

# The Impact of Self-Efficacy and Job Crafting on Job Satisfaction of Gig Workers: An Empirical Study from Indonesia

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## Abstract

This study investigates the job satisfaction of gig workers in Indonesia, particularly the online motorcycle taxi or *ojek* drivers, by looking at the influence of proactive behavior, self-efficacy, and job crafting as found in previous studies. Gig workers are classified as ‘independent contractors’ where some studies show that they achieve high job satisfaction through autonomy and flexibility. However, other studies show that all gig workers do not experience this condition. Location-based gig workers such as the online drivers are highly controlled by algorithm control and customer management, which makes their autonomy and flexibility questionable. The study is quantitative research by conducting a survey approach in seven main cities in Indonesia. Two hundred eighty online *ojek* drivers participated in this research by fulfilling questionnaires. The result shows that proactive behavior does not directly affect job satisfaction, but self-efficacy fully mediates the relationship. Job crafting has an insignificant influence on job satisfaction, and thus, this variable cannot mediate the relationship between job satisfaction and proactive behavior. The major finding of this study suggests that self-efficacy, which is their belief that they can overcome the challenges and achieve their goals, is very central to shaping job satisfaction of the online drivers.

**Keywords:** Job Satisfaction, Self-efficacy, Gig Workers, Ojek Driver, Indonesia

**JEL Classification Code:** J46, J81, M54

## 1. Introduction

In the last decade, a new work format characterized by short-term projects and autonomy where workers can decide their time to work has emerged and is known as gig work (Stewart & Stanford, 2017). The concept of gig work has characteristics far different from traditional jobs, where someone works for a particular employer, at a specific

workplace, and with definite working hours (Ashford et al., 2007). The concept of gig work stimulates further discussions for academics. Previous research and theories on industrial, organizational, and psychology, such as job satisfaction and well-being, are more focused on traditional work (Berger et al., 2019; Kuhn, 2016). Most organizational theories do not capture the new format of work where workers are less committed to a specific employer and less connected to a definite physical workplace (Ashford et al., 2018). However, this does not mean that existing theories cannot be entirely applied to gig workers; in fact, the business model of gig workers shows that organizational topics such as satisfaction and well-being are very relevant to use (Kuhn, 2016). To be applicable to use, several things need to be considered, such as the work form of the gig work (Keith et al., 2019).

Schmidt (2017) defines gig work as location-based digital work where the transaction is mediated by a platform, but the workers have to perform the work manually with a physical presence. This classification covers well-known online transportation and delivery services (Stewart & Stanford, 2017). As all job-related aspects and relations are now offered through the platform, not only has the platform mediated the relationship between the employee and customer, but it also

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altered the relationship between the employee and employer (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016). Most managerial responsibilities such as task allocation and performance management shifted from humans to machines/algorithms.

The platform companies constantly promote gig workers as a profession closely related to autonomy, independence, and flexibility (Ravenelle, 2019). Several studies eventually found these characteristics in gig workers and used ‘independent contractors’ to address gig workers (Stewart & Stanford, 2017; Ravenelle, 2019). In addition, autonomy and independence are well known and proved by many researchers that these characteristics are good predictors of job satisfaction (Gözükara, & Çolakoğlu, 2016). Therefore, it could be argued that gig workers, who have these characteristics, will also have high job satisfaction. However, while some literature found that gig workers have high satisfaction (Kim et al., 2018; Berger et al., 2019), others found the contrary (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016; Ravenelle, 2019).

Some studies show that gig workers achieve high job satisfaction through autonomy and flexibility (Kim et al., 2018; Berger et al., 2019). Therefore, the platform does not specify workers’ work hours nor the minimum number of tasks that need to be done to emphasize their flexibility and autonomy as workers can decide when they want to work, what task to be done, and the way they do the task (Wu et al., 2019). This situation allows them to have a higher work-life balance than formal workers because they have control to adjust their work and personal time (Berger et al., 2019). In addition, the flexibility will allow gig workers to engage more in domestic tasks such as babysit or other family responsibilities (Friedman, 2014).

Furthermore, the condition where workers could adjust and balance their work with their needs and preferences was called job crafting and positively impacted job satisfaction (Zito et al., 2019). The essence of job crafting is the workers’ initiatives to modify the way they do their jobs (Tims et al., 2015). Therefore, many studies relate job crafting with proactive behavior (Tran, 2021; De Beer et al., 2016). Proactive personality impacts workers’ attitudes towards their work (Grasiaswaty et al., 2020) and leads them to craft their job to match their favour. Proactive behavior itself was proved to impact job satisfaction positively. It could influence an individual’s sense-making or interpretation of the work environment and thus influence one’s perception about their job itself and job satisfaction. The impact of proactive personality on job satisfaction could be mediated by one of the most critical variables that predicted job satisfaction: self-efficacy (Li et al., 2017). The assumption is that people with proactive personalities tend to experience higher self-efficacy derived as they proactively seek out better solutions when crafting their work environment (Li et al., 2017). When self-efficacy is triggered, workers will find easier ways to achieve higher job satisfaction. Thus, it

could be concluded that the nature of job gig work leads gig workers to craft their job to match their favour, which will trigger higher self-efficacy and eventually will lead them to higher job satisfaction.

On the contrary, some researchers have argued that most gig workers express dissatisfaction toward their jobs because it turns out that they are not genuinely independent nor feel like entrepreneurs at all (Ravenelle, 2019). Various studies have shown that gig workers, particularly online transportation and delivery service, are far from independent, and any independence they experience is only for bearing all risks at work (Goods et al., 2019). They were left with no social protection, highly controlled with algorithm management, most of the time working long hours, and were silenced as they didn’t have a voice mechanism nor were entitled to collective bargaining (Wood et al., 2019). Additionally, algorithms that regulate and limit their autonomy hindered gig workers’ satisfaction (Rosenblat & Stark, 2016).

This condition also resembles the gig workers’ situation in Indonesia. Gig workers in Indonesia had gained attention since 2015 when platform-based online transportation, particularly “ojek” (motorbike taxi), was introduced. Studies (De Ruyter & Rachmawati, 2020; Novianto et al., 2021) found that gig workers in Indonesia experience a similar situation with gig workers from developed countries. The platform company highly controls those (Wu et al., 2019) despite being classified as “independent” and other terms which indicate freedom and autonomy at work (Harris & Krueger, 2016). The algorithm controls (limits) the orders (tasks) that could be taken by the drivers. The platform company imposes strict rules that the drivers must follow to ensure perfect customer service (Alfian, 2020). Disobeying the rules will lead the drivers to be temporarily or permanently suspended, leaving them with no choice but to obey and work under the threat of being suspended.

With these conflicting conditions, this research would describe and explain how gig workers in Indonesia perceived their job satisfaction, which is formed by their proactive personality, self-efficacy, and opportunity to do job crafting. Therefore, the following section will discuss the literature on gig workers, their job satisfaction, and the antecedents. In contrast, the research methodology section will explain how the research was conducted by distributing questionnaires to the *ojek* online drivers in several cities in Indonesia. Finally, the result and implication of the research will be explained in the discussion and conclusion sections.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Gig Workers as Independent Contractors

Some authors have argued that gig workers, as independent contractors, and their customers benefit from the

flexibility and ease of using the services (Pink, 2001; Hill, 2016). This flexibility enables more effortless mobility and economic empowerment and represents an escape from the bureaucratic employment structures in an organizational hierarchy (Kunda et al., 2002).

The term 'independent contractor' does not appear just currently; in fact, this term gained attention decades ago due to the consequences of taxes and other rights and obligations instead of employees. Employees by law are entitled to mandated rewards and protection such as minimum wage, overtime pay, and collective bargaining, and in return, they are controlled by the management (Harris & Krueger, 2016). On the other hand, independent contractors have the bargaining power to negotiate their terms and conditions and have no guarantee over minimum wage and other types of protections. They could determine when, where, how, how much work, and even what kind of work they want to perform (Harris & Krueger, 2016). Thus, while employees exchange their independence with particular rewards and protection, independent contractors maintain independence but no guaranteed rewards and protections.

The employment classification and status of gig workers have gained attention as their work conditions are questionable. Some studies show that despite the notion of the 'normative' ability to determine their work condition as independent contractors, gig workers are very much controlled (Wu et al., 2019). Furthermore, others (Stewart & Stanford, 2017) argue that such work should merely be seen as the latest version of highly exploitative, precarious work arrangements that have existed in one form or another since the arrival of capitalism. This 'algorithmic control' extends the control from customers, known as 'management by customers' (Fuller & Smith, 1991). Customers give ratings and feedback that directly impact the gig workers' employment eligibility (Gandini, 2019) and direct how work should be performed (Wood et al., 2019).

## 2.2. Proactive Personality and Job Satisfaction

Over the years, several authors have provided comprehensive reviews on job satisfaction in several disciplines (Brayfield & Crockett, 1955; Iaffaldano & Muchinsky, 1985). Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as an individual's subjective assessment of various aspects of their work (Kim, 2002). Another definition was put forward by Ulndag et al. (2011), in which job satisfaction reflects the feeling of an employee towards undertaken work and organization. This conceptualization implies that job satisfaction is an emotional state procured by an individual's work appraisal, which produces a satisfaction level corresponding with the undertaken work situation.

Furthermore, job satisfaction is also conceptualized as a combination of psychological, physiological, and

environmental conditions which cause an individual to truthfully admit whether they were satisfied with their work or not (Hoppock, 1935 in Thiagaraj & Thangaswamy, 2017). That description shows that various variables could influence job satisfaction. Based on these definitions, it could be concluded that job satisfaction is a set of complex variables controlled mainly by worker perception and expectation.

Many previous studies use the big-five model in explaining job satisfaction, as this model is perceived to be stable over time in various situations (Maggiori et al., 2016). However, recently, research has started to explore and examine other personality factors that could predict job satisfaction. One of the variables that are often examined is proactive personality. Several studies have proved that proactive personality can affect job satisfaction (Li et al., 2017). Bateman and Crant (1993) developed the proactive personality concept to observe how far individuals could influence their surroundings based on their actions. The same idea was explained by Crant (2000), who defined a proactive personality as an individual's personality which always identifies opportunity and tries to act accordingly to face such possibility until a meaningful change occurs.

Individuals with a proactive personality are relatively not limited to situational statuses (Bateman & Crant, 1993), set high standards, and use all available resources to reach that standard (Crant, 1996). Proactive personality describes an individual's want and will to pursue something they want to achieve (Antonacopoulou, 2000). As independent contractors who manage their work, gig workers are assumed to have proactive personalities to notice the opportunity and solve various problems and crises they face in finishing on-demand work (Crant & Bateman, 2000). Proactivity is associated with job satisfaction because proactive people tend to create conditions more conducive to personal success at work (Ng et al., 2005). Hence,

*H1: Proactive personality is positively associated with job satisfaction.*

## 2.3. Proactive Personality, Self-efficacy, and Job Satisfaction

Previous studies indicate that a person with a proactive personality also has high self-efficacy (Fay & Frese, 2001; Lu & Kuo, 2016). Self-efficacy is needed in pursuing her personal goals (Lu & Kuo, 2016). A person with no confidence or self-efficacy in doing a certain action will be less likely to attempt to perform that action (Fay & Frese, 2001). Proactive people will have higher self-determination and confidence as they seek better opportunities and solutions for their job-related performance. Therefore, while seeking new opportunities or solutions, proactive people

will simultaneously trigger positive personality traits such as self-efficacy (Li et al., 2017).

Self-efficacy was first introduced by Bandura (1993) and defined as an individual's belief in planning and executing an action to achieve a particular goal (Wang et al., 2017). Bandura (1993) presumed that self-efficacy would trigger a change in an individual's behavior. The different levels of an individual's will would lead to varying levels of control of her ability and life (Scherbaum et al., 2006). Besides affecting behavior, self-efficacy also determines the conditions in which individuals feel, think, and motivate themselves (Bandura, 1993).

The concept of self-efficacy is explained by (Cupertino et al., 2012). It hinges on speculation on an individual's assessment of their abilities to finish an action. A similar definition was explained by Schwarzer et al. (1997), who presumed self-efficacy enables an individual to choose the action they must take to achieve their goal, as well as shape a deeper exploration of their abilities (Scholz et al., 2002). Individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are relatively more positive than those with low levels of self-efficacy. Conversely, individuals with low levels of self-efficacy rather avoid work they feel is difficult and consider it a threat. Their level of commitment is also lower, and they often give up before reaching their goal. Those individuals become more susceptible to negative thoughts and feel unsatisfied with their work (Bandura, 1993). Therefore, many argued that self-efficacy is a strong predictor for job satisfaction (Bargsted et al., 2019; Iqbal, 2012; Judge & Bono, 2001; Alifuddin & Widodo, 2021). Besides that, not only in direct relationships, studies proved that self-efficacy is an essential mediator between personality traits and work outcomes, including job satisfaction (Maggiori et al., 2016; Kim & Kim, 2021). Hence,

*H2: Self-efficacy mediates the association between proactive personality and job satisfaction.*

## 2.4. Proactive Personality, Job Crafting, and Job Satisfaction

A proactive personality leads an individual to do job crafting. Through job crafting, workers change how they face work demands to make their work more meaningful, engaging, and satisfying (Tims et al., 2012). Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) explained that individuals perform physical and cognitive job crafting to overcome their assignment or relational constraints. Changing physical constraints includes changing the shape, scope, or work assignments conducted by a person while working; while changing cognitive limitations is changing how someone views their work. Tims and Bakker (2010) also defined job crafting as a change workers might make to balance work demands and

resources with their abilities and personal needs. Another definition was explained by Petrou et al. (2012), where job crafting could be understood as an individual's condition to adjust their work and utilize the resources required to finish their assignment successfully.

More specifically, with job crafting, employees would experience more satisfaction with their jobs (Ogbuanya, & Chukwuedo, 2017). The worker's ability to adjust job characteristics to fit with their personal preference will make them feel more satisfied with their work conditions, which will create a positive outcome such as job satisfaction (Crawford et al., 2010; Tims et al., 2013; Zito et al., 2019). Following the evidence from literature, online drivers who apply job crafting because of the demands of their job can derive some levels of job satisfaction from the ability to craft their jobs. Hence,

*H3: Job crafting mediates the association between proactive personality and job satisfaction.*

Therefore, the hypothesized model is pictured below (Figure 1).

## 3. Sample and Procedures

This research was conducted in seven main cities in Indonesia where online *ojek* drivers are very easy to find, considering that the demand for this transportation service is relatively high, namely Bandung, Bogor, Depok, Jakarta, Palembang, Surabaya, and Yogyakarta. Data was collected from September 2019 to January 2020 by distributing questionnaires directly to drivers waiting for orders on the roadside or visiting places where they gather to take a break. Respondent participation is voluntary; respondents were explained about the purpose of this study. The questionnaire was filled in with a self-administered approach while maintaining the respondent's confidentiality.

The collected samples reach an amount of 280 drivers. The majority of respondents were male (78%), aged 19–39 (74.6%), and had high-school education (71.5%). Respondents worked 5–14 hours a day (88.6%), while 10% of respondents worked more than 14 hours a day. Income obtained from most respondents (95.6%) ranged from 1–4 million rupiah (USD 69–276) per month.

## 4. Research Method and Measures

The data obtained from questionnaires were processed and analyzed through the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) method with the owned indicators through validity and reliability of the measurement model. Proactive personality was assessed with 10 (ten) items that adapted from the scales developed by Bateman and Crant (1993),

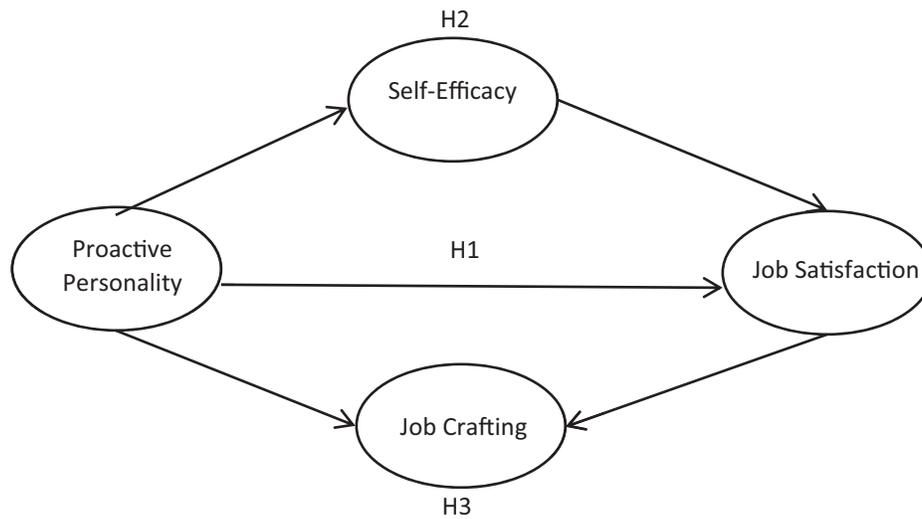


Figure 1: Hypothesized Model

while self-efficacy was assessed with 10 (ten) items that were created by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). For job crafting, this research used a modified version of the job crafting scale developed by Petrou et al. (2012). And lastly, job satisfaction was assessed with 5 (five) items adapted from Johlke and Duhan (2000).

## 5. Results

The first test was the descriptive test to see the distribution of answers from the observed indicator by categorizing answers based on the mean number. The descriptive test shows that proactive personality, self-efficacy, job crafting, and job satisfaction of online drivers are quite high. The lowest average number is found in the job crafting variable, while the highest is proactive personality. Even though each variable shows quite a high category, there was a unique case in the job satisfaction variable. From the five indicators of job satisfaction, one indicator had a very small value with a mean of 2.8, which is the question ‘if I could reverse the time, I would still choose to be an online driver.’ This result shows that even though online drivers are content with their jobs, they would not choose to work in this job if they could choose. Therefore, working as an online driver can be seen as a forced measure due to the difficulty of getting a decent job.

Construct validity was conducted to ensure the indicators used in this research are valid. The model’s construct validity will be seen through the factor loading value. At the same time, the reliability test was performed with composite reliability (CR) and variance extracted (VE) values at each construct. The construct validity of each indicator in the research model has a standard loading factor (SLF) > 0.5, which shows that

each indicator has good validity. Meanwhile, the reliability test shows that the value of CR from each variable is > 0.7 and VE > 0.5. Therefore, refer to Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2014), it could be concluded that the research model above has good reliability.

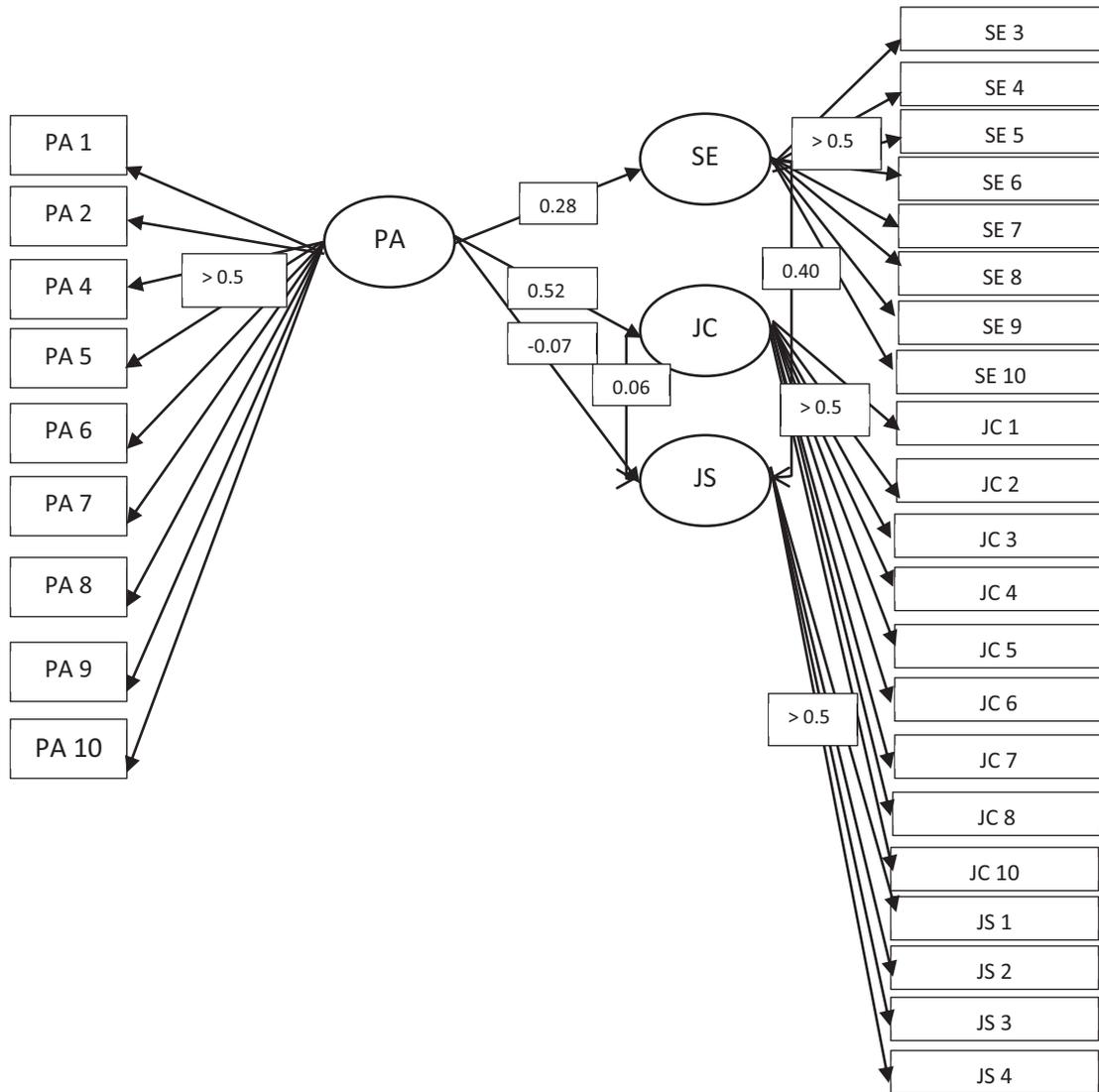
Figure 2 above shows that the path coefficients of proactive personality to self-efficacy, self-efficacy to job satisfaction, proactive personality to job crafting, and job crafting to job satisfaction are all positive, indicating positive impact between variables. However, the path coefficient of proactive personality to job satisfaction is negative, indicating a negative influence, which contradicts previous findings.

Figure 3 above shows that proactive personality positively influences self-efficacy and job crafting but has an insignificant influence on job satisfaction. While self-efficacy positively influences job satisfaction, job crafting has an insignificant effect on job satisfaction. Thus, job crafting cannot be a mediating variable in this research.

Furthermore, the mediation test shows that self-efficacy fully mediated the relationship between proactive personalities to job satisfaction. On the other hand, job crafting cannot mediate this relationship, and job crafting does not significantly influence job satisfaction. Table 1 shows the summary of the results.

## 6. Discussion

This research found a significant positive relationship between proactive personality and self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Li et al., 2017). However, this research found that proactive personality does not directly influence job satisfaction. This situation is similar to the study conducted



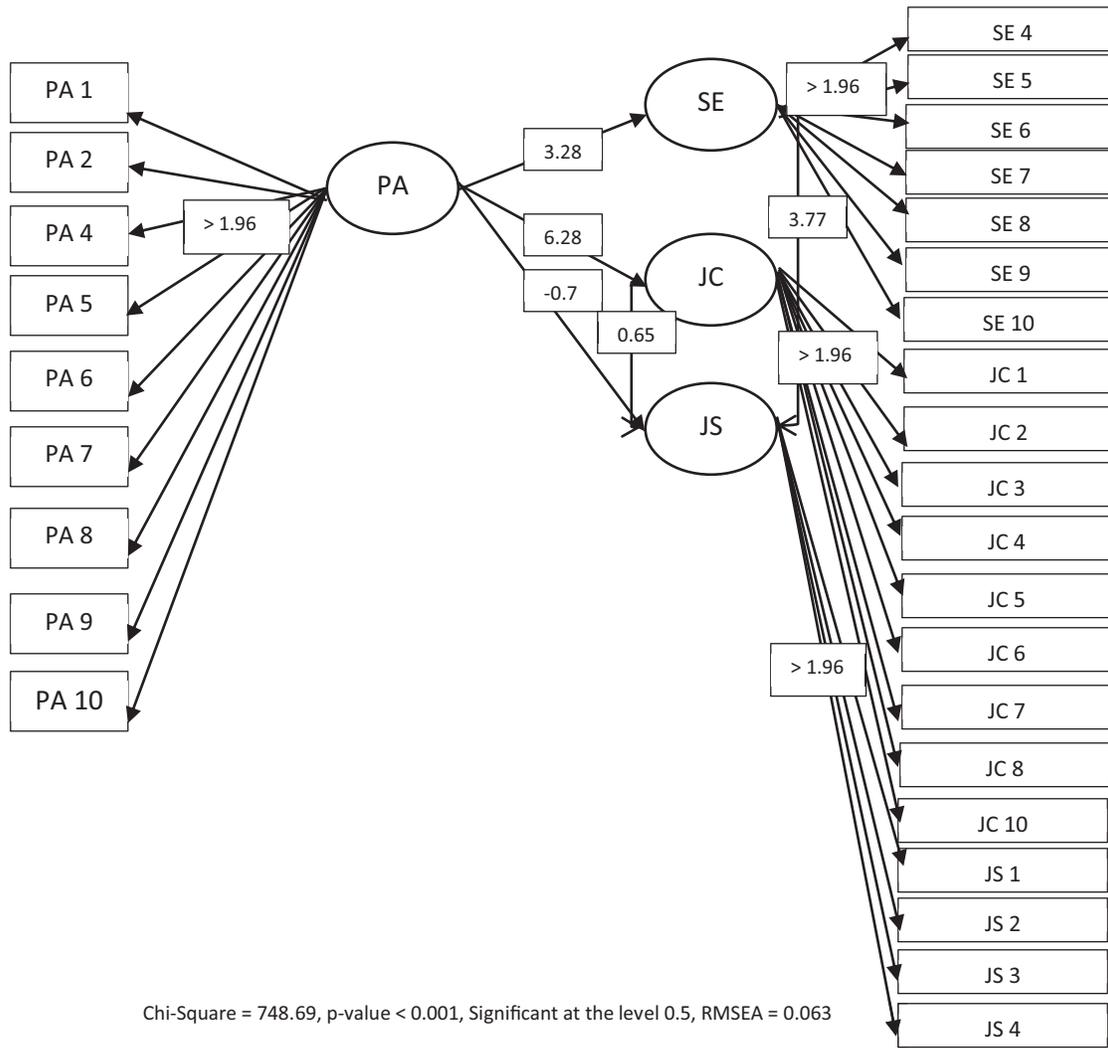
Chi-Square = 748.69, p-value < 0.001, Significant at the level 0.5, RMSEA = 0.063

**Figure 2:** Estimated Standardized Results

by Mohammadi et al. (2015), which stated that there was no influence between proactive personality and job satisfaction due to the absence of inspiring factors in their work. Therefore, when a proactive personality stands alone without following inspiring factors from their work, such as the opportunity to grow, the lack of career path, and acknowledgment of their performance, a proactive personality will not generate job satisfaction.

The online drivers experience work conditions where development opportunities, career advancement, and recognition opportunities are absent as they are classified

as “independent contractors.” Consequently, the platform companies think they do not have obligations to provide Human Resource practices as other employers provide for their employees. Furthermore, as casual workers with non-employment status, the nature of gig workers makes them not entitled to any employment benefits (De Ruyter & Rachmawati, 2020). Therefore, a mere proactive personality held by a driver was not enough to fulfill their job satisfaction in a work environment where no social protection, no career development, and any other inspiring factors.



**Figure 3:** Estimated T-value

**Table 1:** Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Relationship	T-value	Findings	
Hypothesis 1	PA → JS	-0.70	Not Significant	Not supported
Hypothesis 2	PA → SE → JS	2.435	Significant	Supported
Hypothesis 3	PA → JC → JS	0.067	Not Significant	Not supported

Nevertheless, the relationship between proactive personality and job satisfaction could become significant and positive with the full mediating role of self-efficacy. This research shows that when a person with a proactive personality has confidence in their abilities to finish their work well, it will lead them to job satisfaction, not only in a direct relationship but also as a full mediator for various

personality traits (Maggiori et al., 2016). This is because an individual with high self-efficacy can face multiple obstacles in their work, as well as risks of failure (Seibert et al., 2001). Every day, drivers face various challenges in their work, such as high customer expectations, uncertain traffic conditions, street crimes, and traffic accidents. When the work environment does not provide other factors to

increase job satisfaction, an online driver could still obtain job satisfaction if they have self-efficacy to face challenges in their work.

On the other hand, this research found that job crafting does not significantly impact job satisfaction. A similar result was also found in Wang et al. (2020) study, which explains that job crafting that focuses on avoiding challenges in work relatively does not generate job satisfaction because an individual could control not all challenges. In the context of *ojek* online, a couple of work environment factors are controlled by customer management and algorithm management, so they cannot be governed by the drivers (Wood et al., 2019). For example, a driver tries to locate themselves in strategic or convenient locations, but the order they get may be very far from them. A driver cannot reject the order because the algorithm system will affect the driver's opportunity to get the following order (De Ruyter & Rachmawati, 2020).

The effort done to eliminate obstacles that the drivers cannot control may only give the opposite effect, in which it could produce work withdrawal (Wang et al., 2020). This condition emphasizes that online drivers are not independent in undergoing their work, as explained in the independent contractor concept. Because job crafting does not significantly affect job satisfaction, job crafting does not fulfill the criteria to become the mediator between proactive personality and job satisfaction.

## 7. Conclusion and Limitations

This study examines the relationship between proactive personality, job crafting, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction of gig workers, especially online drivers in Indonesia. Data were collected from seven main cities in Indonesia, namely Bandung, Bogor, Depok, Jakarta, Palembang, Surabaya, and Yogyakarta, with 280 respondents. Using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), this study found different results than previous studies, which later extended our understanding of gig workers and their work environment in Indonesia. The nature of gig workers does not allow them to have inspiring factors from their work environment to support their job satisfaction. Moreover, many work factors of platform work were controlled by algorithm and customer management and left the workers with no control over their work environment.

This study found that proactive personality does not significantly affect job satisfaction, but self-efficacy fully mediates their effect. This situation occurs because when a proactive personality stands alone without support from existing work conditions, it could reduce or eliminate job satisfaction. However, when proactive personality is followed by self-efficacy, the online driver's belief that they can perform the job helps them cope with various challenges in their work and enhance their satisfaction.

Secondly, job crafting cannot mediate proactive personality with job satisfaction because the effect of job crafting towards satisfaction is not significant. In the context of *ojek* online, the driver focuses more on avoiding challenges in their work. However, focusing on preventing challenges is seen as not adequate to generate job satisfaction (Wang et al., 2020). Furthermore, many work conditions faced by online drivers are controlled by algorithm management and customer management (Wood et al., 2019); thus, drivers do not have the flexibility in managing their work conditions. Hence job crafting becomes impossible. These results emphasize that gig workers are indeed not 'independent workers.'

This research attempts to evaluate the relationship between variables that have been widely used in traditional organizations and work settings. However, the conditions experienced by the gig workers are different than the traditional ones, e.g., there is no formal employment contract, no development opportunities, or career paths. Therefore, the relationship between the variables does not reconfirm the previous research. Future research should aim to look for more relevant variables for this new kind of work arrangement.

Furthermore, the variables of this research focus on the traits and the feeling of the gig workers. This research found the importance of inspiring factors of a job, involving variables that measure the job/work such as job characteristics model or Job Demand-Resources theory, would be necessary for future research.

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