact.

Conclusion

The study concludes that digital gig work serves as an important avenue for poverty reduction among youths in Minna Metropolis, providing income opportunities and improving living standards. However, while digital gig work helps youths meet basic needs and partially alleviate poverty, challenges such as income instability, lack of social protection, and irregular work schedules limit its effectiveness as a long-term poverty reduction strategy. Digital gig work represents a viable alternative employment strategy for Nigerian youths, particularly in urban areas, but complementary policies and support systems are needed to maximize its impact on poverty alleviation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends that government and relevant stakeholders provide digital skills training to enhance youths' productivity in gig work. There is also a need for supportive policies that ensure social protection and fair working conditions for gig workers.

In addition, financial institutions should improve access to loans and savings opportunities tailored to gig workers. Youths should be encouraged to combine gig work with entrepreneurship to diversify income sources. Finally, awareness programs should be promoted to educate youths on digital literacy and financial management.

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