

Exploring the Key Influence on Gig Economy Participation among Undergraduates in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The gig economy is rapidly transforming the nature of work worldwide, and Sri Lanka is no exception. This study aims to explore the key influences on gig economy participation among undergraduates in Sri Lanka. Despite increasing youth engagement in freelancing and digital platform-based work, limited research exists on the specific psychological, technological, and social drivers behind this trend. The study focuses on five critical variables: attitudes, technology access, motivation, peer and social influence, and perceived benefits. A quantitative research design was employed, using a quota sampling technique with data collected from 455 undergraduates who participated in the gig economy across 17 state universities through structured questionnaires. The data were analyzed using SPSS software, incorporating descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. Results indicate that attitudes, technology access, and perceived benefits significantly influence undergraduates' participation in the gig economy. However, motivation and peer and social influence were not found to have a statistically significant impact. These findings suggest the growing importance of flexible work models for students seeking financial independence, skill development, and career preparation. Based on these insights, universities, policymakers, and platform providers can implement support strategies such as skill development programs, digital literacy initiatives, and awareness campaigns.

Keywords: attitudes, gig economy, peer and social influences, perceived benefits, technology access