



The Influence of Work-Time Flexibility and Financial Incentives on the Performance of Online Motorcycle Taxi Partners in Medan City

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of work-time flexibility and financial incentives on the performance of online motorcycle taxi partners in Medan City. Using a quantitative approach with a questionnaire distributed to 150 respondents, the data were analyzed using multiple linear regression. The results indicate that both work-time flexibility ($t = 6.469$; $p < .001$) and financial incentives ($t = 3.658$; $p < .001$) have a partially positive and significant effect on partner performance. Simultaneously, both variables also have a significant influence ($F = 85.769$; $p < .001$) and explain 53.2% of the variance in performance. The study's primary finding is that work-time flexibility ($\beta = .505$) has a more dominant influence than financial incentives ($\beta = .286$), suggesting that work autonomy is a stronger motivator for partners in the gig economy ecosystem.

Keyword : partner performance, work-time flexibility, financial incentives, gig economy

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has engendered a new economic paradigm, the gig economy, which has fundamentally reshaped the global employment landscape, including in Indonesia (Izza et al., 2024). A prominent manifestation of this phenomenon is the online transportation industry, with motorcycle ride-hailing services (ojek online) at its forefront. In metropolitan areas such as Medan, these services have evolved from being merely alternative transportation to becoming a crucial pillar of the urban mobility ecosystem and a primary source of livelihood for hundreds of thousands of individuals (Nasution, 2023). The presence of major application-based platforms like Gojek, Grab, and Maxim has created a highly competitive work environment where drivers (classified as partners) are the frontline of service delivery. Their performance, an aggregate of productivity, service quality, and efficiency, is a critical determinant of the operational success and reputation of these platform companies (Novianto, 2022).



To optimize driver-partner performance, platform companies leverage two primary strategic instruments: operational flexibility and financial incentives (Li et al., 2025). Flexibility is frequently proffered as a principal benefit of this profession, affording drivers the autonomy to determine their own work schedules and durations (Dunn et al., 2023). Conceptually, this autonomy is anticipated to enhance work-life balance, which should, in turn, positively influence job satisfaction and motivation, thereby fostering superior performance (Novianti & Fuadiputra, 2021). However, this idealized representation is confronted by a more complex operational reality. The proclaimed autonomy is often more ostensible than substantive, as drivers must align their work patterns with market demand fluctuations and platform algorithms to maximize earnings. Furthermore, the imperative to meet daily targets to secure bonuses indirectly constrains drivers to specific hours, thereby eroding the distinction between flexibility and compulsion (Zhu et al., 2024).

Conversely, financial incentives represent a more tangible and quantifiable extrinsic motivator (de Beer, 2024). Schemes such as daily bonuses, trip target achievement incentives (points), and dynamic "surge" pricing during peak hours are designed to directly stimulate productivity. This system aims to ensure driver availability during periods of high demand, thereby dynamically balancing supply and demand. Financial incentives are anticipated to be a potent driver for motivating individuals to work more diligently and efficiently (Mukhopadhyay & Chatwin, 2020). However, the effectiveness of this strategy is not without its challenges. Frequent and often unilateral changes to the incentive structure, implemented without adequate communication, can provoke frustration, uncertainty, and perceptions of inequity among drivers (Syahreza et al., 2024). Furthermore, a strong reliance on bonuses may erode intrinsic motivation to provide high-quality service, shifting the focus from customer satisfaction to merely meeting quantitative targets (Promberger & Marteau, 2013). Therefore, a comprehensive investigation is warranted to understand the tangible impacts of these various financial incentive schemes on the holistic performance of online motorcycle taxi drivers (Skrzek-Lubasińska & Szban, 2024).

The selection of Medan as the locus for this study is justified by its unique characteristics as a primary economic, commercial, and educational hub on the island of Sumatra. Characterized by dense urban dynamics, high rates of mobility, and distinctive traffic infrastructure challenges, Medan provides a pertinent social laboratory for examining the online motorcycle taxi phenomenon (Purba, 2024). Furthermore, the socio-demographic profiles of drivers and the commuting patterns of the local population are critical contextual variables that may moderate the influence of flexibility and incentives on performance. The majority of the extant literature has



predominantly focused on the context of Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek) and other major cities in Java (Abadi & Taufiqurrahman, 2023; Pradana, 2024; Pratama et al., 2024; Salsabila et al., 2025). Consequently, a significant gap in the literature exists regarding the specific dynamics within major cities outside of Java, such as Medan.

This study is crucial as it aims to address a research gap by examining the influence of work-hour flexibility and financial incentives on the performance of online motorcycle taxi drivers in Medan City, both simultaneously and partially. Understanding the complex interplay between these variables is vital from multiple perspectives. Academically, this research will contribute to the theoretical development of human resource management and organizational psychology within the non-traditional context of the gig economy. Practically, the findings can provide data-driven recommendations for platform companies to design more effective and humane partner management systems. Furthermore, for municipal governments and regulators, this research can serve as a basis for formulating policies that protect the welfare of workers in the informal digital sector without stifling industry innovation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Worker Performance

Performance is a fundamental concept in the fields of human resource management and organizational psychology. Conceptually, performance is defined as the work outcomes achieved by an individual or a group within an organization, in alignment with their assigned authority and responsibility, to achieve organizational goals legally and ethically (Mangkunegara, 2017). Consistent with this perspective, Gibson et al. (2012) assert that individual performance constitutes the primary foundation supporting overall organizational performance. The definition of performance is not limited to final outcomes (output) but also encompasses the relevant processes and behaviors exhibited to achieve those outcomes.

In the context of work not bound by formal organizational structures, such as that of online motorcycle taxi drivers, this concept of performance is more directly applied to concrete and observable work outcomes. The performance of an online motorcycle taxi driver is measured not only by the number of completed trips but also by the quality of service provided. Qualitative aspects—such as response speed to orders, customer satisfaction levels reflected in ratings, and adherence to safety and service standards set by the platform company—are integral components of their performance assessment. Within the gig economy ecosystem, particularly in the online transportation sector, performance measurement possesses unique characteristics as it is digitally monitored by the platform, rendering it more quantitative and transparent (Izza et al., 2024).



According to several studies, a number of indicators are commonly used to evaluate the performance of online motorcycle taxi drivers (Pradana, 2024; Salsabila et al., 2025).

Work Hour Flexibility

Work hour flexibility is conceptualized as a work practice that grants employees greater autonomy and control over the timing and location of their work (Baltes et al., 1999). In contrast to traditional work models, which are characterized by rigid schedules predetermined by the employer, flexible work arrangements offer alternatives such as adjustable hours, part-time schedules, or the ability to determine one's own start and end times for the workday (Abednego et al., 2015). For workers in the gig economy, such as online motorcycle taxi drivers, flexibility constitutes a primary attraction and a fundamental characteristic of the work itself. These individuals are not bound by conventional work hours (e.g., 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.). Instead, drivers possess complete freedom to decide when to commence work (go online), the duration of their work periods, and when to conclude their activities (go offline). This autonomy enables them to balance professional responsibilities with other personal commitments, such as education, family obligations, or concurrent employment.

Work hour flexibility directly addresses the need for autonomy. By empowering online motorcycle taxi drivers to manage their own work schedules, the platform inherently supports the fulfillment of this psychological need. According to SDT, the satisfaction of the need for autonomy fosters higher levels of intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation—defined as engaging in an activity for the inherent satisfaction it provides—is a robust predictor of high-quality performance, persistence, and psychological well-being. Consequently, drivers who perceive a high degree of control over their work are more likely to be proactive and responsible, ultimately exhibiting enhanced performance (Manninen et al., 2022; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

A body of empirical research has demonstrated a positive relationship between work flexibility and performance. For instance, a study by Huda & Ekhsan (2023) concluded that work flexibility has a positive and significant influence on employee performance. Drivers who can manage their own time are better positioned to achieve work-life balance, which in turn can reduce stress and enhance their focus and sense of responsibility. However, the literature is not entirely consistent. Some studies have found that work flexibility does not have a significant effect on outcomes like job satisfaction, a finding attributed to a lack of discipline among drivers in managing their time. This suggests that the positive impact of flexibility is contingent upon an individual's self-management capabilities (Hakim, 2021; Putri, 2021). Without effective self-discipline, the freedom offered by flexible schedules may paradoxically lead to lower productivity. Nevertheless,



the prevailing literature supports the proposition that the autonomy afforded by flexible work hours is a critical driver of motivation and performance, particularly within the context of independent work, such as that of online motorcycle taxi drivers.

Financial Incentives

Financial incentives are a form of monetary compensation provided to workers, supplementary to their base salary or wages, designed to encourage desired behaviors and performance outcomes. According to Hasibuan (2016), an incentive is a stimulus aimed at employees to foster greater work enthusiasm and promote higher levels of achievement. In the context of the app-based ride-hailing sector, financial incentives serve as a primary managerial tool utilized by platform companies (e.g., Gojek, Grab) to manage driver supply and motivate them to work at specific times and locations. The common types of financial incentives in this industry include point-based or target-based bonuses, where drivers receive a monetary bonus upon accumulating a predetermined number of points within a daily or weekly period. Points are awarded for each completed trip, with varying weights assigned based on service type, distance, and time of day, such as higher points being awarded during peak hours. Another prevalent incentive is dynamic pricing, also known as surge pricing, which automatically increases trip fares during periods of high demand and low driver availability. This functions as a direct and immediate incentive for drivers to be online and operate in high-demand areas. Furthermore, companies may implement income guarantee programs, which guarantee a minimum level of earnings for drivers who are online during specified hours, provided they meet certain activity and acceptance rate criteria (Nugroho, 2025; Putri, 2021; Roeseno & Sobirin, 2023).

Empirical studies consistently indicate that financial incentives have a significant influence on performance. For instance, research conducted on Gojek drivers in Pekanbaru revealed a positive and significant correlation between incentives and driver performance; higher incentives were associated with higher levels of performance (Putra et al., 2023). However, this relationship is both dynamic and complex. Alterations or reductions in incentive schemes by platform companies frequently lead to driver protests and a decline in morale. This suggests that a heavy reliance on extrinsic incentives can render driver performance vulnerable to shifts in corporate policy. If incentives are perceived as unfair or no longer attractive, motivation and performance can deteriorate dramatically. This phenomenon underscores the criticality of instrumentality and valence within Expectancy Theory; if drivers no longer believe that their efforts will yield a fair and valuable reward, their motivation will inevitably erode (Syahreza et al., 2024).

Hypotheses



Based on the aforementioned theoretical framework, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

- **H1:** Flexible working hours have a positive and significant effect on the performance of online motorcycle taxi drivers in Medan City.
- **H2:** Financial incentives have a positive and significant effect on the performance of online motorcycle taxi drivers in Medan City.
- **H3:** Flexible working hours and financial incentives simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on the performance of online motorcycle taxi drivers in Medan City.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach utilizing an explanatory survey design. This approach is deemed appropriate for numerically measuring the influence between variables and analyzing them through statistical procedures. The explanatory (or causal) nature of this research is specifically aimed at testing and elucidating the cause-and-effect relationship between the independent and dependent variables. In this context, the study examines how the independent variables, namely flexible working hours (X1) and financial incentives (X2), collectively and partially influence the dependent variable, driver performance (Y).

The study was conducted in Medan, Indonesia. This locale was selected based on its status as a major metropolitan area with a high intensity of online ride-hailing service usage. The city's traffic characteristics and socio-economic conditions are considered representative for examining the phenomenon under investigation. Data collection was concentrated in high-traffic locations that serve as hubs for ride-hailing drivers, such as shopping centers, train stations, business districts, and university campuses. The entire research process, from instrument development to data analysis, is scheduled to span three months, from April to June 2025.

The target population for this study comprises all active online ride-hailing drivers operating in Medan. As the exact number of drivers is unknown and subject to fluctuation, the population is classified as infinite. To determine a representative sample size from an infinite population, Lemeshow's formula was applied. Establishing a 95% confidence level ($Z=1.96$), a population proportion of 0.5 (to maximize variance, as the true proportion is unknown), and a tolerable margin of error of 10% ($d=0.1$), the minimum required sample size was calculated to be 96.04 respondents. To account for potentially incomplete or invalid responses, the sample size was rounded up to 100 respondents. The study utilizes a convenience sampling technique (also known as accidental sampling). This non-probability sampling method was selected for its practicality in reaching a highly mobile population that is not listed within a formal sampling frame. Researchers



administered questionnaires directly to drivers who were encountered incidentally at the pre-determined locations and who consented to participate.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire-based survey. To provide deeper contextual understanding and enrich the quantitative findings, this method was supplemented by brief, unstructured interviews with a subset of respondents following questionnaire completion. These interviews aimed to elicit qualitative insights into the drivers' experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to work flexibility, incentive systems, and performance optimization.

All variables in the study were measured using a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating "Strongly Disagree" and 5 representing "Strongly Agree." The first independent variable, Flexible Working Hours, was defined as a driver's perceived autonomy in managing their work schedule and location. This was assessed through indicators such as the freedom to set start and end times, take breaks, choose workdays, and select operational areas. The second independent variable, Financial Incentives, referred to the drivers' perception of the monetary reward system, measured by indicators like the appeal of bonus amounts, the fairness of targets, the clarity of information, and the timeliness of payments. The dependent variable, Driver Performance, was defined as the work output achieved by a driver in terms of service quantity and quality. This was measured through indicators such as meeting trip targets, order acceptance rates, response speed, efforts to secure positive ratings, and adherence to service standards.

Before the main data collection began, the questionnaire was pilot-tested with 30 drivers who were not part of the final sample to ensure its validity and reliability. A validity test using Pearson Product-Moment correlation was conducted to confirm that each item accurately measured its intended construct; an item was deemed valid if its calculated r-value was greater than the table's critical r-value at a 0.05 significance level. Following this, a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha was performed to measure the internal consistency of the instrument, which was considered reliable if its coefficient exceeded 0.60.

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis began with a series of classical assumption tests to ensure the regression model met the criteria for a Best Linear Unbiased Estimator. These preliminary tests included a Normality Test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method, a Multicollinearity Test to check for high correlations between independent variables by examining Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor values, and a Heteroscedasticity Test using the Glejser method to confirm that the variance of residuals was constant.

To test the research hypotheses, multiple linear regression analysis was employed using the model $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$. To determine the individual effect of each independent variable on



driver performance, a t-test was used, with a hypothesis being supported if the significance value was less than 0.05. An F-test was then used to assess the joint effect of both independent variables on the dependent variable. Finally, the Coefficient of Determination (R^2) was calculated to measure the proportion of variance in driver performance that could be explained by flexible working hours and financial incentives combined.

RESULTS

The descriptive statistics, derived from a sample of 150 respondents, provide a preliminary overview of the research variables. The performance of Gojek partners in Medan (Y) registered the highest mean score ($M=21.80$), indicating that, on average, participants perceive their performance level as high. The variable of Work-Time Flexibility (X1) followed with a mean of 21.49, suggesting a high level of satisfaction with the autonomy provided in their work schedules. Concurrently, Financial Incentives (X2) yielded a mean score of 20.54, which suggests that the monetary rewards received are generally perceived as adequate (see Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Work Hour Flexibility (X1)	150	12	25	21.49	3.11
Financial Incentives (X2)	150	12	25	20.54	3.01
Partner Performance (Y)	150	15	25	21.8	2.67

To test the research hypotheses, further statistical analyses were conducted. The partial-effects analysis, using a t-test, revealed that Work-Time Flexibility (X1) has a positive and statistically significant influence on performance. This is evidenced by a t-value of 6.469 and a significance level of $p<.001$, which is well below the conventional threshold of 0.05. Consequently, the first hypothesis (H1) was supported. Similarly, Financial Incentives (X2) were also found to have a positive and significant effect on performance, with a t-value of 3.658 and a significance level of $p<.001$, thus supporting the second hypothesis (H2).

Table 2. Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients Predicting the Dependent Variable (Y)



Variable	Unstandardized	Standardized	t-value	p-value	Collinearity Statistics
	Coefficients B	Coefficient Std. Error β (Beta)			
(Constant)	7.276	1.124		6.471	< .001
Predictor (X1)	0.434	0.067	0.505	6.469***	< .001
Predictor (X2)	0.253	0.069	0.286	3.658***	< .001

Furthermore, this study examined the simultaneous effect of both independent variables on performance through an F-test. The results yielded a substantial F-value of 85.769 with a significance level of $p < .001$. This finding confirms that Work-Time Flexibility and Financial Incentives collectively exert a significant influence on the performance of Gojek partners, leading to the acceptance of the third hypothesis (H3). Although both variables were found to be significant predictors, the t-test results indicate that Work-Time Flexibility has a relatively stronger partial effect on performance compared to Financial Incentives.

Table 3. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the Regression Model

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)
Regression	570.826	2	285.413	85.769	< .001
Residual	489.174	147	3.328		
Total	1060	149			

To complete the analysis, the Coefficient of Determination (Adjusted R^2) was calculated to quantify the extent to which the independent variables explain the variance in the dependent variable. The analysis yielded an Adjusted R^2 value of 0.532, indicating that 53.2% of the variance in the performance of Gojek partners can be collectively explained by Work-Time Flexibility and Financial Incentives. The remaining variance is attributable to other factors not included in this research model.

Table 4. Model Summary for Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.734 ^a	.539	.532	1.82420



DISCUSSION

This study aimed to analyze the influence of work-time flexibility and financial incentives on the performance of Gojek partners in Medan. The multiple linear regression analysis reveals that both independent variables, individually and collectively, exert a positive and significant effect on partner performance. The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R²) of 0.532 indicates that 53.2% of the variance in partner performance can be explained by these two factors, suggesting a model with moderate and significant predictive power.

The first hypothesis (H1) was supported, demonstrating that work-time flexibility (X1) has a positive and significant effect on the performance (Y) of Gojek partners ($t=6.469, p<.001$). This finding confirms that greater autonomy for partners to determine their own work schedules directly contributes to enhanced performance. This aligns with seminal research by (Katz & Krueger, 2019), who identified flexibility as a primary attraction and one of the most potent non-monetary motivators in the gig economy. When individuals have control over when and how long they work, it can lead to increased job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation, which in turn fosters better performance.

In the context of ride-hailing drivers, flexibility allows them to effectively balance their work with other personal commitments, such as family, education, or other employment. The ability to strategically work during peak hours when demand is high, or to take breaks when necessary, empowers partners to work more efficiently. This result also supports the arguments of (Spreitzer et al., 2017), who posited that autonomy and flexibility in modern work environments can boost worker engagement and productivity. Thus, control over one's schedule is not merely a convenience but a strategic element that drives partners to achieve higher performance targets.

Similarly, the second hypothesis (H2) was supported, as financial incentives (X2) were found to have a positive and significant influence on performance (Y) with a t-value of 3.658 ($p<.001$). This result is consistent with classic motivation frameworks, such as Vroom's Expectancy Theory, which posits that individuals are motivated to exert effort if they believe it will lead to good performance, and that such performance will be rewarded with desirable outcomes.

Previous research by (Ashkrof et al., 2025) also showed that bonus schemes and dynamic pricing models (*surge pricing*) effectively motivate drivers to increase their working hours and accept more rides, which directly correlates with performance metrics. For Gojek partners, financial incentives—such as trip completion bonuses, point-based reward systems, or additional income from various services (GoFood, GoSend)—serve as powerful extrinsic motivators. Clear and attainable financial rewards encourage behaviors desired by the platform, namely high availability and prompt service, which are proxies for strong performance.



While both variables are significant predictors, a more nuanced analysis reveals that work-time flexibility (standardized beta coefficient $\beta=0.505$) exerts a stronger partial effect on performance compared to financial incentives ($\beta=0.286$). This is a key finding of the present study. It suggests that within a gig economy ecosystem like Gojek, the autonomy and control over one's work may be valued more highly by partners than monetary rewards alone.

This can be interpreted through the lens of Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, where financial incentives may act as a "hygiene factor"—necessary to prevent dissatisfaction but not sufficient to drive long-term motivation. In contrast, flexibility functions as a true "motivator" that provides job satisfaction and promotes sustained high performance. This finding offers a slight contrast to studies like Hall & Krueger (2018), which placed a greater emphasis on earnings as the primary driver for participation in ride-hailing platforms. This difference may stem from the socio-economic context of Medan, where many partners may engage in ride-hailing as a secondary source of income, making flexibility the dominant value proposition.

Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on work motivation within the gig economy, particularly in a developing country context. It reaffirms the relevance of classic motivation theories while highlighting the unique motivational calculus of non-traditional workers, for whom non-monetary factors like flexibility can outweigh financial ones.

From a practical standpoint, the findings offer valuable insights for the management of Gojek and similar platforms. Platforms should protect and promote flexibility as a core value proposition. Policy changes that reduce partner autonomy risk diminishing motivation and overall performance. While important, financial incentives should be designed to complement, not compromise, flexibility. Dynamic, personalized incentives may be more effective than rigid schemes. In recruitment strategies, emphasizing the autonomy and flexibility offered may be more effective in attracting and retaining high-quality partners than focusing solely on earning potential.

CONCLUSION

This study provides compelling evidence that both work-time flexibility and financial incentives are significant and positive drivers of performance among Gojek partners in Medan. The research confirmed all three hypotheses: that each factor individually enhances performance and that their combined effect is substantial. Collectively, these two variables account for 53.2% of the variance in partner performance, underscoring their critical role in motivating workers within the gig economy. The most notable finding is the relative strength of work-time flexibility over financial incentives. The analysis revealed that the autonomy to control one's work schedule ($\beta = 0.505$) has a considerably stronger impact on performance than monetary rewards ($\beta = 0.286$). This suggests



that for Gojek partners in this specific context, the freedom and control inherent in the work are more powerful motivators than the financial returns alone. This insight aligns with motivational theories that distinguish between extrinsic rewards and intrinsic satisfiers, positioning flexibility as a core element that fosters job satisfaction and sustained high performance.

LIMITATION

This study is not without its limitations. First, the data were collected via self-report questionnaires, which may be susceptible to social desirability bias, particularly on the performance variable. Second, the cross-sectional design does not allow for the analysis of causal relationships over time. Third, the model leaves 46.8% of the variance in performance unexplained, which is likely due to other factors such as platform support, algorithmic fairness, social community, or individual psychological traits. Future research could employ a longitudinal design to observe the impact of policy changes on partner motivation and performance over time. Additionally, future studies could incorporate other variables, such as social support from the partner community, perceptions of algorithmic justice, and work-related stress, to build a more comprehensive model of gig worker performance.

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