

Why Is Gig Work Not More Widely Used as a Side Job?

- The Current Status of Gig Work and Associated Issues as Revealed By a Questionnaire Survey on the Effects of the Spread of COVID-19 on Telework-based Work Styles, Lifestyle, and Awareness-

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The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a growing interest in “gig work,” the provision of one-time, short-term services, with employers and workers being matched via the Internet. For workers, gig work allows the utilization of skills and time in a highly flexible mode of working; for the providers of gig work, it allows the use of services that meet their needs at an affordable price. However, at the same time, gig workers do not have the guaranteed rights and benefits that are normal for workers. Their income tends to be unstable, and their safety net is fragile. The gig economy is becoming increasingly important to Japanese society amid ongoing labor shortages and soaring prices. We are at a watershed moment in terms of whether or not this new way of working can be developed in a healthy way.

According to the results of NIRA's 9th Questionnaire Survey on the Effects of the Spread of COVID-19 on Telework-based Work Styles, Lifestyle, and Awareness, an estimated 2.75 million people in Japan as a whole, or 4% of all workers, have experience of gig work as a side or concurrent job. Younger workers, self-employed workers with no employees, professional and technical workers, managers, and teleworkers are most likely to engage in gig work. The majority of gig work is white-collar work, such as data entry jobs. This is mainly what might be called “backward-looking gig work,” which is most strongly characterized by supplementation of income from a main job using time that is not taken up in that job. This differs from what we will call “forward-looking gig work,” in which workers work flexibly and efficiently use their own ideas and skills without being tied down to an organization; this is a style of work that has long been expected to eventuate. In order to promote “forward-looking gig work,” it will be essential for companies to become more open to their employees having side jobs and to more appropriately evaluate their workers' skills and guarantee adequate wages, and that the system design of platforms that match workers and work is improved.

This is a translation of a paper originally published in Japanese in March 2023.

1. The Rise of Gig Work

In recent years, “gig work” has been attracting significant attention as a new way of working. The term gig work was coined from “gig” (i.e., a one-off musical performance at a small live music venue, etc.) and “work.” It refers to workers offering the performance of specific jobs or the provision of specific services to customers on a one-time basis, in the main facilitated via services that match the two sides on the Internet. Gig work began to spread, mainly in Europe and the U.S., in the 2000s, and expanded rapidly when the pandemic struck. Gig work is also rapidly increasing in Japan; a typical example of gig work in the nation is work as delivery workers for Uber Eats and similar companies.

The advantages of gig work from a worker's perspective include the flexibility to decide working hours and workload, and the ability to do a variety of jobs utilizing their skills without being bound by employment contracts or organizations. On the other hand, there are also many disadvantages. Gig workers are not affiliated with an organization such as a company, and they therefore have no guaranteed rights and benefits. In addition, their work is determined by matching skill-sets with work online, and work is not always available, meaning that a gig worker's income is necessarily unstable. Furthermore, although this factor is not limited to gig work, routine tasks and jobs that attract a large number of applicants are less well paid than other jobs.

Working as a gig worker has both advantages and disadvantages, but consumers are able to benefit in many ways from gig work. Services for which there was previously a demand but which could not be realized due to various constraints (e.g., availability of workers, cost, etc.), or were overly expensive, are now readily available at affordable prices. In addition to the meal delivery services mentioned above, such as Uber Eats and Japan's Demae-can, other services such as on-site cooking and housekeeping services are emerging one after another. In today's Japan, an increasing number of elderly people are living alone, and they are finding it impossible to perform house cleaning, garden maintenance, house repairs, shopping, and other chores by themselves. In addition, daily housework and meal preparation can also be a challenge for families with two working parents raising children. Gig workers provide a solution to these problems by offering a variety of services that support the daily life of their clients.

Gig work is not limited to consumer services. Today, many companies and employers are suffering from labor shortages and cannot afford to hire workers as full-time employees and pay them adequate wages. As a result, an increasing number of jobs that cannot be performed entirely in-house are being outsourced as one-time gig work jobs. For example, the outsourcing

of data entry and web management can reduce employment costs. In other cases, restaurants in business districts hire temporary workers to assist during lunch hour or supermarkets request gig workers to take inventory during the busy year-end and New Year holidays. The ability to request one-time work without having to establish an employment contract is particularly beneficial to a company.

When gig work first emerged, it was thought that what are termed in Japan “freeter,” part-time, non-regular workers, were central to this type of work. However, in particular since the pandemic, a broad segment of workers in general, in addition to “freeters,” are now working or wishing to work as gig workers. Gig work can therefore be broadly divided into the two categories indicated below based on the gig worker’s motivation.

Japan faces a serious labor shortage due to the nation’s declining birthrate and aging population. In addition, a long-term economic slump and heavy tax burden have reduced workers’ disposable income, and this has been exacerbated by a recent sharp rise in the cost of living. Using gig work to break out of this situation and make up for the shortfall in living expenses is what we might term “backward-looking” gig work.

At the same time, workers’ attitudes toward the way they work are also changing. As lifestyles in Japan become more diverse, people are seeking more flexible work styles; an increasing number of people want to work flexibly, making use of their own ideas and their own skills in an efficient way in side jobs without being tied down to an organization. This can be termed “forward-looking” gig work.

Whether “backward-looking” or “forward-looking,” the importance of gig work as a side job is rapidly increasing. This paper will focus on the use of gig work to provide a side job for the already employed.

2. Definition of Gig Work

There are various definitions of gig work. Some define “freeter” as gig workers, but the gig work as discussed in this paper is gig work as a side or concurrent job. Therefore, it is assumed in this paper that gig workers are already employed (including non-regular employees). Note that unemployed persons, housewives (and househusbands), students, and “freeters” are not included in this definition.

For the purposes of this paper and the Questionnaire Survey on the Effects of the Spread of COVID-19 on Telework-based Work Styles, Lifestyle, and Awareness discussed below, gig work is defined as a way of working that does not involve an employment contract with a company, but rather a one-time, short-term job contracted by a company or individual via the Internet.

3. Current Status of Gig Work

Since the beginning of the pandemic in early 2020, Professor Toshihiro Okubo's laboratory and NIRA have jointly conducted an eight-part Questionnaire Survey on the Effects of the Spread of COVID-19 on Telework-based Work Styles, Lifestyle, and Awareness concerning telework. This project has asked survey participants a range of questions focusing on telework and digitalization in order to conduct a fixed-point survey regarding the progress of the digital economy and the behavior of workers. The eighth survey asked in detail about workers' experience of gig work, the frequency and duration of the work, the remuneration for the work, the nature and type of the job, and job satisfaction. There were 9,804 respondents to the eighth survey, of whom 9,447 were employed at the time of the survey.

The survey results show that 393 workers indicated that they had done some type of gig work by December 2022 (Figure 1). This represents 4% of the total. 344 respondents had already registered with a job-matching service and were planning to do gig work in the future. This also represents 4% of the total. Furthermore, 1,896 respondents, or 20% of the total, answered that they were interested in performing gig work or would like to try it in the future, although they had no experience of it, had not registered with a job-matching service, or had no plans to do so. This indicated that while the number of those who have actually done gig work remains small, there is a high level of interest in gig work among the already-employed.

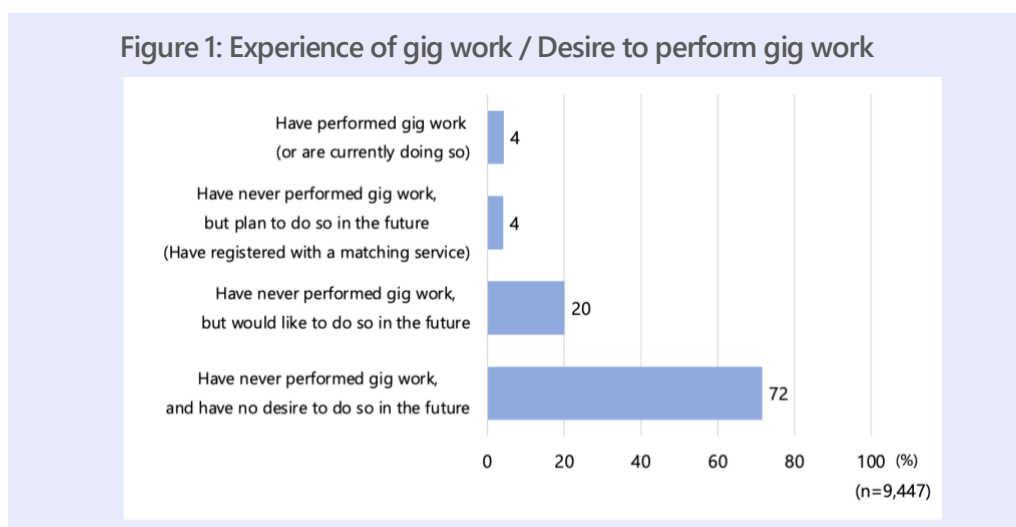
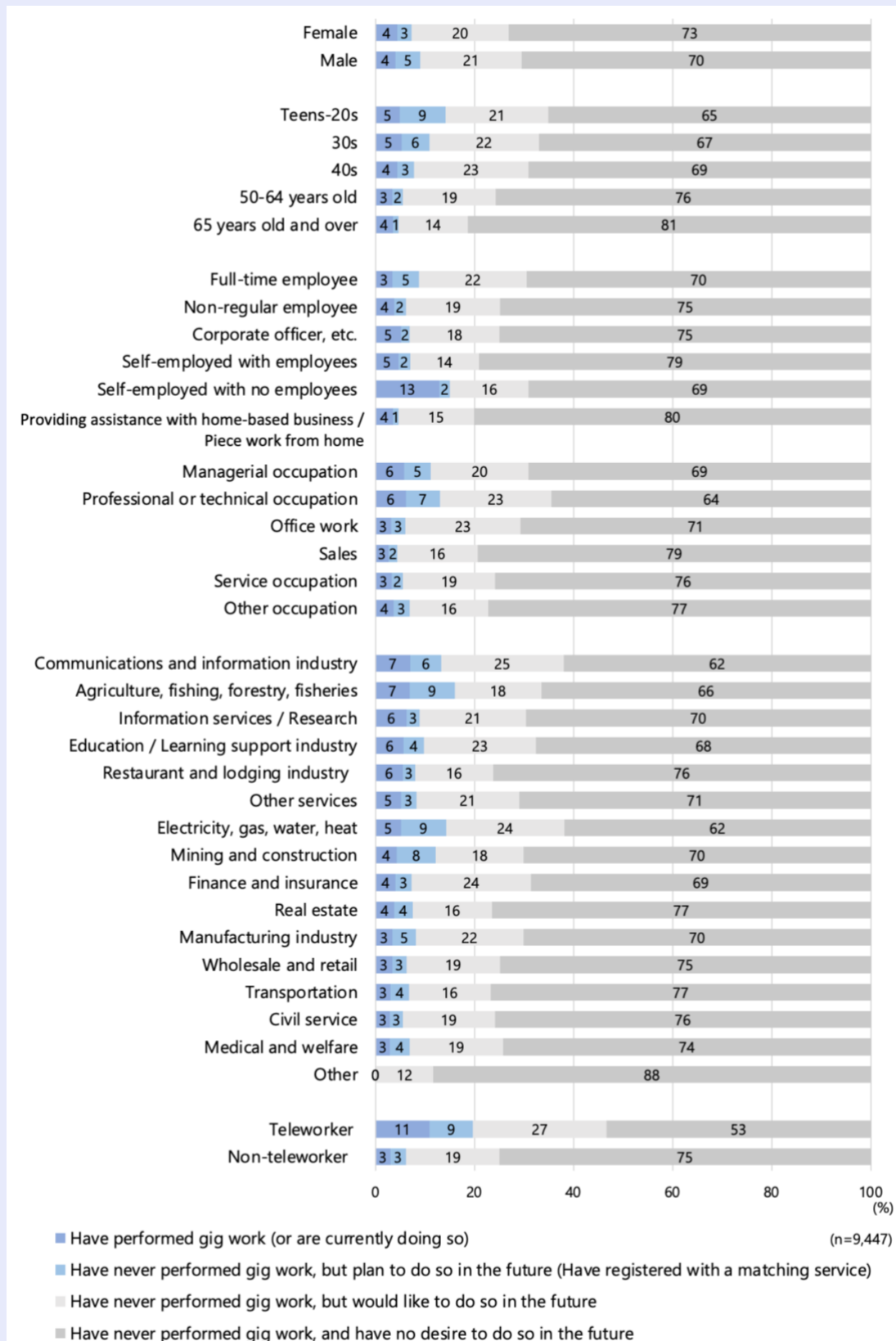


Figure 2: Experience of gig work and desire to perform gig work (By attribute)



By employment status (Figure 2), those who are self-employed and have no employees are more likely to engage in gig work (13%). By occupation, gig work tends to be more common in professional/technical occupations (6%) and managerial occupations (6%). By industry, it is most common in the communications and information industry (7%) and the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries industry (7%). In addition, younger age groups are more likely to engage in gig work, with little difference by gender. A higher percentage of teleworkers engage in gig work.

The overall labor force in Japan is approximately 68.6 million. The Japanese government estimates the freelance population as about 4.62 million; some private research institutes consider the freelance population to be equivalent to the gig work population or the potential gig work population (Note 1). However, our surveys target only the side jobs of already-employed subjects, and therefore while there is some overlap with sole proprietors in the survey, the overall target population is different. Based on the results of our survey, the total number of workers engaging in gig work as a side job in Japan as a whole is about 2.75 million.

4. How Gig Workers Work, What They Do, and the Compensation They Receive

Respondents who had performed gig work in 2022 were asked about the frequency of their gig work and their average work hours on the days that they performed gig work (Figures 3 and 4). Although there was considerable variation, on average 38% performed gig work less than once a month, 28% performed gig work once a month to one day a week (1 to 5 days a month), 25% performed gig work 2 to 4 days a week (6 to 20 days a month), and 10% performed gig work 5 or more days a week (21 or more days a month). The average amount of time spent on gig work per day is 4.8 hours; it appears that people are doing gig work in their spare time (Note 2) (Note 3).

Figure 3 : Frequency of gig work

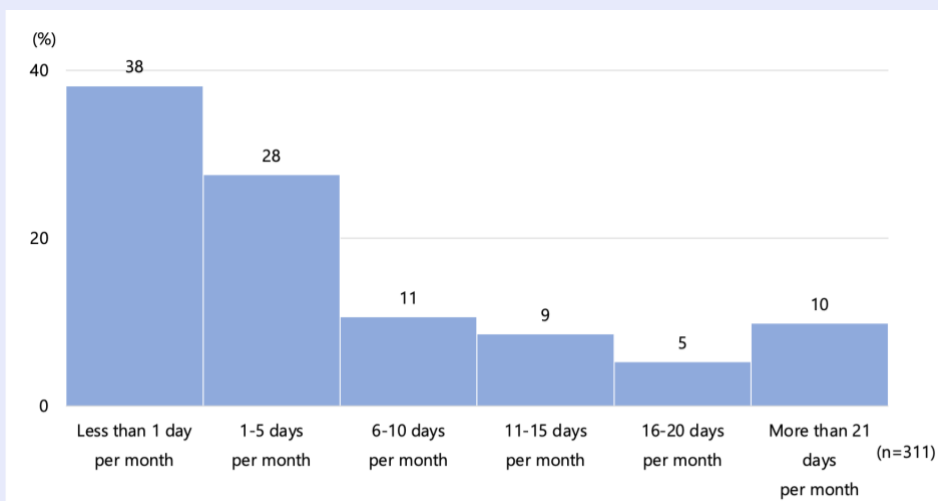
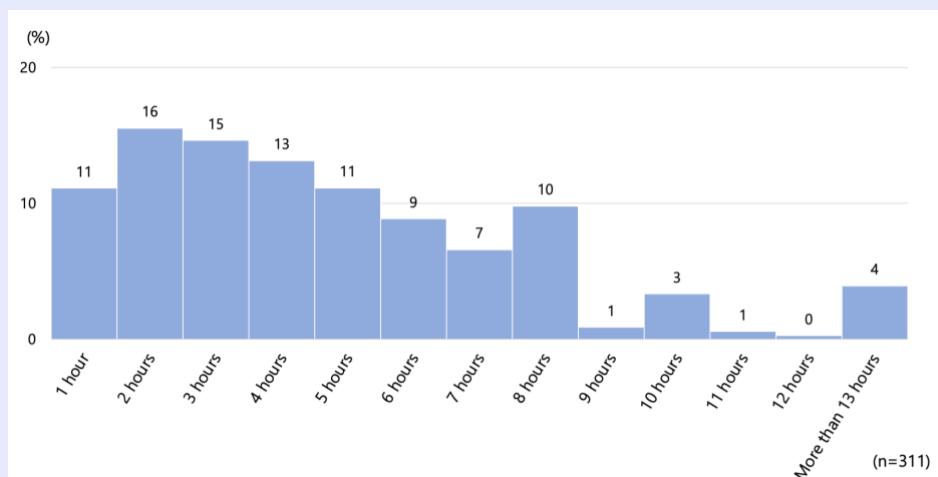


Figure 4: Average gig work hours on days when doing gig work



Next, we asked respondents who had performed gig work about the nature of their work. Gig work jobs are one-off jobs, and the job descriptions are wide-ranging. The worker surveys asked about a total of more than 50 specific job descriptions, many of which are difficult to categorize (Table 5); because one-off jobs often span multiple fields, the questionnaire was multiple-choice, asking respondents to select all applicable details. Thus, the number of jobs ordered by employers does not equal the number of job descriptions.

Table 5: Types of work done by gig workers

	n	Percentage		n	Percentage
<Office-related>			(28) Mechanical design, electrical engineering and design, architectural and civil engineering design, surveying techniques	11	4%
(1) Data entry	111	36%	(29) Translation, interpretation	17	5%
(2) Text entry, transcription	59	19%	(30) Sales and marketing (real estate, cosmetics, insurance, food, etc.)	11	3%
(3) Editing, proof-reading, grading	52	17%	(31) Tax, legal and other specialized administrative services	7	2%
(4) Preparation of documents for transactions, contracts, etc.	23	7%	(32) Manuscripts, writing, writing of articles, or other writing services	25	8%
(5) Organization of forms and other documents	26	8%	(33) Acupuncture, moxibustion, osteopathy, massage	3	1%
(6) Call center work, responses to inquiries	21	7%	(34) Actor, actress, model, emcee, instrumentalist, singer	3	1%
(7) Formulation of documents (PowerPoint, Excel, etc.)	25	8%	<Lifestyle-related Services, Housekeeping, Hairdressing and Beauty, Stores and Restaurants>		
<Design- and Video Production-related>			(35) Housekeeping, handyman services, domestic help (cleaning, tidying/organizing, cooking, laundry, shopping, pet care, repairs, etc.)	3	1%
(8) Design / Content creation	39	12%	(36) Barber, beautician, stylist, dresser, makeup artist, esthetician, manicurist, health and beauty	6	2%
(9) Naming of products, etc. /Copywriting	21	7%	(37) Customer service, cooking, reception, cashier	12	4%
(10) Photography, video/image/music production, editing	15	6%	(38) Child care/nursing care services,	5	2%
(11) Animation, illustration	19	6%	(39) PC setup and smartphone-related services	7	2%
(12) Advertising, production of fliers, production of business cards, DTP	12	4%	<Site-related (Transportation, Manufacturing, Repair, Cleaning, etc.)>		
<IT-related>			(40) Delivery / Food delivery	10	4%
(13) Website creation	22	7%	(41) Transportation, transport, assistance with moving, driving services, other than delivery or food delivery	5	2%
(14) Updating of information on websites, operation and management of websites and server systems	24	7%	(42) Posting, leaflet distribution, insertion of leaflets in other media	11	3%
(15) Information retrieval, computational processing, programming work	21	7%	(43) Manufacturing, assembly and production processes	10	3%
(16) Database design and creation, creation of servers and networks	14	4%	(44) Maintenance, inspection and repair	5	2%
(17) Design, software development, SE in relation to applications and systems	12	4%	(45) Construction, site work, civil engineering	4	2%
(18) Software bug checking and testing	15	5%	(46) Event site setup, site traffic control, security	8	3%
(19) Technical support work requiring IT skills	15	5%	(47) Warehouse operations, packing, shelving	17	5%
<Professional Services (Medical, Technical, Lecturing, Performing Arts, Musical Performance, etc.)>			(48) Cleaning, maintenance	5	2%
(20) Surveys, research and analysis	20	6%	(49) Agriculture, fisheries/forestry, outdoor activities	3	1%
(21) Management, marketing and strategy consulting	11	4%	<Other Tasks and Operations>		
(22) Web/IT Consulting	9	3%	(50) Monitoring or questionnaires responses, quality assessment	48	15%
(23) Career, human resources, labor consulting and representation	11	3%	(51) Reviews, word of mouth, influencer, SNS follow-up and diffusion	12	4%
(24) Learning support and on-site services for schools, cram schools, and other educational institutions, online lessons and instruction, lecturing	14	4%	(52) Ticketing, exhibiting, reservation agent, shipping agent	7	2%
(25) Educational services for hobbies and personal development such as language, qualifications, PC-related, music, etc., online lessons, instructor	11	4%	(53) Life counseling, fortune-telling, companion services, various consultations	6	2%
(26) Cooking-, food- and nutrition-related on-site services, online advice,lecturing, instructor	5	2%	(54) Other	9	3%
(27) Sports-, fitness- and health-related on-site services, online advice, lecturing,instructor	8	3%			

The most common type of gig work was “(1) Data entry,” with 111 respondents having performed this work. The next most common types of gig work were “(2) Text entry, transcription,” (59 respondents), followed by “(3) Editing, proofreading, grading,” (52 respondents), “(50) Monitoring or responding to questionnaires, quality assessment” (48 respondents), “(8) Design / Content creation” (39 respondents), “(5) Organization of forms and other documents” (26 respondents), “(32) Manuscripts, writing, writing of articles, or other writing services” (25 respondents) and “(7) Formulation of documents (PowerPoint, Excel, etc.)” (25 respondents). Because these jobs are performed as a side or concurrent job, they tend mainly to be short-term and routine jobs.

Looking at the relationship between these jobs and respondents’ main jobs (Table 1), it appears that those working in specific occupations also make use of the skills they use in their main job in gig work. It is particularly common for technicians and engineers in fields such as information processing and telecommunications to perform data creation, software development, and other IT-related work. Those whose main occupation is in the category “managerial occupation” also do office-related work such as data entry, proofreading, text entry, and writing. In addition, designers work in the areas of design and content creation. In general, gig workers tend mainly to be people who work in offices, and they utilize the expertise gained in their main jobs to perform gig work remotely. There are few cases in which the main occupation is on-site labor.

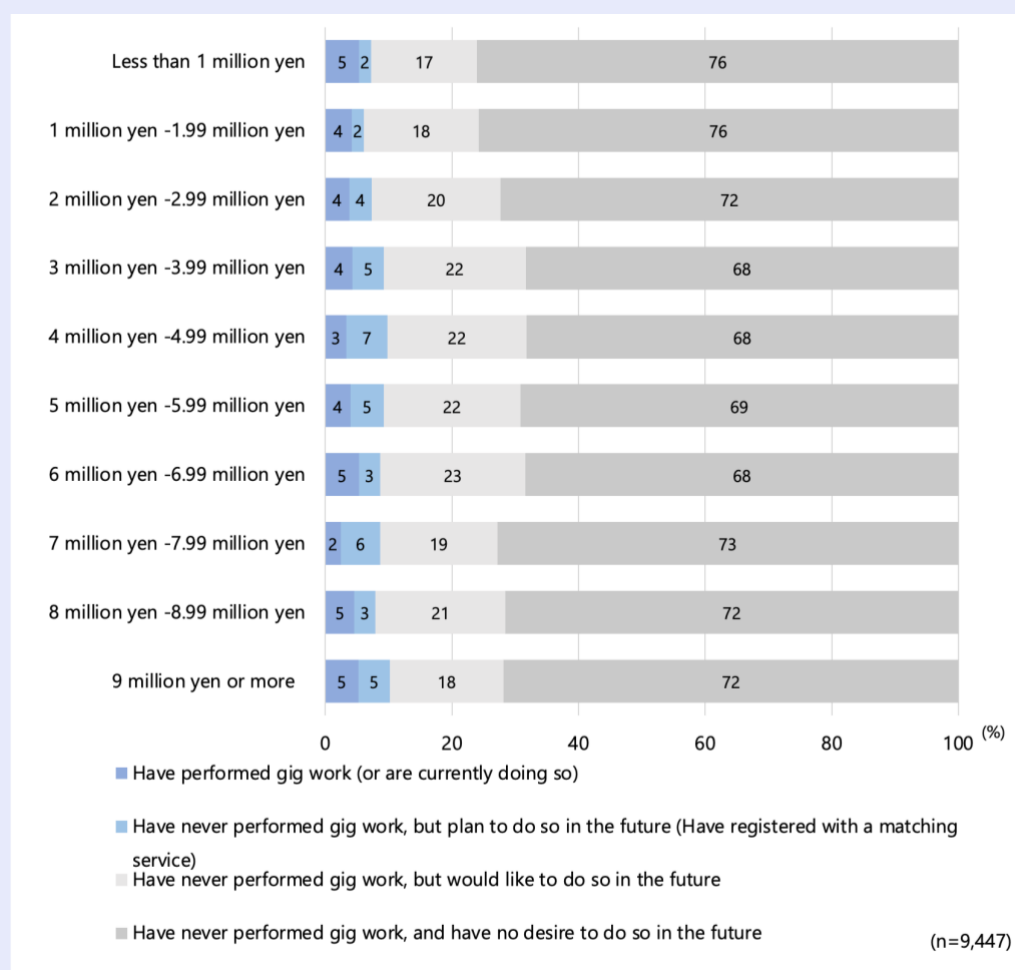
Because gig work as understood in this report is a side or concurrent job for survey subjects, there are few jobs that are “Inefficient from the perspective of time,” “Tend to require long hours,” “Involve physical labor that may affect the main job,” or “Tend to be paid by piecework.” Although not zero, the number of workers in the categories of “(35) Housekeeping, handyman services, domestic help,” “(45) Construction, site work, civil engineering,” “(48) Cleaning, maintenance” and “(49) Agriculture, fisheries/forestry, outdoor activities” is extremely low.

In addition, a very small number of respondents were engaged in gig work that required a license or other qualification, such as “(31) Tax, legal and other specialized administrative services” “(33) Acupuncture, moxibustion, osteopathy, massage,” “(26) Cooking-, food- and nutrition-related on-site services, online lessons, instructor,” and “(36) Barber, beautician, stylist, dresser, makeup artist, esthetician, manicurist, health and beauty”. In some cases, the main job of the person performing such work is a completely different occupation. For example, people whose main occupation is clerical work, sales, or marketing may work side jobs as cooking or nutrition instructors, while medical technicians or other professionals (librarians, curators) may work as hairdressers or beauticians.

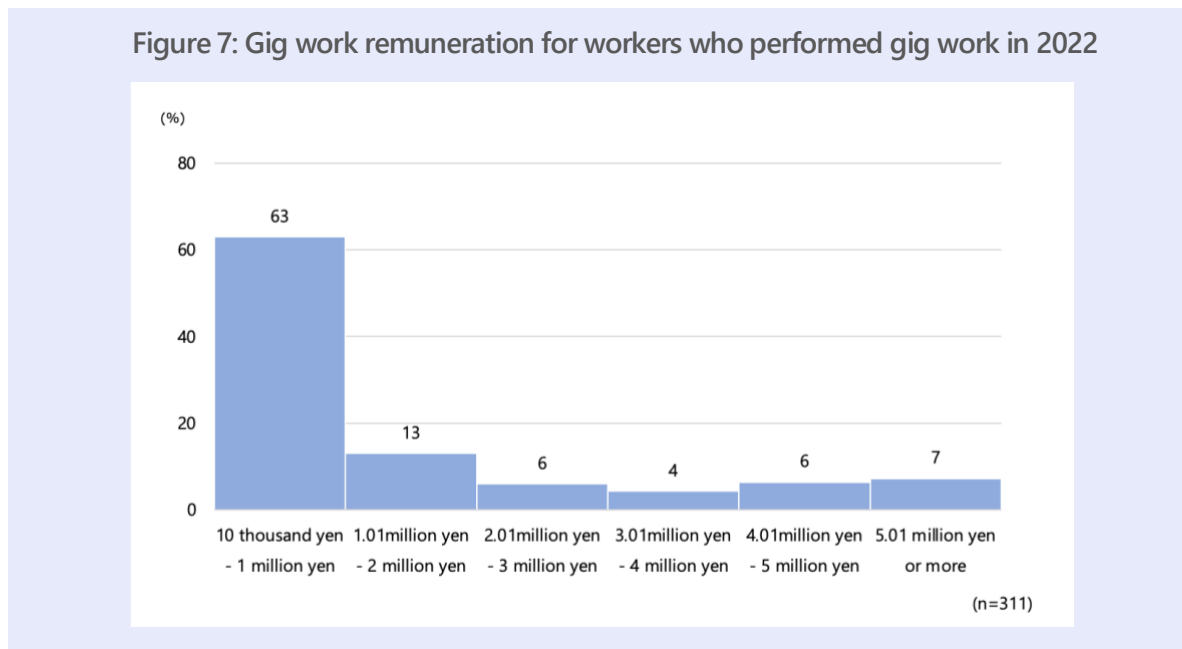
We asked respondents who had no experience of gig work, had not registered with a matching service and had no plans to do so, but were interested in gig work, what type of work they would prefer to do. The most common types of work desired were data entry, monitoring/responding to questionnaires, office work (text entry, proofreading), surveys/research, and writing reviews. These are jobs that can be done at home on a PC, with time allotted for predetermined, routine tasks. The next most popular types of work were manufacturing, warehousing/packing, information processing/programming, design, and customer service/cashier work, which can be classified as routine work or one-time work at a specific site.

Next, we will look at the relationship between gig work and income. Figure 6 shows the distribution of gig workers by income group. Although the middle-income group is slightly higher, it is clear that a relatively broad range of income groups tend to engage in gig work.

Figure 6: Annual income in 2022 and gig work



The survey also examined the remuneration from gig work (annual remuneration in 2022). The average annual remuneration is 1.49 million yen, but the majority earn less than 1 million yen (Figure 7). It appears that the use of gig work is spreading to supplement income.



When workers engage in gig work as a side job, it can in many cases be categorized as “backward-looking gig work,” the major characteristic of which is supplementation of income. This differs from the idea of “forward-looking gig work,” a type of work that has been expected to emerge, and which represents a new way of working. The major characteristic of this type of gig work is that it allows workers to flexibly use their time and increase their income efficiently by utilizing their skills, without being restricted by a corporation or organization.

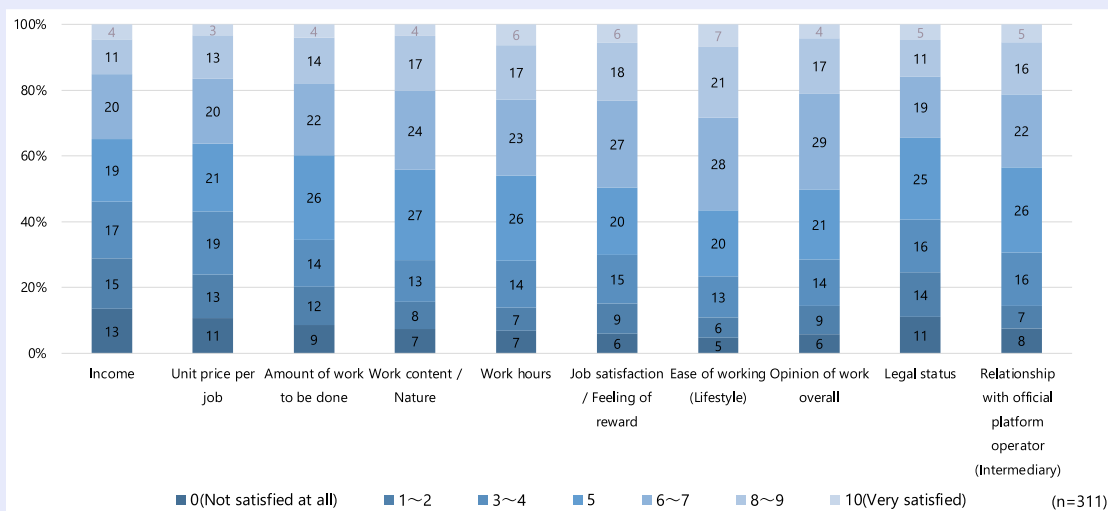
5. From “Backward-looking Gig Work” to “Forward-looking Gig Work”: Problems and Solutions

Why has the use of gig work as a side job, in particular “forward-looking gig work,” not spread significantly? Here we consider reasons based on survey results.

Figure 8 shows the results of a survey of subjects who have done gig work, asking about their opinions of, and satisfaction with, gig work. Satisfaction with the flexible hours and the ability to work frequently offered by gig work is high. However, there is strong dissatisfaction with the income earned, the low unit price of work, and gig work’s legal status (i.e., minimum wage, sick leave, social insurance, etc.). Dissatisfaction with income is particularly high: 13% of gig workers are not satisfied at all with their income (lowest on a scale of 1 to 10) and only 4% are very

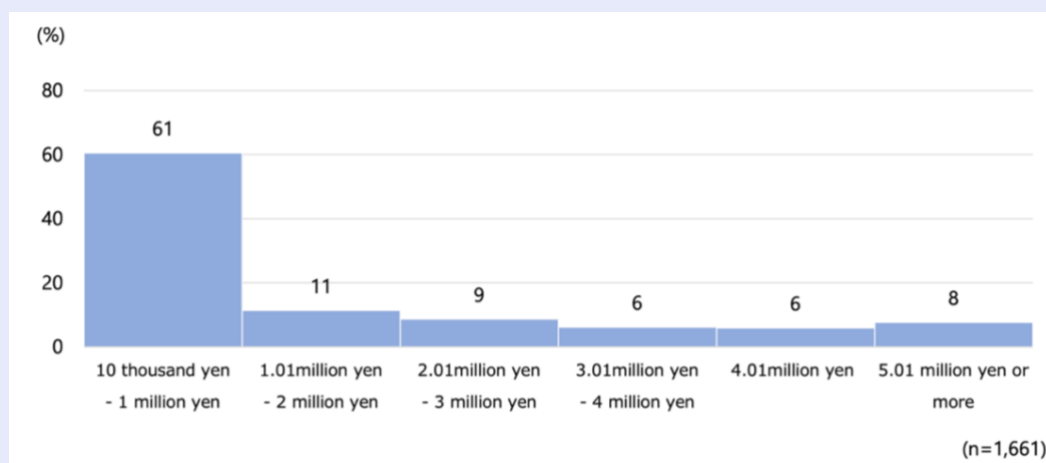
satisfied (highest on a scale of 1 to 10). Dissatisfaction is also pronounced with regard to the unit price of work (11% are not satisfied at all, while only 3% say they are very satisfied).

Figure 8: Satisfaction with gig work



This dissatisfaction can be understood from another perspective. The survey asked about the remuneration desired from gig work by subjects who plan to do gig work and those who are only registered with a matching service. Figure 9 shows the distribution of desired remuneration. Desired annual remuneration averaged 1.63 million yen, which is about 140,000 yen higher than the average annual remuneration of those who actually worked in gig work (1.49 million yen). This suggests that while there is a certain amount of people who plan to do gig work, when they actually do perform this type of work, their incomes are not as high as they desire. Alternatively, they may not have started working even after registering with a matching service because the remuneration or conditions of the work were not suitable or because there were not always jobs available. The primary reason the use of gig work as a side job is not growing is that the actual remuneration for gig work is lower than expected.

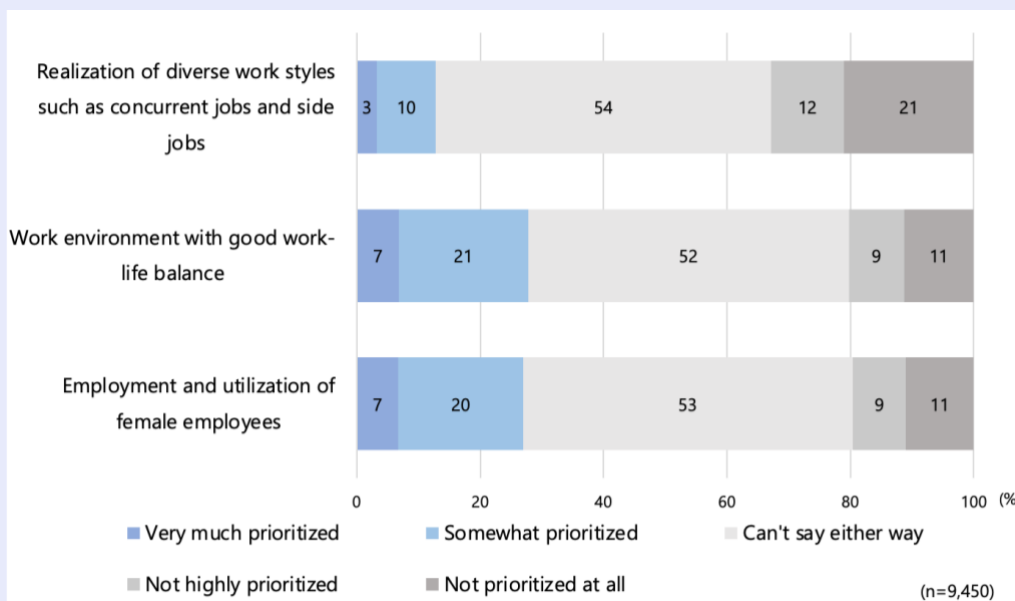
Figure 9: Distribution of remuneration expected by workers who plan to or wish to perform gig work



The low level of remuneration for gig work is also likely to lead to overwork. As mentioned above, the incomes of the low- to middle-income strata have tended not to rise in recent years, and these groups have been severely impacted by rising prices. To the extent that they fall into these groups, this may lead workers to engage in gig work in the future. Gig work can be done easily and on a one-time basis, and it therefore has considerable appeal as a method of supporting one's lifestyle amidst the harsh realities of the current economy. However, if this situation is ongoing, it is possible that a certain number of people will be forced to work impossible hours in order to earn sufficient remuneration. Another problem is that the companies for which people work in their main jobs do not value their skills sufficiently and do not guarantee an adequate income.

A second reason for the lack of growth in the use of gig work as a side job is that many companies do not allow side or concurrent employment. In the fourth stage of the “Questionnaire Survey on the Effects of the Spread of COVID-19 on Telework-based Work Styles, Lifestyle, and Awareness,” respondents were asked about the status of their employers with regard to the realization of diverse work styles, including side or concurrent jobs. Only 13% of respondents answered that their companies were “Very much” or “Somewhat” in favor of side or concurrent employment, while 33% answered “Not very” or “Not at all” (Figure 10). Incidentally, for other items, the percentage of positive responses was much higher, and the percentage of negative responses was lower. For example, 28% of all respondents responded positively that their work environment offered a good work-life balance, while 20% responded negatively. With regard to the employment of women by their companies, 27% of subjects responded positively. From this, it can be seen that relatively few companies have a positive attitude towards side or concurrent employment.

Figure 10: Priorities of respondents' companies, organizations, etc. (as of April 2021)



Compared to the promotion of female employment and the improvement of work-life balance, a significantly higher percentage of companies take a negative view of side/concurrent jobs. Of course, it is understandable that companies are reluctant to allow their employees to work side or concurrent jobs because of the possibility that they will neglect their main job or that a conflict of interest will arise. However, workers employed by companies are also consumers. If very convenient services provided by the gig economy spread further throughout society, consumers will be able to enjoy the benefits of these services and lead richer lives, and workers themselves will be able to work more efficiently. As a result, companies will also benefit from increased productivity. Companies will also need to be creative in lifting their prohibitions on side jobs, even partially, for example by limiting them to jobs that can be expected to have a synergistic effect with the worker's main job.

The third reason that gig work has not been more extensively used to provide side jobs is the asymmetry of information in matching services and the institutional design of the market. Because gig work involves one-time jobs with no contract, workers may find it difficult to receive remuneration commensurate with their abilities. On matching services, skilled workers seek high remuneration but withdraw from the service when they are not offered the type of job that they desire due to other workers filling the position for lower wages; alternatively, they may find a satisfactory client, develop a long-term relationship and then withdraw from the service. If this is the case, only low-skilled workers prepared to take on work at a lower price will remain. As a result, customers seeking high-quality services will no longer use matching services. If this

trend goes to an extreme, it will be a case of “bad money driving out good,” in other words, the quality of services may decline and the market become untenable. The one-off nature of gig work can also easily lead to problems, such as gig workers not completing the job as expected or, conversely, clients making excessive demands.

The nature of gig work in Japan is becoming increasingly diverse, and it is difficult to determine its actual value in the market. For example, the term “domestic tasks” encompasses a wide range of tasks, from simple housekeeping to garden maintenance, dog walking, repairs, organizing/cleaning up, assistance with computer operation, handyman-like work, and proxy work. Naturally, the operators of matching services employ a variety of measures to prevent problems, and the problems pointed to above have thus far not manifested themselves.

Incidentally, the surveys have also asked about the level of satisfaction of gig workers with their relationship with the operators of matching services (specifically, response to problems and fulfillment of contracts), and half of the respondents (about 46%) were neither dissatisfied nor satisfied; 8% were very dissatisfied, and 5% were very satisfied. These results suggest that there is still room for improvement in the design of the system related to gig work. If institutional design is not carefully conducted utilizing knowledge of economics, including microeconomics (e.g., contract theory) and behavioral economics, we may face severe problems in the future.

6. Conclusion

This paper has discussed the use of gig work to provide a second job based on the results of a Questionnaire Survey on the Effects of the Spread of COVID-19 on Telework-based Work Styles, Lifestyle, and Awareness. Gig work is rapidly attracting attention in the wake of recent slow income growth and increasing prices. Although many workers are interested in using gig work to provide a side job, the remuneration for this type of work is not high, and it is a type of work that seems to be limited to supplementing income from the worker’s main job. Furthermore, many respondents are dissatisfied with the remuneration for gig work. The current situation is that workers are doing “backward-looking gig work” because they have no choice. This may be due to the fact that companies do not adequately value the skills of their employees, and lack the motivation to increase productivity and improve wages. In order to increase “forward-looking gig work,” it will be essential that companies become more open to their employees having side jobs, appropriately value the skills of their employees, and guarantee adequate wages.

As noted above, the gig economy can provide consumers with tremendous benefits by making a variety of new services available at affordable prices. A variety of lifestyle services will be especially important in Japan, where there is an insufficient labor force, the birthrate is declining and the population is aging, and couples are increasingly both engaged in the workforce. The enhancement of such services will ultimately lead to increased productivity for companies. There are numerous issues to be addressed in the systems that allow matching of one-off jobs on the Internet, such as system design issues. It will be necessary to discuss these issues comprehensively in the future, and to design systems that make use of knowledge of economics.

Table 1: Occupations and Types of Gig Work

	n	Office work- related	Design- and video production- related	IT-related professional services	Professional services- related	Lifestyle- related services, domestic tasks, hairstressing and beauty services, stores and restaurants	Onsite work	Other tasks and operations
Managerial occupations	37	62%	15%	8%	7%	0%	3%	6%
Researcher	7	43%	0%	0%	43%	0%	15%	0%
Agricultural, forestry or fisheries specialist	5	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Manufacturing specialist	10	55%	0%	9%	36%	0%	0%	0%
Architectural, civil engineering or surveying specialist	10	74%	0%	0%	17%	0%	9%	0%
Information processing or communications specialist	17	6%	12%	77%	6%	0%	0%	0%
Physician, dentist, veterinarian, pharmacist	7	30%	15%	0%	13%	0%	0%	43%
Public health nurse, midwife, nurse	7	30%	14%	0%	28%	14%	0%	14%
Medical technology / Healthcare	7	39%	34%	0%	0%	13%	0%	14%
Social welfare profession	3	27%	49%	0%	0%	0%	24%	0%
Management, finance or healthcare profession	3	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	34%	33%
Teacher	6	17%	0%	0%	49%	0%	0%	34%
Author, reporter, editor	7	15%	0%	0%	85%	0%	0%	0%
Artist, designer, photographer, videographer	17	12%	45%	9%	28%	0%	6%	0%
Other professional occupation	11	9%	9%	0%	46%	18%	9%	9%
Office work	34	51%	3%	3%	20%	6%	3%	15%
Accounting	7	86%	0%	0%	14%	0%	0%	0%
Production-related office work	2	52%	48%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Sales or sales-related office work	11	46%	0%	8%	37%	9%	0%	0%
Transportation- or postal-related office work	2	0%	0%	48%	0%	0%	52%	0%
Office equipment operator	2	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Merchandise sales, sales occupation, or sales-related occupation	16	44%	6%	6%	5%	0%	33%	6%
Home living assistance or nursing care service provision occupation	2	0%	52%	0%	48%	0%	0%	0%
Healthcare or consumer service profession	1	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Food and beverage preparation, customer service	6	0%	0%	16%	19%	17%	16%	32%
Other service occupation	17	17%	0%	0%	16%	0%	27%	39%
Security-related occupation	1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Agricultural, forestry or fishing industry profession	1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
Production process	4	63%	0%	0%	37%	0%	0%	0%
Transportation / Machine operation	3	68%	0%	0%	0%	0%	32%	0%
Construction / Mining	1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Transportation, cleaning, packaging, etc.	6	32%	0%	0%	0%	0%	51%	17%
Other	41	34%	2%	9%	14%	4%	12%	25%
Total	311	39%	9%	8%	19%	3%	9%	12%

Note

In addition to the author, the survey and data analysis were conducted by Kiwamu Kato, Senior Architect, Future Corporation, and Atsushi Inoue, Kozue Sekijima, and Sosuke Suzuki of the Nippon Institute for Research Advancement.

1 General Secretariat for Japan's Economic Revitalization, Cabinet Secretariat, (2020), Fureeransu jittai chousa kekka "[Survey of Status of Freelance Workers](#)" (in Japanese; accessed February 13, 2023)

2 Average values were calculated based on a figure of 13 hours per day if 13 hours or more were worked per day.

3 When limited to those who have never done gig work but plan or hope to do so, the desired frequency of gig work averaged 47% for once a month, 32% for once a month to once a week, 17% for 2 to 4 days a week, and 4% for 5 or more days a week, with an average desired time per day of 3.7 hours, indicating that the desired workload is lower than the workload for those actually performing gig work.



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