Informalisation of employment and career trajectories in the gig economy: evidence from ehailing drivers Cape Town.

A Masters Dissertation presented to

The Department of Information Systems

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In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the course:

Master of Commerce Information Systems

Submitted by:

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Acknowledgments

The exceptional mentorship of Professor J.P Van Belle and his guidance have been instrumental to this research. I appreciate and thank my wife for her support during this period, after receiving 2 lifechanging offers that made me migrate to the middle east for 12 months and later to London where I am based now, I never thought I would complete this research, but she encouraged me always. Above all I would like to thank God for without him I would not have completed this.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my unborn twins and to my father S Zimuto Senior. “…chanda gwinyira chii…”

Abstract

Problem Statement: The rate of technological development, ehailing adoption, work fairness, and industry performance within the gig-economy are well-studied globally. However, the South African context remains underexplored. Research on career trajectories and informality in this sector has been limited by insufficient data and the absence of robust frameworks. **Research Objective**: The main aim of this research is to investigate the impact of the gig economy on informalisation of employment and individual career trajectories of gig workers, by assessing the degree of formality in ehailing, the career expectations and planning of ehailing drivers. To this end, a post-positivist research philosophy was adopted. **Research Design**: The study collected data using semi-structured interviews. The sample for the study was constituted of 30 ehailing drivers from Cape Town. The study employed an exploratory approach which enables the researcher to probe for more information based on initial responses from the participants and a thematic approach for data analysis. The study adopted the Spectrum of Informality (SOI) and the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) frameworks to guide the research. The SCCT framework was customized to focus on ehailing-specific and related factors termed job specific determinants of career choices. **Findings**: The study findings depict the ehailing driver's job as a more informal to semi-formal role on SOI. Wage determination, compliance and legal benefits mapped as Informal on the SOI. While contracts, income stability, hours of work and supervision plotted as Semi-Formal on the SOI. The study found that most drivers initially planned to continue in their historical careers and expected consistent growth over time, while some maintained ehailing as a part-time role. The study found that joining ehailing significantly changed most drivers' career progression, with others considering it a complete career change. However, when investigating satisfaction, this study found that drivers are not satisfied with the support received from ehailing companies, their current incomes and other factors. **Research Contribution**: The study was situated at the intersection of labour economics and information systems research around the gig economy. This study contributes to literature on ehailing studies and career trajectories of gig workers. In addition, the aspect of informality and the mapping of the ehailing driver's role is a key contribution that could aid policy making. The updating of the SCCT model and its application to ehailing careers also created a good opportunity for further research in this area.

Keywords: gig economy, ehailing, career trajectories, informalisation, spectrum of informalisation model, social cognitive career theory.

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List of Acronyms

BCT	Boundaryless Career Theory
CCT	Career Construction Theory
CSM	Career Self-Management Framework
DOT	Department of Transport
GPS	Global Positioning System
ILO	International Labour Organization
IS	Information Systems
IT	Information Technology
MaaS	Mobility-as-a-Service
NLP	Natural Language Processing
PCT	Protean Career Theory
SA	South Africa
SARS	South African Revenue Authority
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
SOI	Spectrum of Informality
STATSA	Statistics South Africa
UCT	University of Cape Town
UK	United Kingdom

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Individual transportation services that are accessed from digital platforms on smart phones or other devices, which connect providers (drivers) with customers (riders) based on the global positioning system (GPS) are categorised as ehailing services (Idros et al., 2018; Rayle et al., 2016). Platforms such as Uber, Bolt, Lyft, Indriver and DiDi have been credited with disrupting the transportation sector, attaining growth rates of over 11.1% per year (Statista Research Department, 2021) and market capitalisation of more than 90 billion USD (Nasdaq, 2021). The simplified version of their operating model includes predetermined pricing (fixed or auction system), pre-agreed payment method and automatically generated efficient routes for the trip. The value creation of ehailing services, from both pre- and post-usage, as well as reduced transaction costs, travel costs and market barriers, have ensured high uptake from customers (Geitung, 2017).

The innovative nature of these digital platforms and their operating models have brought many benefits for ehailing drivers and riders, but this has also brought about questions regarding the fairness of the relationship between drivers and the platform providers (Fredman et al., 2020a; Heeks et al., 2020). The operating model of ehailing platforms and the classification of ehailing drivers either as worker, partners or freelancers has an impact on the classification of their work as either formal or informal. This classification has a direct impact on the rights and benefits these drivers are accorded, potentially influencing their individual career trajectories. Hence there is widespread concern that the growth in the gig economy is leading to informalisation of employment.

Exact definitions of informalisation depend on the regulatory frameworks or labour standards in each region, but it is largely agreed that it represents the movement from "jobs within" to "jobs outside", the current regulatory frameworks and the main features of informalisation include increased social inequality and labour exploitation (Hussmanns, 2004; Shahid et al., 2020; Young, 2020). Therefore, policy makers and academics are concerned that the increased unregulated labour relationships in the gig economy will erode the gains of formalisation won in the 19th and 20th centuries which can accelerate social inequality and affect the attainment of the millennium development goals particularly for countries in the global south.

The global south has an estimated 40 million gig workers, representing most of the gig workers in the world (Graham et al., 2020; Heeks, 2019). Uber launched in South Africa in 2013, marking the beginning of ehailing services (Competition Commission Report, 2020). Bolt (formerly Taxify)

launched in 2016 (Reuters, 2019) with other major firms such as inDriver and DiDi launching over the last four years. The USD750 Million estimated revenue and 9.8% estimated growth rate for 2021 in the South African e-haling sector, shows the value and impact this sector has in the overall economy. By 2017, Uber had more than 29 000 jobs in Africa (Venter, 2019), but Reuters (2021) estimates Uber has more than 20 000 registered drivers in South Africa alone, and Bolt has more than 25 000 registered drivers on their platform. The ehailing sector is growing but platforms are still facing challenges that impact business continuity as evidence by the decision of DiDi to leave the market in South Africa in 2022.

1.2 Problem Statement

There is a growing body of knowledge around adoption of ehailing (Ranzini et al., 2017; Shaheen, 2018), fairness of work (Graham et al., 2020; Roberts, 2016) and performance of the industry, but the South African context on ehailing remain largely unexplored. Data availability remains one of the key impediments limiting studies, forecasting, and policy planning in ehailing. Notwithstanding the innovative nature of the ehailing platforms, inefficiencies with significant labour implications still exist which warrant further studies (Drouillard, 2017; Olbert and Spengel, 2017). One of the key issues is understanding the impact of ehailing services on the degree of informality of employment for drivers.

The operating model of the ehailing sector is operating largely outside current labour standards and legal frameworks (Fredman, 2020), hence affects the degree of informality of employment for ehailing workers. The growing body of knowledge has not explored individual worker trajectories and this gap is critical to understanding how platform owners and actors [fleet owners] can offer help to drivers in their career trajectories and enhance their career paths. This can lead to platform growth by attracting more drivers, but research is needed to draw sound conclusions. This dissertation will contribute to the body of knowledge by studying individual worker trajectories of ehailing drivers in the Western Cape province of South Africa.

Studies in the gig economy domain have largely employed non-systematic frameworks borrowed from other domains, hence a gap exists for the application of a gig economy centric systematic framework (Graham et al., 2020; Heeks et al., 2020). This dissertation will contribute to the body of knowledge by innovatively employing two systematic frameworks, one from the field of human resources to understand career trajectories and another borrowed from labour economics to study the degree of informalisation.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

The ehailing sector represents a significant part of the gig economy in the global south, employing a large portion of the estimated 40 million workers in the gig economy. The innovative nature of the gig economy's operational models has exploited regulatory grey areas relating to labour classification and this has an impact on the degree of informality for workers, employment classification and workers' rights hence, this research has the objective to investigate the impact of the gig economy on informalisation of employment and individual career trajectories of gig workers. To achieve the research objective, the proposed study will answer the following main research question:

- What is the impact of the ehailing sector on informalisation of employment and individual career trajectories of ehailing drivers?

The main research question is broken down into the following sub-questions:

1. What is the degree of informality of ehailing drivers work?
2. What are the career expectations of ehailing drivers before joining ehailing?
3. What was the impact of joining ehailing on the career expectations of the driver?
4. What are the perceptions of ehailing drivers on the role played by ehailing platform providers in shaping their career trajectories?

1.4 Research Framework

This study used the Social Cognitive Career Theory as a lens to understand career trajectories of ehailing drivers. The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is a unifying framework which explains career trajectories from a career development perspective Earlier work on the SCCT was established in 1994 and consisted of three connected models aimed at explaining career trajectories from: (a) interest development, (b) choice-making, and (c) performance and persistence in educational and vocational domains (Lent et al., 1994). Recent modifications include of the theory included (d) a model of satisfaction and well-being (Lent & Brown, 2006; Lent & Brown, 2008) and (e) a model of career self-management (Lent & Brown, 2013).

The study also used the International Labour Organisation's Spectrum of Informality to understand informalisation. The Spectrum of Informality framework is a comprehensive tool for understanding the multifaceted nature of informal work arrangements and their implications across various

domains. The framework provides a nuanced perspective on the diverse spectrum of informal work, encompassing a wide range of employment arrangements, from gig economy platforms to part-time and temporary work. The SOI framework is derived from the research done by ILO (2002; 2003; 2013a 2015b; 2018) and Cobb et al., (2009). The framework's applicability extends to diverse research contexts, making it a suitable choice for the current study.

These two frameworks offered a degree of flexibility that was required for the specific context of this study.

1.5 Significance of the study

The Gig Economy has grown to earning US$50bn+ per year, employing over 40 million workers in the Global South (Heeks et al., 2019) and global growth rates of over 30% per year (Heeks et al., 2020). These rates of revenue and labour count growths are expected to increase hence the overall percentage of the world economic contribution from the gig economy will increase significantly. Understanding the structure of employment and its impact on informalisation and career trajectories can contribute significantly to creating regulatory frameworks that help prevent the deterioration of conditions of work.

This study seeks to initiate research focusing on career trajectories in the gig economy and set the foundation for future research that can unlock understanding into how individual career trajectories are dynamically impacted by working in the gig economy.

1.6 Overview of Chapters

The dissertation will be structured in the following manner in order to logically present the findings.

Chapter 2: The literature review examines the literature on ehailing, career trajectories and informalisation of employment to explores these within the South African context. The determinants of career trajectories and informalisation are also reviewed in this chapter to give a solid background for the research.

Chapter 3: The theoretical framework section discusses the selected frameworks and their application for this study. A detailed discussion on the suitability of framework for this study, its contributions to meeting the research objective and addressing the research questions was also presented in this section.

Chapter 4: Research design and methodology encapsulates the design of the research and the methodological approach employed for this research. The section details philosophical

consideration, approach to theory, sampling, collection, the research instrument, analysis of data, research timeframe, ethics considerations, and limitations of the research.

Chapter 5: Data analysis and findings presented the data collected from ehailing drivers and the general terms and conditions of the ehailing contracts. The chapter presented an analysis of the career self-management views of ehailing drivers and their career satisfaction opinions. Details on the environmental support and resources were presented & analysed within the spectrum of informality.

Chapter 6: Discussion, conclusion, and recommendations covers the discussion, conclusion, and recommendations of the study. This chapter summarised the themes and outcomes of the research, addressing the research questions and reviewing how the research objective was fulfilled.

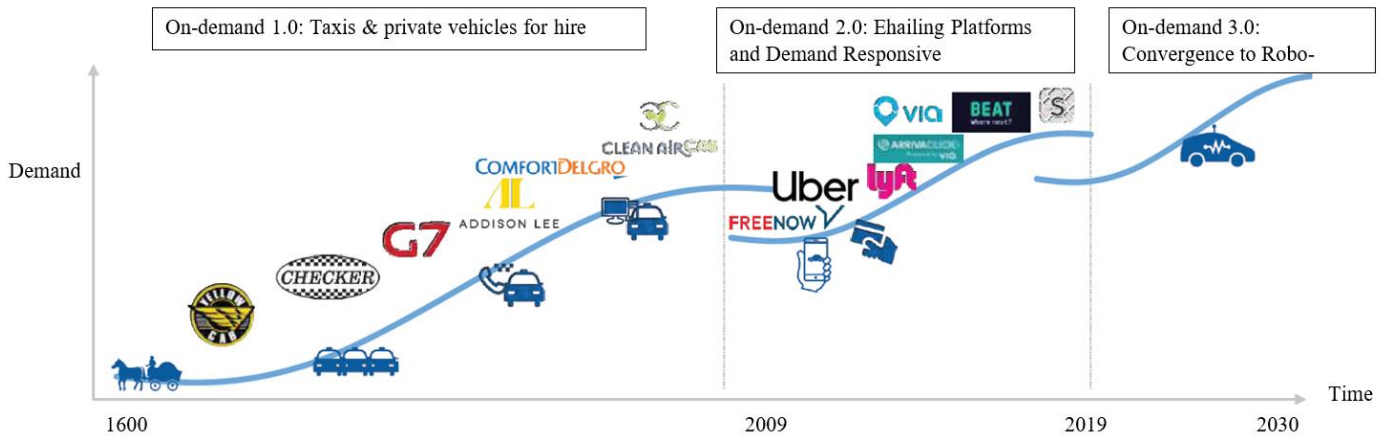
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review gives a detailed background into ehailing from both a local and international perspective. Focus is given to the South African context as required by the objectives of this research. The context of informalisation and career trajectories in ehailing is set out from relevant sources including peer reviewed conference papers, academic databases, government reports, white papers, academic journals, and published books. Information relating to policy frameworks and the ehailing in South Africa was accessed from the Department of Transport (DOT) website, Statista Database, Statistics South Africa (STATSA) and individual ehailing platforms performance reports. Finally, a summary of the literature review is presented and how it informs the methodology to be adopted for this research.

2.1 Ehailing - A Global Historical Perspective

The ehailing industry's inception and exponential has significantly transformed the transportation sector and pushed the boundaries of urban mobility (Shaheen & Cohen, 2018). An innovative departure from telephone-based ride hailing, app-based ride hailing, or platform-based hailing gained traction around 2009 with the popularity of Uber (Rayle et al., 2016). Other notable names in the industry include Lyft, Bolt and DiDi. Riding on the availability of internet connectivity and mobile phone adoption, ehailing platform providers user-friendly applications which simplified and revolutionized the taxi industry, with customer convenience, driver convenience, affordability and connectivity being the core tenets.

Figure 2. 3: Depicting the on-demand hailing services historical perspective.



Source: Audenhove et al., 2020: p3

Figure 2.1 shows the history of the hailing industry from the 1600 period. Early on the sector was characterised by the original business model that was anchored on traditional hailing approach such as direct taxi rank or street hailing. A significant shift is depicted from 2009 where innovation was at the centre of the transformation of the industry with the emergence of transport network companies, real time demand matching and ehailing platforms (Audenhove et al., 2020: p3).

The global expansion of ehailing witnessed the rise of competitors such as Lyft in 2012, challenging Uber's dominance, notably in the United States (Zervas et al., 2017). Concurrently, regional players like Grab in Southeast Asia and Ola in India diversified the market, catering to local preferences and needs. The genesis of ehailing services, synonymous with app-based ride hailing or transportation, heralded a groundbreaking era in urban mobility (Cohen & Shaheen, 2018). Emerging in the early 2000s, this innovative concept swiftly gained momentum, spearheaded by pioneering entities like Uber, Lyft, and Didi Chuxing, altering the landscape of traditional taxi services through a fusion of mobile technology and inventive business models.

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Uber, a trailblazer established in 2009, remains emblematic of the ehailing industry's transformative prowess (Rayle et al., 2016). Its user-centric smartphone application redefined transportation by seamlessly connecting passengers with drivers. This innovative utilization of underutilized private vehicles swiftly garnered widespread appeal owing to its trifecta of convenience, affordability, and accessibility, fundamentally altering how individuals navigated urban environments. The global proliferation of ehailing witnessed the emergence of formidable competitors such as Lyft in 2012, disrupting Uber's stronghold, particularly within the United States (Zervas et al., 2017). Concurrently, regional powerhouses like Grab in Southeast Asia and Ola in India emerged, capitalizing on their nuanced understanding of local preferences and specific market needs. Their entry not only diversified the ehailing landscape but also intensified competition, prompting innovative services and tailored approaches to cater to diverse cultural and geographical contexts (Audenhove et al., 2020).

This competitive landscape spurred rapid advancements and service expansions within the ehailing domain, fostering a dynamic environment characterized by continuous innovation and market adaptations (Nwachukwu & Vu, 2022). The evolution of ehailing did not merely introduce a novel mode of transportation but engendered a paradigm shift, setting the stage for a revolution in urban mobility that transcended geographical boundaries (Peng et al., 2021).

The history of ehailing embodies a monumental shift in transportation dynamics propelled by technological innovation and evolving consumer preferences. Academic inquiry, evident through a plethora of studies, has provided multifaceted insights into the impacts of ehailing, from socio-economic implications to environmental considerations (Zervas et al., 2017). The framework developed by Heeks et al. (2019) serves as a testament to the scholarly endeavour to evaluate the impact of ehailing on labour standards, underscoring the significance of ensuring "decent work" in the platform economy.

2.1.1 Ehailing and the South African Context

Ehailing has grown exponentially since its inception across the globe, with overall users estimated to reach 1.7 billion by 2025 (Statista Research Department, 2021) and only one platform (DiDi) reaching 31 million drivers by 2020 (*DiDi performance report.* 2021). In South Africa, the ehailing sector is 9 years old in 2023. Uber are the South African pioneers entering the market in 2013 and having more than 35000 drivers and projected to have 7.5 million users by 2025. Taxify (formerly Bolt) entered the market in 2016 and now has more than 2.1 million users and more than 40 000 drivers by 2023 (Bolt.eu, 2023). Studies around ehailing can be classified into two main themes, one relating mainly to the customer, platforms, and adoption side areas, the second class relating to workers, regulation, and impact on other facets of the economy. Adoption, consumer need, utilisation, influence, and the general makeup of them ehailing operating model have been studied and are key themes of current studies (Alemi et al., 2018; Rayle et al., 2016). The focus of these studies has largely been in the developed world, with the global south not getting much research focus.

Advancements in smartphone technology, mobile penetration, wireless technology, and usage-based pricing models have been identified as key enablers for the growth of ehailing services in South Africa and around the world (Tani et al., 2021). The generational characteristics of millennials and preceding generation have also been identified as key enablers for this growth when compared to previous generations (Ranzini et al., 2017). One ehailing platform, Lyft, completed more than

375.5 million rides globally in 2017 and contributed to more than 250k riders opting out of car ownership (Iqbal, 2021). This shows the extent of the impact that ehailing has had in the daily lives of consumers.

The Western Cape province is a major tourism hub attracting millions of visitors per year from mainly developed countries where the ehailing industry is more mature than in South Africa. This has given ehailing a particular boost during its initial launch periods. But driver security concerns in a high crime rate country like SA, the retaliation of traditional taxi drivers and poor mobile penetration in other areas have accounted for failed penetration in township areas.

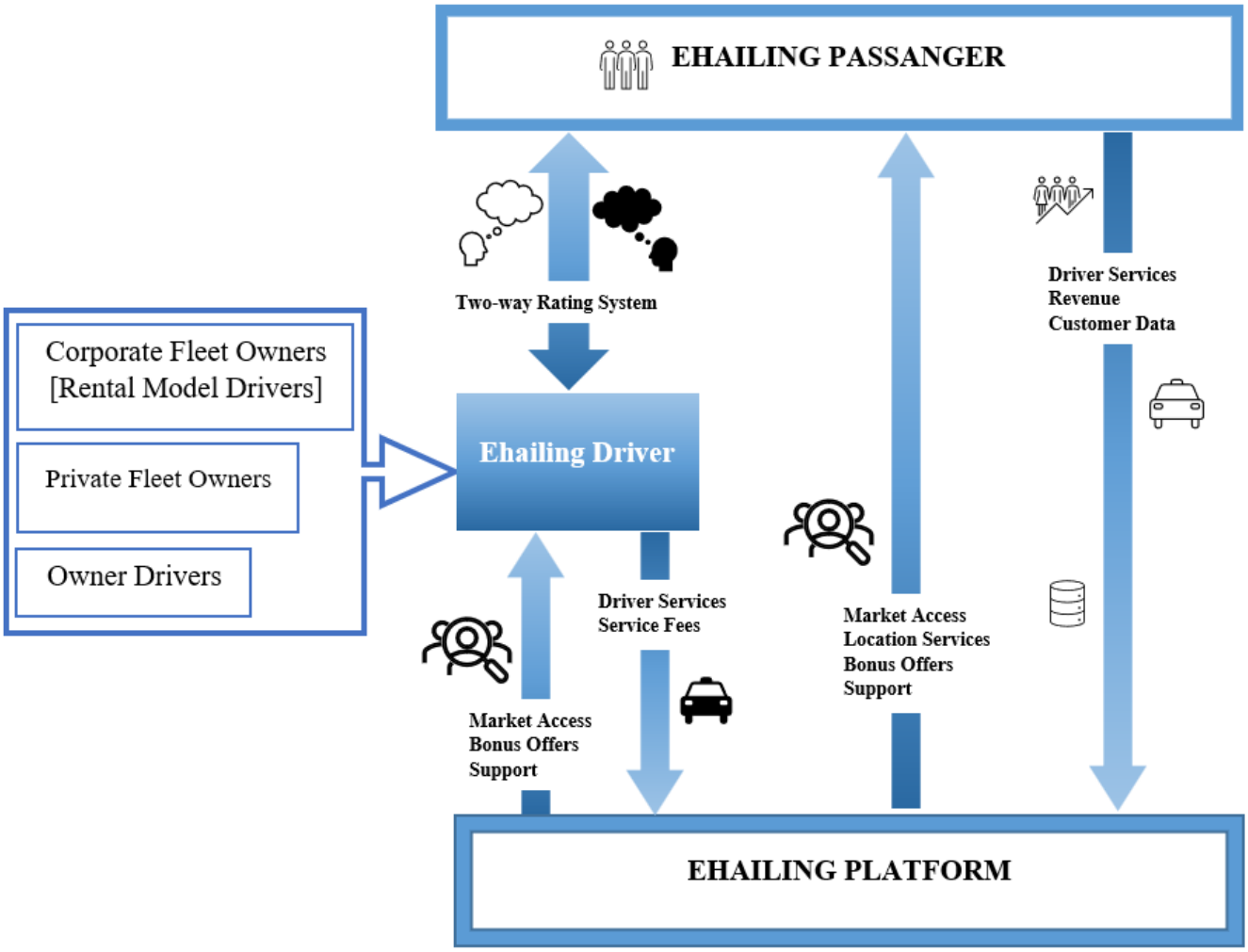
The operating model is depicted in Figure 1, showing the main players as the platform, the drivers, and the riders. Riders use mainly mobile apps on smartphones to order a ride from point A the origin to point B the destination. Riders are required to create profiles with their details and are required to add credit card details for (Uber and DiDi only). The platforms show predetermined pricing for all other e-haling services except for inDriver. InDriver offers an auction pricing system offering riders the chance to set an ask price for a specific trip and drivers the option to respond with a bid price. Riders can check the rating, car type and number of completed trips for a driver before accepting their price. All platforms offer 2-way rating systems, which is now being used to determine if a driver should be blocked or not on other platforms such as Bolt. The rating for Bolt particularly is cumulative and calculated as a moving average (the exact method is still opaque and not public knowledge) and a driver can be blocked temporarily or permanently from the platform should it fall below a certain figure on the moving average of recent rides.

The remuneration of drivers is based on revenue per ride less various platform related charges and fees e.g commission. Except for DiDi which offers a withdrawal option at various intervals, the payment for earnings is done weekly in arrears into the driver's bank accounts. Uber offers drivers an extra layer of financial support if a car is impounded by local police for not having a local operator's licence, but other platforms do not offer that form of support. The ehailing sector remains an innovative fast paced sector with platform upgrades and updates coming in regularly.

The recent court case in the United Kingdom (Uber BV v Aslam, 2021 as cited in McGaughey, 2019) and Europe have put the spotlight on the second class of research which has until recently been not getting attention from academics. The plight of ehailing drivers, the worker rights, employment classification and the fairness of their relationship with e-haling platform companies. The Fair Work project have dedicated their work to addressing the question of fairness and

contributing to the setting of standards that will ensure fairness in the relationship between platforms and drivers. A longstanding view by the ILO has been that a formalization of employment drive-initiated post WW2 has resulted in significant gains to the rights of workers but the fact that ehailing drivers in 2020 are still mis-classified as per the UK supreme court ruling begs the question if the gig economy has an impact on the formalization of employment.

Figure 2. 4: Depicting the South African Ehailing Operating Model.



2.2 Informalisation

Informalisation in the context of information technology refers to the increasing prevalence of informal employment and informal employment practices within the IT sector or IT led business models. This trend has significant implications for the nature of work, organizational structures, and the overall economy. The concept of informalisation is particularly relevant in the field of information technology, given the rapid evolution of digital platforms, remote work arrangements, and the gig economy. As both organizations and customers increasingly rely on digital platforms and flexible work arrangements, the boundaries between formal and informal employment are

becoming blurred, leading to a reconfiguration of traditional employment relationships and work practices (Dougherty & Escobar, 2013).

The determinants of informalisation in the IT sector are multifaceted and encompass various factors such as technological advancements, organizational contexts, and individual characteristics. Technological advancements, particularly in information technology, have facilitated the rise of informal work arrangements through digital platforms and online exchanges (Pavlou et al., 2007). Moreover, the organizational context, including the adoption of information technology and interorganizational business process standards, plays a crucial role in shaping the prevalence of informal employment within the IT sector (Venkatesh & Bala, 2012). Additionally, individual characteristics such as age, education, and cognitive abilities have been identified as significant determinants of informal employment in the context of information technology (Khamis, 2011).

Understanding the determinants of informalisation in the IT sector is essential for policymakers, organizations, and individuals to address the challenges and opportunities associated with this trend. By examining the interplay of technological, organizational, and individual factors, stakeholders can develop strategies to mitigate the negative consequences of informalisation while leveraging its potential benefits. Furthermore, as the IT sector continues to evolve, a comprehensive understanding of the determinants of Informalisation is critical for fostering a dynamic and inclusive digital economy (Saha et al., 2013; Yankson & Gough, 2019). The following section will introduce the determinants of informalisation.

2.2.1 Determinants of Informalisation

The informalisation of employment is a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by various factors that shape the nature of work. Economic factors, such as slow economic growth and lack of formal job opportunities, can drive individuals into informal employment due to limited formal job creation (Oldenkamp et al., 2017). This is particularly prevalent in the global south with high levels of unemployment. Labor market dynamics, including flexibility in hiring and firing, can lead employers to prefer informal arrangements to bypass regulations and costs associated with formal employment (Butt & Ahmad, 2020).

Technological advancements have a dual impact on informal work, creating new informal opportunities while also reducing the need for certain informal jobs through automation and efficiency improvements (O'Connor et al., 2020). It is the intersection of technological advancement

and a regulatory environment that contributed to the need to investigate the interplay between the gig economy and informalisation of employment.

Policy and regulation, social and cultural factors, education and skills, globalization, and trade liberalization also play crucial roles in shaping informalisation (Jonsson et al., 2018; Mathiassen et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2020).

The absence of, or inefficiency in enforcing labour laws and regulations can contribute to Informalisation, while high regulatory burdens or complex procedures for formalizing businesses can push both employers and employees toward informal arrangements (Mathiassen et al., 2023). Social and cultural factors, such as historical or cultural reasons, can perpetuate informal work arrangements, shaping the labour market dynamics in specific contexts (Huang et al., 2020).

Limited access to education and skill development can confine individuals to informal work, as the lack of formal qualifications or specialized skills can limit employment options, leading to informal work as the only available choice for many individuals (Al-Tarawneh et al., 2019). Global economic changes can affect local economies, influencing job availability and the nature of employment, potentially driving people towards informal work as a means of livelihood (Jonsson et al., 2018).

2.2.2 Informalisation and the Ehailing Context

The gig economy, particularly the ehailing sector has become a significant part of the labour market in the world economy. The gig economy is characterized by short-term, flexible jobs often mediated through digital platforms, and this structure of work can have significant implications for Informalisation. The increasing prevalence of informal work arrangements, where workers are often independent contractors or freelancers rather than traditional employees has been a common thread across the gig economy and more so the ehailing sector. This trend is influenced by some of the determinants discussed in section 2.2.1.

The ehailing sector has been shaped by the use of digital platforms and partly social media, which play a crucial role in community building among gig workers and directly facilitating gig work (Kaine & Josserand, 2019). This has implications for the informalisation of work, the flexibility and perceived informality of gig work can lead to challenges in ensuring decent work standards and labour rights.

Additionally, ehailing as a subset of the gig economy has provided opportunities for gig workers to exercise agency in earning and sustaining their livelihoods, highlighting the complex dynamics of labour agency and resistance in this context (Anwar & Graham, 2019). From a macro-view the offline contexts of online jobs, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, have also been examined to understand the potential for creating decent work and the impact on informality (Cieslik et al., 2022). This highlights the intersection of the gig economy with informal work arrangements and the need to assess its implications for labour standards and regulations.

Furthermore, the development and application of frameworks for evaluating gig work against decent work standards have been proposed, emphasizing the importance of systematically assessing the impact of gig work on labour rights and working conditions (Heeks et al., 2021). This is particularly relevant in the context of the ehailing sector, where gig workers may face challenges in accessing decent work and fair labour practices. Moreover, the potential integration of the gig economy in sectors such as healthcare has been explored, indicating the need to understand the implications of gig work for formal and informal employment in different industries (Alanzi, 2021).

Further studies in the context of specific platforms and regions, such as the experiences of Didi and taxi drivers in the on-demand economy, have shed light on the labour dynamics and activism within the gig economy (Chen, 2017). Additionally, the multi-dimensional theory of temporal control in the gig economy has been proposed, highlighting the complexities of temporalities and autonomy in gig work arrangements (Kwok & Chan, 2021). These studies provide valuable insights into the informalisation of work in the gig economy, particularly in the ehailing sector, and underscore the need to address the challenges and opportunities associated with informal work arrangements in this rapidly evolving labour market.

The gig economy, especially in the ehailing sector, has significant implications for Informalisation, as it has reshaped traditional employment relationships and introduced new forms of flexible and often informal work arrangements. Understanding the multifaceted nature of informalisation in the gig economy is essential for policymakers, organizations, and researchers to address the challenges associated with the increasing prevalence of informal employment while leveraging its potential benefits. It is equally important to understand the implication on the career trajectories of the gig workers involved (ehailing drivers in this context).

2.3 Career Trajectories

The following section introduces the career trajectories discourse within an ehailing context and how the current literature captures the various constructs suggested as determinants. Career trajectories refer to the paths and patterns of professional advancement and development that individuals follow throughout their working lives. These trajectories are influenced by a myriad of factors, including technological advancements, economic conditions, individual preferences, and societal trends. From an academic perspective, understanding career trajectories is essential for comprehensively analysing the dynamics of the labour market, employment patterns, and the factors that shape individuals' professional journeys. Wood et al. (2018) emphasizes the impact of the gig economy on career trajectories, highlighting the autonomy and algorithmic control experienced by workers in this sector. The authors argue that the gig economy has the potential to fragment work, increase casualization, and undermine the standard employment relationship, thereby shaping the career paths of individuals involved in this form of employment.

Tran et al. (2019) provides insights into the dynamics of career mobility and the transition to self-employment, offering empirically based explanations of the factors that drive individuals towards self-employment. This qualitative study delves into the complexities of career trajectories, shedding light on the motivations and processes that lead individuals to pursue self-employment as a career path.

Locke et al. (2022) explored the career trajectories of indigenous early career researchers, emphasizing the transition from postgraduate studies to potential careers in academia and research. This study underscores the importance of understanding the needs and experiences of individuals as they navigate their career trajectories, particularly within the context of underrepresented or marginalized groups. By focusing on the experiences of early career researchers, this research contributes to a nuanced understanding of the determinants that shape career trajectories in specific professional domains.

In summary, the academic understanding of career trajectories encompasses the multifaceted influences that shape individuals' professional journeys, including the impact of the gig economy, the dynamics of career mobility, and the experiences of underrepresented groups in specific career paths. By synthesizing these insights, the following sections summarises some of the key determinants of career trajectories identified in the literature.

Career trajectories in the ehailing sector are influenced by various determinants that shape the experiences and outcomes of drivers. Understanding these determinants is crucial for both drivers and policymakers to make informed decisions and implement effective interventions. Research in this area provides valuable insights into the factors that impact the career trajectories of ehailing drivers, encompassing aspects such as earnings, job satisfaction, challenges, and the dynamics of the ehailing job market.

The career trajectories of ehailing drivers are influenced by a multitude of factors, including the technological advancements in the ehailing platforms (Fielbaum & Tirachini, 2021). Zhang & Xu, (2021) highlight the impact of technology on the job market, emphasizing the efficiency gains for drivers and passengers through smartphone applications that optimize the assignment of riders in real-time. This technological aspect plays a significant role in shaping the work experiences and opportunities available to ehailing drivers (Barbeau et al., 2014; Barbeau, 2018; Mjogolo & Sando, 2020).

Moreover, the pricing strategies implemented by ehailing platforms also play a pivotal role in shaping the career trajectories of drivers. According to Sun et al., (2019) the optimal pricing strategies implemented by ride-sourcing platforms consider factors such as ride details and driver location, to maximise utility for both drivers and customers. Understanding these pricing dynamics is essential for drivers to make informed decisions about their participation in the ehailing sector and for policymakers to ensure fair and sustainable practices within the industry as recommended by the fairwork principles (Fredman et al., 2020a; Fredman et al., 2020b; Van Belle et al., 2023; Wong & Yong, 2017).

Besides technological and economic elements, the career paths of ehailing drivers are substantially influenced by the encounters and difficulties they encounter (Wilmans & Rashied, 2021). In their study, Wilmans and Rashied (2021) focused on ridehailing drivers in Johannesburg, South Africa, with the objective of gauging their levels of job satisfaction and examining the challenges they faced. This investigation found that ehailing drivers felt unsafe due to violence the faced from mini-bus taxi operators in the region. This brings attention to the intricate facets of drivers' experiences, offering valuable perspectives into the factors affecting job satisfaction and the hindrances that could impact their professional journeys.

Furthermore, the career trajectories of ehailing drivers are influenced by the broader context of the gig economy and informal sector, particularly in the geographical locations where these services

operate. Cieslik et al. (2022) discusses the offline contexts of online jobs, focusing on platform drivers, decent work, and informality in Lagos, Nigeria. Understanding the contextual factors that shape the work environment for ehailing drivers is essential for comprehensively analyzing their career trajectories and implementing policies that address the specific challenges they face.

Table 2.3: Depicting the pull factors and challenges of the gig economy vs standard jobs

Attractions		Challenges
Flexibility in working hours (Wood et al., 2018)		Job insecurity and lack of stable income (Wood et al., 2018)
Opportunity for self-employment (Tran et al., 2019)		Exposure to safety risks (Wilmans & Rashied, 2021)
Technological ease of job assignment (Zhang & Xu, 2021)		Competition and pricing pressures (Sun et al., 2019)
Potential for higher earnings (Barbeau et al., 2014)		Fragmentation of work and casualization (Wood et al., 2018)
Increased autonomy (Wood et al., 2018)		Threats from traditional taxi drivers (Wilmans & Rashied, 2021)
Low entry barriers (Cieslik et al., 2022)		Algorithmic control and surveillance (Wood et al., 2018)

Overall, the career trajectories of ehailing drivers are multifaceted and influenced by a diverse set of determinants, including technological advancements, pricing strategies, job satisfaction, challenges, and the broader context of the gig economy. By synthesizing the insights from these studies, a comprehensive understanding of the factors shaping the career trajectories of ehailing drivers can be developed, providing valuable knowledge for both academic research and practical interventions in the ehailing sector.

2.4 Career Trajectories and Informalisation

The intertwining of the informalisation of employment and research on career trajectories is evident in the exploration of career shocks and unexpected events that can significantly impact individuals' career trajectories. The informalisation of employment, characterized by the increasing prevalence of non-standard forms of work such as temporary employment, part-time work, and independent contracting, has led to greater career volatility and unpredictability (Akkermans et al., 2018). This phenomenon has prompted scholars to investigate the implications of career shocks on individuals' professional journeys, shedding light on the challenges and adaptations required in the context of informalized employment.

Moreover, the rise of self-employment and non-traditional career patterns, which are characteristic of informalized employment, has become a focal point in both research on career trajectories and the informalisation of employment (Bay & Koster, 2022). Understanding the career patterns of individuals engaged in self-employment and non-standard forms of work is essential for comprehensively analysing the impact of informalisation on career trajectories. This line of research provides insights into the heterogeneity of self-employment, career stability, and the factors that influence individuals' professional paths within informalized employment arrangements.

The relationship between career commitment, employability, and career success also intersects with the informalisation of employment and career trajectories (Heijden et al., 2022). As individuals navigate non-standard forms of work and employment arrangements, the mediating role of employability in shaping their career trajectories becomes a critical area of investigation. The evolving nature of employment opportunities, particularly within informalized sectors, influences individuals' career success and professional development, highlighting the interconnectedness of these research domains (Smale et al., 2019).

Furthermore, the role of unexpected career shocks and events in young professionals' employability and career competencies is a significant area of inquiry that bridges the study of career trajectories and the informalisation of employment (Blokker et al., 2019; Hirschi & Koen, 2021). The impact of unexpected events on employability and career competencies is particularly relevant in the context of informalized employment, where individuals may face heightened uncertainty and the need to adapt to unanticipated changes in their professional lives (O'Toole et al., 2023).

The changing employer-employee relationship and its implications for managing sustainable careers also feature prominently in the discourse on the informalisation of employment and career trajectories (Akkermans & Kubasch, 2017). The evolving nature of work relationships, characterized by non-standard employment arrangements and shifting career patterns, underscores the need to consider the broader context in understanding individuals' career trajectories within informalized employment settings (Jooss et al., 2021).

Moreover, the influence of personal relationships, social networks, and family obligations on employment outcomes adds another layer of complexity to the intertwining of research on career trajectories and the informalisation of employment (Felfe & Lalive, 2018; Lalive et al., 2023). Understanding how personal relationships intersect with individuals' employment experiences and career paths is essential for comprehensively analyzing the impact of informalisation on career

trajectories, particularly in relation to the support networks available to individuals engaged in non-standard forms of work (Oesch & von Ow, 2017).

The protean career attitude, career resilience, and proactive career behaviour also play a pivotal role in shaping individuals' career trajectories within informalized employment contexts (Nimmi et al., 2020; Park et al., 2022). The adaptability and proactive approach required in navigating non-traditional career paths are central themes that bridge the study of career trajectories and the informalisation of employment, highlighting the dynamic nature of professional development within evolving work environments.

Furthermore, the career narratives of women university graduates in times of precarity offer valuable insights into the intersection of gender, employment precarity, and career trajectories within the context of informalized employment (Baruch & Rousseau, 2019; Simosi et al., 2022). Understanding the experiences of marginalized groups within informalized employment settings is crucial for addressing the unique challenges they face in shaping their career trajectories and professional advancement.

Table 2.4: Depicting the factor influencing career trajectories

Factors Influencing Career Trajectories		**Description**
Career shocks and unexpected events		This includes unforeseen changes that impact career stability and development (Akkermans et al., 2018).
Self-employment dynamics		Explains the heterogeneity in career stability within informalized sectors (Bay & Koster, 2022).
Role of employability		How employability mediates success in non-standard work environments (Heijden et al., 2022).
Protean career attitudes		Adaptability and proactive career behaviour to navigate informal work (Nimmi et al., 2020).
Gender and employment precarity		Unique challenges faced by women in informalized employment settings (Baruch & Rousseau, 2019).
Impact of personal relationships		The role of family and social networks in shaping career trajectories (Felfe & Lalive, 2018).

Table 2.4 gives a summary of all the factors explained in this section.

Finally, the employment of STEM graduates in Kazakhstan provides a lens through which to examine the trajectories of individuals in specialized fields within the context of informalized

employment (Dmitrienko & Kuzhabekova, 2023). This research underscores the need to consider the specific contexts and limitations that influence individuals' career trajectories within the evolving landscape of non-standard employment arrangements.

In conclusion, the intertwining of research on career trajectories and the informalisation of employment offers a comprehensive understanding of the evolving nature of work, the dynamics of employment patterns, and the factors that shape individuals' professional journeys. By synthesizing insights from these two constructs and studying them within the ehailing domain, this research can offer additional knowledge for addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by informalized employment and for informing policies and interventions aimed at supporting individuals in navigating their career trajectories within non-standard work arrangements. Further discussions of the determinants of both Career Trajectories and informalisation are examined in Section 3.

2.5 Literature Research Gap

The study of career trajectories in the context of ehailing drivers and informalisation presents a unique opportunity to explore the dynamics of non-standard employment arrangements and the factors that shape individuals' professional journeys within the ehailing sector. While existing research has provided valuable insights into various aspects of ehailing services and self-employment dynamics, there are several research gaps that warrant further exploration within the specific context of ehailing drivers' career trajectories and the informalisation of their employment.

Firstly, the sustainability of careers among ehailing drivers remains an underexplored area within the literature. Research has shown that the roles of job preferences, competency, and resilience are crucial in understanding the sustainability of ehailing services (Baruch & Rousseau, 2019; Daud et al., 2021; Rahim et al., 2023; Rahmat et al., 2022; Simosi et al., 2022). However, there is a need to delve deeper into the career trajectories of ehailing drivers, considering the unique challenges and opportunities associated with their work environment especially in the context of the global south. Exploring the sustainability of careers in the ehailing sector can provide valuable insights into the factors that contribute to career longevity, job satisfaction, and the adaptability of drivers to the evolving landscape of ehailing services.

The regulatory gap that exists in and around labour rights of platform workers has significant implications for the potential exploitation for ehailing drivers by platform owners. Together with

the influence of ehailing applications on the taxi industry and the changes experienced by drivers before and after engaging with ehailing apps are topics that require further exploration. Understanding the impact of ehailing applications on the career trajectories of taxi drivers who transition to ehailing services can provide valuable insights into the dynamics of employment shifts, revenue changes, and the adaptation of drivers to technological disruptions in the transportation sector.

This research gap presents an opportunity to comprehensively analyse the career trajectories of individuals who have transitioned from traditional taxi services to ehailing platforms. This study will provide a point of discussion on the implication on informality as an input into the regulatory process. Institutions such as ILO and regional regulatory bodies can add this to the litany of studies that are advocating for labour regulation of the gig economy and benefit from the peculiar angle to the issues that this study will take.

Furthermore, the dynamics of career mobility trajectories to self-employment (Baruch & Rousseau, 2019; Bay & Koster, 2023; Daud et al., 2021; Rahim et al., 2023; Rahmat et al., 2022; Simosi et al., 2022; Tran et al., 2021), as observed in other contexts, present an intriguing area for investigation within the ehailing sector. Understanding the factors that drive individuals towards self-employment as ehailing drivers, the transitions involved, and the implications for their career trajectories can offer valuable insights into the motivations and experiences of individuals engaged in non-traditional forms of work. This line of inquiry can shed light on the career patterns, stability, and adaptability of ehailing drivers within the informalized employment context.

In summary, the research gaps in the studies of career trajectories of ehailing drivers and informalisation encompasses the sustainability of careers, dynamics of career mobility to self-employment, impact of ehailing applications on the taxi industry, localized social and economic impacts, and comparative perspectives from other employment contexts. By contributing to addressing these research gaps, this research can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape the career trajectories of ehailing drivers, informing policies and interventions aimed at supporting diverse career pathways within the ehailing sector.

2.6 Literature Review Summary

This chapter detailed the current literature on career trajectories and informalisation. The chapter introduces the ehailing context to discourse on career trajectories and the determinants under focus.

Special consideration was given to how studying the informalisation and career trajectories within the ehailing context gives an opportunity to better understand the dynamic nature of the labour market and the fast-paced gig economy. This chapter lays the foundation for further theoretical based interrogation done in chapter 3. Section 2.5 concluded this chapter by identifying the gaps within the literature and gave justification for why they are important to study them.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

A theoretical framework stands as a foundational element frequently misconstrued by many scholars (Osanloo & Grant, 2016). Often likened to a "blueprint," it serves as a structural scaffold guiding researchers through their studies, enabling the systematic organization of ideas around a phenomenon (Heale & Noble, 2019). This framework, analogous to a map, not only directs the investigation but also aids in establishing a logical sequence for understanding and interpreting findings within a specific context. To understand the career trajectories of ehailing drivers four frameworks were investigated: i. The Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al, 1994; Lent & Brown, 2008; Amalia et al, 2023), ii. Boundaryless Career Theory (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Purohit & Jayswal, 2022).)., iii. Protean Career Theory (Hall, 2002; Soares et al., 2019) and iv. Career Construction Theory (Savickas, 2005). This study used the Social Cognitive Career Theory as a lens to understand career trajectories of ehailing drivers. To understand informalisation the International Labour Organisation's Spectrum of Informality was used for this study. The Modernisation theory (Geertz 1963; Gilbert 1998; Lewis, 1959; as cited in Williams & Kedir, 2018), the Political Economy theory (Davis 2006; Slavnic 2010; Meagher, 2010 and Taiwo, 2013) and the Neo-liberal theory (Becker, 2004 and Nwabuzor, 2005) had been considered.

This chapter is organized as follows; in Section 3.1 the researcher puts forward the justification for the selection of each model. Sections 3.2 discusses the SCCT further. Section 3.4 expands on the ILO Spectrum of Informality. The chapter then concludes in Section 3.5 by summarizing the theoretical frameworks.

3.1 Suitability of the frameworks for the Study

This section details the justification for the frameworks selected for this study.

3.1.1 Suitability of SCCT for the Study

The selection of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) as the framework for this research is supported by its extensive applicability and effectiveness in different research contexts. SCCT has been successfully utilized in various studies to explore career choices, work-life integration, entrepreneurial intentions, and career-related behaviours across different cultural and occupational settings. Hawkswell et al. (2021) used the SCCT model to investigate the careers of entrepreneurial Emirati women in Dubai, demonstrating the utility of SCCT in understanding career development within the Middle Eastern context. Additionally, Dewsbury et al. (2019) utilized SCCT to explore

the impact of culturally specific realities on the career choices of first-generation, minority STEM college students, highlighting the framework's effectiveness in understanding the influence of cultural factors on career decisions. Furthermore, SCCT has been applied to other studies on the career trajectories of women of colour (Hackett & Byars, 1996), persons with disabilities (Fabian, 2000), college students (Garriott et al., 2017) underrepresented groups in science and engineering (Fouad & Santana, 2017), the intersection of race and gender (Byars-Winston & Rogers, 2019). The flexibility of SCCT on cross-sectional and longitudinal data also makes it suitable for this study.

Mapping the career trajectories of ehailing drivers will be a novel application of this theoretical framework to the gig economy context and will potentially set the stage for future work on other parts of the gig economy. It is the flexibility and ease of modifications and extensions of this framework that allowed the researcher to focus on or add ehailing drivers' specific factors.

Moreover, SCCT has been utilized to explore the mediating role of career decision self-efficacy, as demonstrated by (Chui et al., 2022), indicating the framework's effectiveness in investigating cognitive antecedents of career decision-making (Chui et al., 2022). Additionally, Ali et al. (2019) identified the importance of social support and corporate culture in the context of SCCT, highlighting the framework's relevance in understanding the relationship between social support, corporate culture, and career advancement. Furthermore, SCCT has been successfully integrated into career intervention programs, as evidenced by Ali et al. (2019) and Howe-Walsh et al. (2020), demonstrating its effectiveness in enhancing career development and exploration among different demographic groups.

In contrast, the Boundaryless Career Theory (BCT), Protean Career Theory (PCT), and Career Construction Theory (CCT) have limitations in certain research contexts. For example, Veloso et al. (2018) found weak correlations between the competencies of intelligent careers and the perception of the pressure from technology on careers, indicating the limitations of traditional and non-traditional career theories in understanding the younger generation's relationship with new technologies. This limitation is shared by the SCCT but as explained earlier in this section it offers a degree of flexibility to cater for the ehailing context in this research by applying a modified model of later applications of the framework.

Additionally, Hong et al. (2020) highlighted the impact of cultural individualism and collectivism on protean and boundaryless career attitudes and job satisfaction, indicating the limitations of these theories in explaining the changing nature of work. Moreover, Akkermans et al. (2019) identified

that boundaryless career theory has been applicable in career perspective in project management research. This framework is easier to operationalise when longitudinal data is used for the research, making it not suitable for this research.

However, the application of SCCT has been broadly focused within non-information systems domains, widely utilized in understanding career development and decision-making, it may have limitations in fully capturing the broader socio-cultural and structural influences, critical consciousness, and nuanced interplay between affective, environmental, and perspective factors in shaping career intentions and behaviours. These limitations were addressed for this study by a tailored application of modified models of the SCCT - The Model of Satisfaction & Well-being (Lent & Brown, 2006; Lent & Brown, 2008) and The Model of Career Self-management (Lent & Brown, 2013).

In summary, the extensive applicability, flexibility, easy modification/modernisation, and effectiveness of SCCT in diverse research contexts, as evidenced by its successful utilization in understanding career choices, work-life integration, entrepreneurial intentions, and career-related behaviours, make it the most suitable framework for the current research. The limitations of alternative BCT, PCT, and CCT in certain research contexts further support the selection of SCCT as the most appropriate framework for the research.

3.1.2 Suitability of Spectrum of Informality for the Study

The Spectrum of Informality framework is a comprehensive and versatile tool for understanding the multifaceted nature of informal work arrangements and their implications across various domains. The framework provides a nuanced perspective on the diverse spectrum of informal work, encompassing a wide range of employment arrangements, from gig economy platforms to part-time and temporary work. The framework's applicability extends to diverse research contexts, making it a suitable choice for the current study.

The SOI framework is the more applicable framework derived from the research done by ILO (2002; 2003; 2013a 2015b; 2018) and Cobb et al. (2009). The focus of these studies derives from progressive research that feeds into various labour policy formulations. The literature identified three potential alternative models: the modernisation theory (Geertz 1963; Gilbert 1998; Lewis, 1959; as cited in Williams and Kedir, 2018), the political economy theory (Davis 2006; Slavnic 2010; Meagher, 2010 and Taiwo, 2013) and the neo-liberal theory (Becker, 2004 and Nwabuzor, 2005), but these are more appropriate to understanding informalisation at national economy level

for cross country classification or comparisons focusing on entrepreneurs rather than from a micro level perspective.

As a standalone model, the SOI captures all aspects and constructs that makeup ehailing driving as a job and allows its mapping onto the spectrum, but the alternative models do not encapsulate the complex nature of informalisation from a gig economy or modern economy's perspective. This could be owing to the slow modernisation of these theories or the limited nature of cross field application in the field of information systems.

3.2 The SCCT Framework

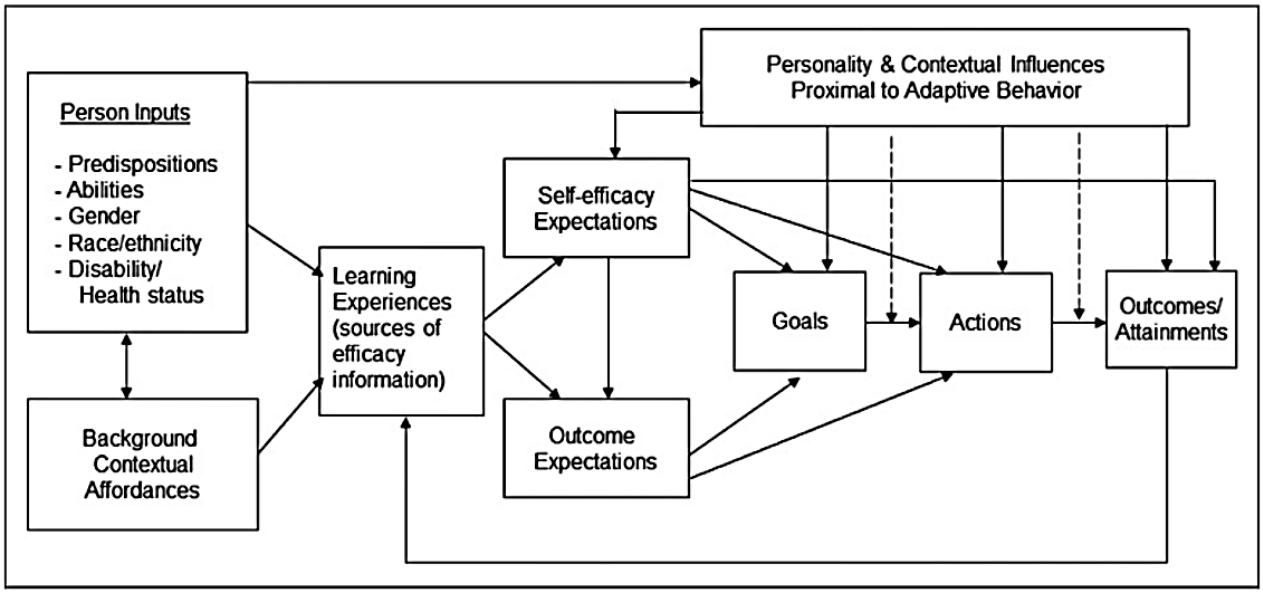
The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is a unifying framework which explains career trajectories from a career development perspective Earlier work on the SCCT was established in 1994 and consisted of three connected models aimed at explaining career trajectories from: (a) interest development, (b) choice-making, and (c) performance and persistence in educational and vocational domains (Lent et al., 1994). Recent modifications include of the theory included (d) a model of satisfaction and well-being (Lent & Brown, 2006; Lent & Brown, 2008) and (e) a model of career self-management (Lent & Brown, 2013).

It is the application the latter two models that focus on career decision-making, job finding, balancing work-life demands, retirement planning among other facets that will be employed to answer the research objective in the proposed research. SCCT has been applied to various context including the career trajectories of women of colour (Hackett and Byars, 1996), persons with disabilities (Fabian, 2000), college students (Garriott et al., 2017) underrepresented groups in science and engineering (Fouad & Santana, 2017), the intersection of race and gender (Byars-Winston and Rogers, 2019). Mapping the career trajectories of ehailing drivers will be a novel application of this theoretical framework and will potentially set the stage for future work on other parts of the gig economy.

This study has a particular focus on individual career trajectories, hence the focus on aspects of the Career Self-Management Model and the Satisfaction & Well-being model. Figure 3.1 captures the career self-management model proposed by Lent & Brown (2013) which represents a departure from previous Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) models by focusing on the process rather than the content aspects of career development.

Figure 3.1 captures the career self-management model proposed by Lent & Brown (2013) which represents a departure from previous Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) models by focusing on the process rather than the content aspects of career development. Unlike earlier models that aimed to predict specific career interests and choices, the self-management model seeks to predict how individuals make school and work-related choices and manage various developmental tasks, challenges, and crises, irrespective of their chosen occupations (Gibbons & Borders, 2010).

Figure 3. 3: Depicting the SCCT Model



Source: Lent and Brown (2013)

This model posits that individuals' actions, such as engaging in career exploration or retirement planning activities, are linked to three core social cognitive variables: self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and goals (Gibbons & Borders, 2010).

The model suggests that acting, such as searching for a job, is influenced by individuals' goals, which are partly shaped by their job-search self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations. Self-efficacy and outcome expectations are hypothesized to directly relate to actions as well as indirectly via goals. Acting is then expected to increase the likelihood of favourable outcomes, such as receiving job interviews and offers, while failing to act makes negative outcomes, such as remaining unemployed, more likely. However, the exercise of adaptive behaviours does not always guarantee positive outcomes due to factors beyond an individual's control, such as the availability of job openings and discriminatory hiring practices (Gibbons & Borders, 2010).

Consistent with other SCCT models, personal factors (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, personality traits) and contextual variables (e.g., supports, barriers, socioeconomic conditions) are posited to be linked to self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, goals, and actions through various routes—directly, indirectly, and/or as moderators. For instance, contextual supports can influence the development of self-efficacy and outcome expectations, enable goal setting, and facilitate the translation of goals into actions. Moreover, the relevance and role of specific personality traits are seen as varying depending on the developmental task and dependent variable under consideration (Gibbons & Borders, 2010).

Following the same approach to modification by Lent & Brown (2013), the next section details how the researcher modified the model to focus on factors that capture the ehailing context, while maintaining the focus on the process of career development, self-management and the factors influencing individuals' actions and outcomes, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding and potentially predicting career-related outcomes and decisions ehailing drivers.

3.3 The Spectrum of Informality (SOI)

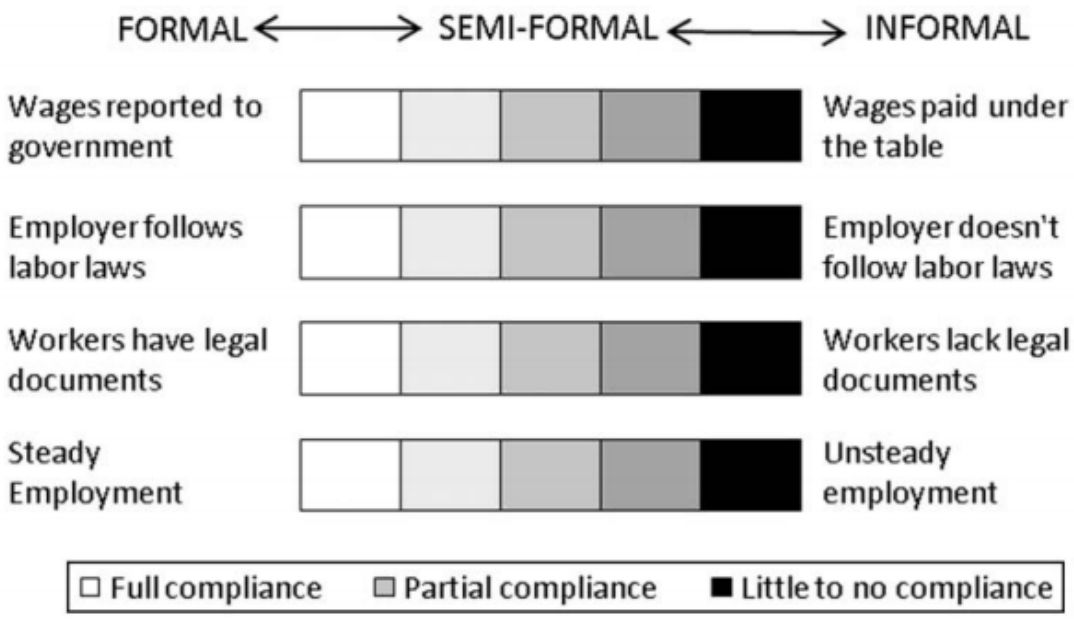
There are several theoretical frameworks borrowed from labour economics and other fields that can be applied to study the degree of formality of employment in the ehailing sector, but the Spectrum approach is a consistent and most applicable framework derived from the research done by ILO (2002; 2003; 2012; 2013a 2015b; 2018) and Cobb et al. (2009). The literature has employed three models: the modernisation theory (Geertz 1963; Gilbert 1998; Lewis, 1959; as cited in Williams and Kedir, 2018), the political economy theory (Davis 2006; Slavnic 2010; Meagher, 2010 and Taiwo, 2013) and the Neo-liberal theory (Becker, 2004 and Nwabuzor, 2005), but these are more appropriate to understanding informalisation at national economy level for cross country classification or comparisons focusing on entrepreneurs rather than employees or workers. As standalone models they do not encapsulate the complex nature of informalisation from a gig economy or morden economy's perspective.

The SOI does not strictly define the informal/formal "*dichotomy*" giving the impression that informal and formal are in different places, but rather suggests that the two are interwoven and many degrees exist in a grey area between the two phenomena (Cobb et al., 2009; Roever, 2005; Zhang and Friedman, 2019). Determining the degree of informalisation is then a function of mapping current conditions against a pre-set criterion. The spectrum is defined by Cobb et al. (2009) to range from informal to semi-formal and formal. The SOI serves as a comprehensive tool to

delineate and classify varying degrees of formality inherent within diverse work arrangements existing in contemporary economies (ILO, 2002; ILO, 2018). This model recognizes the nuanced continuum on which formality in employment exists, offering a multidimensional portrayal of the economy and workforce.

At one extremity of this spectrum as depicted in figure 3.2 is the Formal Employment, which is characterized by structured employment contracts, compliance with labour regulations, provision of social security benefits, and adherence to established legal frameworks (ILO, 2002). Workers in this domain typically enjoy job security, legal protections, and access to various employment benefits. Conversely, the opposite end of this continuum embodies Informal Employment, encompassing unregulated and often precarious work arrangements devoid of legal structures and social protections (ILO, 2018). Activities within this sector may include street vending, unregistered businesses, daily contractors, and undeclared labour, where workers experience heightened vulnerability due to the absence of formal contracts and associated benefits.

Figure 3. 4: Depicting the Spectrum of Informality Model



(Adapted from: Cobb et al., 2009)

Between these 2 is a semi-formal or grey area incorporating hybrid characteristics of both formalization and informality (ILO, 2002). Entities operating in this sphere, such as registered businesses with irregular work hours or limited social protections, represent the amalgamation of

formal and informal attributes within their organizational structures. Moreover, transitional or hybrid arrangements exist, epitomized by freelancers or gig workers operating within formal legal frameworks but lacking the conventional stability and entitlements associated with formal employment (ILO, 2018).

Emerging trends in employment, including remote work, digital platforms, and gig economy participation, present novel challenges to delineating clear boundaries between formal and informal sectors (ILO, 2018). These evolving work paradigms redefine conventional classifications of formal and informal employment, necessitating re-evaluations of regulatory frameworks and worker protections within these novel contexts. Figure 3.2 shows how they posit the spectrum to move for each factor in between the varying degrees of formality.

To operationalize this framework the researcher would perform an exercise to map ehailing driving on the spectrum and estimate its degree of formality from publicly available data, information gathered from the interviews conducted and the interpretation of where that places on the spectrum.

3.4 Theoretical Frameworks Summary

SCCT helps explain the personal, external and psychological factors that influence career choices, satisfaction and development within the gig economy. In parallel, SOI provides a structural and contextual understanding of the varying degrees of informality & the specific features of ehailing driving map onto the SOI. The frameworks, though introduced separately are not used in isolation but are applied to complimentary aspects of the research, which naturally interlink throughout the analysis. Therefore, the dual-lens approach already contributes to the depth and rigor of the study without the need for additional section.

The SOI and the SCCT frameworks represent the lens through which the research was conducted, affording a structured and deductive approach to answering the research questions and meeting the research goals. The grounded justification for the use of both frameworks and how each was operationalised for the research where detailed in this chapter. The following chapter will discuss the research methodology.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to explore the degree of informalisation and career trajectories of drivers in the ehailing industry. Understanding informalisation and career trajectories as they relate to ehailing drivers is important given the effects on labor relations and employment regulation. Research design and methodology describes a systematic approach to the discovery of knowledge (Ken et al., 2007). This chapter presents the research design and methodology employed in this study and argues its suitability to attain the research objectives. The chapter is structured as follows: Section 4.1 describes the philosophical consideration, Section 4.2 focuses on the research purpose, and Section 4.3 discusses the research strategy. Section 4.4 presents the sampling techniques, while data collection techniques are outlined in Section 4.5. Section 4.6 discusses the methods of data analysis, and the issues of research validity and reliability are canvassed in Section 4.7. Section 4.8 presents research ethics and approval, and the chapter concludes with a summary in Section 4.9.

4.1 Philosophical Considerations

Researchers are required to formulate and fully understand their opinions about reality in the context of the research, covering what can be known, and how that knowledge can be acquired (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). To facilitate this a research philosophy must be explicit. The research philosophy in the Information Systems field covers three key assumptions epistemology, ontology, and axiology. Epistemology relates to assumptions made by the researcher regarding reality and knowledge discovery (Carson et al., 2001). Ontology focuses on their assumptions about the physical and social environment and beliefs about the nature of reality and the social world (Saunders et.al., 2009). Axiology relates to what impact the values and ethics of the researcher and participants will have on the research (Saunders et.al., 2009). The assumptions made by the researcher and their choices must be appropriate for the study and justified explicitly or implied to ensure sound scientific rigor in IS research.

The study adopted a postpositivist epistemology, ontology, and axiology. The post-positivistic ontology assumes that social reality can be recognised as having an impact on reality and causes observable phenomena. Social reality is perceived as coherent, whole, and singular (Bisel & Adame, 2017). Post-positivistic epistemology assumes that social reality is measurable and knowable, albeit difficult to access. In line with the post-positivistic ontology and epistemology, the Post-positivistic Axiology was employed for this research. The post-positivistic axiology assumes that knowledge about social reality is intrinsically worthwhile to acquire and should be as value neutral as possible

in its characterization of that reality (Bisel & Adame, 2017). These key assumptions encapsulate the researcher's view of how social reality is constructed and form the philosophical ground on which research data was collected, discussed, and analysed.

Alternative belief systems about social realities and how the knowledge can be acquired exist, such as positivism or interpretivism. A positivist epistemology suggests that relationships between constructs are fixed based on theoretical deduction and can be investigated by employing structured (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). Critical epistemological approach assumes a reality that exists independent of human but access to that knowledge is influenced by humans (Myers & Klein, 2011). Whereas interpretivism assumes that knowledge is a social construct which cannot be objectively determined but rather studied based on perceptions of social actors (Walsham & Sahay, 1999).

The historical view that interpretive epistemology fits more with IS research (Klein & Myers, 1999) and the other approaches are mostly inappropriate as they are borrowed from other fields of study which do not consider the key phenomenon of appropriateness (Ngwenyama, 2019). This research adopted a postpositivist epistemology which tries to address the weaknesses of positivism while retaining the belief of objective truth by assuming that most knowledge is based on human conjectures (Hassan et al, 2019). This selection is justified by the objectives of this research which seeks to understand informalisation of employment and individual career trajectories in the gig economy by interacting with social actors (drivers), within their work setup and about their personal opinions regarding these phenomena. This means that to acquire this knowledge, the researcher was required to interactive, hence the selection of qualitative approach which also enables the comparison of multiple points of view.

4.2 Research Purpose and Approach to Theory

The study employed an exploratory approach which enables the researcher to probe for more information based on initial responses from the participants (Saunders et al., 2009b). The research objective was to understand informalisation of employment and the career trajectories of ehailing drivers. The approach to theory can either be inductive or deductive (Bhattacherjee, 2012). This study employed a mostly deductive approach to theory, where the research began with two theories based on literature review and tested them by the design strategy (Saunders et al., 2016). However, a predominantly deductive approach still leaves space for new elements to be discovered. The study used the SCCT and the Informality Spectrum, which articulate what constitutes informality and the constructs on career progression (Lent & Brown, 2013, Byars-Winston and Rogers, 2019)). An

alternative approach would have been Abductive approach to Theory which focuses on research where there is far less theoretical information not just about the context but also about the phenomenon under study (Awuzie and McDermott, 2017). This was not appropriate for this research because the themes and theoretical base around informalisation and career trajectories are documented from a traditional economy context, the subject matter is to investigate this from a gig-economy's perspective.

4.3 Sampling Approach

The target population for this study are ehailing drivers in the Cape Town; these can be driving for one or multiple platforms. A convenience sampling was used because of the nature of ehailing as a business and to reduce the search cost. Ehailing drivers were approached via two social media platforms: Facebook and WhatsApp. I searched for e-haling driver groups on Facebook and contacted them, via WhatsApp, then leveraged those contacts to be added to WhatsApp groups for further engagement. This approach may be hard to replicate in other studies and other researchers may argue that it lacks the typical rigour of scientific study; however, I detailed the data collection process to justify this approach as required by Saunders et al. (2016).

The choice of convenience sampling has several limitations that should be critically examined. Firstly, the selection of easily available participants instead of a random sample can add bias as the selected participants may not be representative of the entire population (Etikan et al., 2016). This in turn can affect the generalizability of the findings. The participants in this study did not share similar socio-economic status, immigration status or technological proficiency, this mitigated the potential degree of bias. Studies in the field of IS, particularly in user-centred studies or software evaluation, convenience sampling often leads to homogenous user groups, which can limit the applicability of findings across other diverse user populations (Kitchenham & Pfleeger, 2008). While convenience sampling can provide useful preliminary insights, it is important to acknowledge these limitations and consider them when interpreting the results. Future research should aim to validate the findings using more rigorous sampling methods, such as random or stratified sampling, to enhance the robustness and generalizability of the outcomes (Bornstein et al., 2013).

4.4 Data Collection and Research Instruments

The strategy relating to data collection and data analysis is guided by the research aims and research questions (Saunders et al., 2009). The study applied semi structured interviews for data collection because it allows the researcher to employ open-ended questions (Sankar & Jones, 2007). The

research instrument is attached in Appendix 2. The research instrument was constructed in such a way to collect data as required by the two theoretical frameworks being employed in the research: SCCT (Lent & Brown, 2013) and FFC (Heeks et.al., 2020).

The views and experiences of ehailing drivers was extracted using semi-structured interviews, as interviews are a generally used methodology of gathering data within qualitative research, because they consist of "talking, and talking is natural" (Griffee & Hitchcock, 2005). WhatsApp calls and direct calls were used to conduct the interviews for the study to enable the researcher to obtain sufficient data from the respondents. The drivers were asked to agree to a schedule for the call, then upon initiating the call a brief presentation of the research would be given and consent verbally sought from each ehailing driver before proceeding. (Myers & Newman, 2007). A key advantage of employing semi-structured interview because "*several key questions that not only help to define areas to be explored, but also allow the interviewer or interviewee to pursue an idea or response in more detail*" (Gill, et, al p. 291).

4.5 Pilot Study

A pilot study of 2 semi-structured interviews for traditional ehailing in Cape Town was done to test the structure of the interview questions and strategy in a pilot study. This pilot study exposed the formulated research instrument to ehailing drivers to test the quality, feasibility of use, appropriateness, and efficiency of the research instrument. The pilot study was also used to validate and corroborate the research instruments, to document any logistical issues that maybe encountered in the data collection and resolve these before the main study is done. Following the study a few changes were made to the scheduling so that it is done when ehailing drivers are at home and not on driving breaks. Additionally, some questions were shortened, and a procedural note made to skip questions that will not provide new information given previous answers given.

For example, this questions: "Do you meet up with other platform workers (face to face and or online forums like WhatsApp or Facebook groups)? What kinds of things do you talk about?", was long and due to how the drivers answered similar responses could be received by just asking the first part of the question: "Do you meet up with other platform drivers?". Another question: "Are you in a union or workers' association? [Probe] Previous strikes, walk-outs or other activities (e.g. collectively cancelling all orders, not accepting orders, etc.). [Probe] If engaged in any strikes or similar activities, how did the platform respond?", which was the last question required further explanation as some drivers did not understand what union or workers association referred, so the

second part of the question was used as the trigger and further probe was made if drivers belonged to any union.

4.6 Data Analysis Methodology

In line with the qualitative research approach employed for this study, thematic analysis was applied for analysing the data collected. Following high quality data collection and the use of logical and justifiable methodology, credibility in qualitative research is also directly influenced by the quality of the analysis process (Patton, 2014).

Table 4. 2: Depicting Thematic Analysis Phases.

Phases	Detail
1	**Familiarizing yourself with your data**: Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2	**Generating initial codes:** Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3	**Searching for themes:** Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4	**Reviewing themes:** Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic map of the analysis.
5	**Defining and naming themes:** Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6	**Producing the report:** The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79)

To ensure data analysis quality this research followed a systematic process which aimed to demonstrate elicitation of individual constructs that are refined hermetically and compared logically. Thematic analysis satisfies this criterion of inquiry and was therefore considered applicable for this study. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 79) define thematic analysis as “a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data.” Thematic analysis follows a set of logical steps with the objective of carefully reading and re-reading the data to identify patterns and themes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). These steps are shown in Table 4.6. 21 Interviews were conducted in English while the remaining 7 included a mixture of English and Shona. The researcher transcribed the interviews into English using a Microsoft Word processor. The data was

reviewed to ensure it fulfilled all the requirements of anonymized data where potential names could have been mentioned or any identifiable personal information. All ehailing drivers who participated were coded as “Ehailing Driver N” (N denotes a number).

The researcher applied manual thematic analysis without the aid of analysis software or natural language processing models (NLP) as it offers a degree of flexibility that allowed the researcher to cater for the unique characteristics of the ehailing data set. The iterative nature of manual thematic analysis can lead to unexpected themes (Guest et al., 2012). Research in the ehailing domain requires a nuanced understanding of drivers’ behaviours and intrinsic motivations. This approach allowed the researcher to genuinely engage with the data set, enabling the identification and interpretation of complex patterns (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The application of manual thematic analysis is susceptible to interpretation and subjective/cultural biases that can influence the conclusions drawn from the research (Walsham & Sahay, 2006). The potential bias is usually addressed by the application of Triangulation in co-authored studies (Nowell et al., 2017), but this researcher applied reflexivity as proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). At multiple intervals the researcher would take a break and reflect on personal biases or preconceptions about the study.

For example, a phrase such as “The income offered is starting to look smaller because since this covid thing. The conditions of work are not okay security is a major issue driver safety if being ignored” was categorised as an expression of dis-satisfaction. This was coded under the theme “Not Satisfied”. Considering a phrase like “Always, as a mechanic, I always get linked with side jobs. If any of us needs to service or fix their cars, they get referred to me”; all parts of this response were coded as support from other drivers, which represented the social support within the various groups of drivers both within and outside the ehailing domain. This step-by-step process was followed by applying the coding principles and helping identify the remaining themes.

The researcher acknowledges the inherent drawbacks of manual thematic analysis owing from a potential lack of reproducibility and potential to overlook research complexities. The issue of reproducibility was addressed by providing detailed guide on how the coding process and stepwise coding decisions were made, this also enhances transparency (Braun & Clarke, 2019). A hierarchical or nested approach to thematic analysis was applied to reduce oversimplification identified by Myers (2013). Information Systems studies often involve complex technological, organizational, and user-related dynamics. Manual thematic analysis might oversimplify this complexity by aggregating diverse perspectives into broad themes, potentially overlooking nuanced insights that could be crucial (Myers, 2013).

While alternative approaches such as natural language processing (NLP) or software tools, can offer the following benefits: technology aided coding, algorithmic data set management, automation, and increased efficiency. The researcher considered the following factors that lack in these approaches: domain expertise, sentiment in the linguistic approach of the participants, an understanding of the ehailing context and the unstructured data limitations of the data set available in the research (Bryman, 2016; Mitev & de Vaujany, 2018).

4.7 Qualitative Research Trustworthiness

A common criticism of qualitative study is that it can be viewed as lacking rigor (Cope, 2014, and the credibility of any data collected. The same methods used for quantitative data checks such as reliability and validity tests may not apply in the same way to qualitative data. Guba & Lincoln (1982) proposed four constructs applicable to qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

Credibility explains the congruency of reality with the research findings. This requires that researchers make considerations to "promote confidence that they have accurately recorded the phenomenon under scrutiny" (Shenton, 2004, p. 64). Transferability is concerned with "*showing that the findings have applicability in other contexts*" (Amankwaa, 2016).

To enhance transferability, researchers should provide detailed descriptions of the research context, participants, and methodology, enabling other scholars to assess the potential relevance of the findings to their own contexts (Adler et al., 2018; Lee & Baskerville, 2003). Additionally, employing diverse samples and incorporating multiple perspectives in the research design can contribute to the generalizability of findings, thereby bolstering transferability.

Dependability tries to answer the question "if the study were repeated using the same methods and in the same context, would analogous results be found (Shenton, 2004). Conformability deals with the view of researcher's bias, and this can be addressed by techniques such as triangulations (Amankwaa, 2016; Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Shenton, 2004).

4.8 Ethics and Confidentiality

The study complied with all the requirements of the UCT Ethics Committee and obtained the required approval. Appendix B: the UCT Ethics Committee approval. Ethics approval was obtained, and the data collection was done adhering strictly to the code of ethics and recommended guidelines. This research was self-sponsored and hence did not have any potential conflicts of interest in that

regard. The researcher is not an ehailing driver or a holder of e-haling company stocks, hence does not have an interest in the research results outside academic interest. Thus, no conflict of interest was declared.

As surveys and semi structured interviews were used, clear written or verbal consent from participants was sought, an opt out option was communicated, and clear anonymity procedures were followed to prevent identification or potential undue influence on the participants. Clear plain language was used in the research instrument to ensure its easily understandable as the target sample had various levels of literacy. All data was stored in password-protected files on a hard disk dedicated to the study. The data was used only for research purposes without attempting to identify study participants. Further data storage and the period of storage will be done according to the requirements of the Department of Information Systems and University of Cape Town Research Ethics Committee.

4.9 Limitations of the Research

This study employed a cross-sectional approach where data was collected at a point in time and as such could have drawn much deeper insight by employing a longitudinal study. This may not have been possible in this context given the time limit on the masters in information systems. The number of participants and the use of calls over face to face interviews may have resulted in missed non-verbal communication cues that can aid in either probing further or drawing conclusions.

Additional value could be gained by increasing the expanding the population to other provinces and comparative studies can be done. The sample was largely made up of immigrant ehailing drivers whose career trajectories may already be influenced by being immigrants hence a different sampling technique may add value.

4.10 Summary of Research Design and Methodology

This chapter detailed the research methodology and justified why their selection for this study. We built the chapter from the philosophical consideration, where the post-positivist approach was summarized. The justification for this selection presented and the reasons why alternative approaches were not considered appropriate for this study. Section 4.2 gave a summary of the research purpose and approach to theory. The research instrument, data collection approach and data analysis methodology were detailed and justified. Thematic analysis offered a structured approach to reviewing the findings and a logical process to extract the themes and patterns from the

qualitative data. The chapter concluded by probing the trustworthiness of the data, the research limitations and a summary of the ethical considerations made for this research.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to investigate the impact of the gig economy on informalisation of employment and individual career trajectories of gig workers in Cape Town. This chapter details the findings and the key themes extracted from the data.

The chapter is structured in the following format: Section 5.1 gives insight into the demographic profiles of the participants. Section 5.2 presents the findings regarding how ehailing drivers conduct career self-management and section 5.3 looks into the findings on career self-management, Section 5.4 discusses findings on why drivers joined ehailing. Section 5.5 is a summary of the findings on future career plans and the impact of ehailing on those plans, Section 5.6 presents the findings on career support, Section 5.7 looks at career satisfaction and wellbeing, Section 5.8, presents the findings on conditions of work and where they land on the informality spectrum. Section 5.9 concludes the chapter with a summary of all the findings.

5.1 Demographic Profile and Response Rate

The demographic data is presented to help identify and summarise the main demographic groups the participants in this research belong to. This gave the researcher key insight into the differences in terms of response from the different demographics in this study.

5.1.1 Response Rate of Ehailing Drivers

The researcher attempted 32 interviews using WhatsApp calls and Direct calls. While all drivers had initially given consent to schedule the interview, one driver did not answer the call at the scheduled time and further attempts to engage with him were not successful. Two interviews were stopped due to network issues and one interview was stopped as the driver decided to withdraw consent midway.

"Driver 12" felt the honest answers he can provide to the questions the researcher was asking could put him: "*...in trouble with the platforms given the fact that this my number is the same one i use on my driver profiles, I think let's not proceed baba, maybe if it was face to face"*.

After 28 interviews, saturation was achieved, thus the researcher did not continue with the interviewing more participants.

5.1.2 Demographic Profiles of Ehailing Drivers

The researcher gathered demographic data from the respondents being guided by age-group, highest education Level, country of birth and immigration status. Table 5.1.2 shows a summary of the responses received.

The data indicates that most of the sample population falls in the age range of 26-35 and has a high level of education, with the majority (20 drivers) having completed matric or higher. 11 drivers in the sample population were from Zimbabwe and hold either a work permit or other immigration status. Only 7 of the 28 successfully interviewed drivers were born in South Africa. There is a small proportion of the population in the 55+ age range [2 drivers] and 3 of the interviewed drivers held a Post graduate degree.

Table 5. 6: Summary of Ehailing Drivers personal demographic data (n=28s).

Age Range		**Education**		**Country of Birth**		**Immigration Status**	
18 - 25	8	**None**	6	**South Africa**	7	**Naturalized**	7
26 - 35	10	**Matric**	7	**Zimbabwe**	11	**Work Permit**	8
36 - 45	4	**Diploma**	5	**Malawi**	6	**Refugee Status**	9
46 - 55	4	**Degree**	7	**DRC**	4	**Other**	4
55+	2	**Postgraduate**	3				

5.1.3 Platform Affiliation Profiles

The researcher extracted platform specific data and platform driving experience collected during the interviews, guided by the main platform of affiliation, length of service in ehailing and whether drivers worked on other platforms or not. Table 5.1.3 shows a summary of the responses received.

The data indicates that most of the sample population falls in the age range of 26-35 and has a high level of education, with the majority (20 drivers of 28) having completed matric or higher. 11 drivers in the sample population were from Zimbabwe and hold either a work permit or other immigration status. Only 7 of the 28 successfully interviewed drivers were born in South Africa. There is a small proportion of the population in the 55+ age range [2 drivers] and 3 of the interviewed drivers held a Post graduate degree.

Table 5.2 depicts the driving experience in years, the distribution of driver's main platform affiliation and the frequency of multi-platform association of the drivers who were interviewed in for this study. 12 drivers had between 2 to 4 years' ehailing experience, while 13 drivers had at least

4+ years of ehailing experience. Uber and Bolt had 11 and 15 drivers affiliated to them as main platforms respectively, while InDriver had 4 drivers affiliated to it as main platform. This potential stay or loyalty to the ehailing industry by drivers differs from the less than 1 year spent at traditional driving jobs in South Africa (Braverman, 2019).

Table 5.7: Summary of Ehailing Drivers platform affiliation and experience.

Years of Ehailing Experience		**Main Platform Affiliation**		**Multi-Platform Affiliation**	
Years	**Number of Drivers**	**Platform**	**Number of Drivers**	**Number of Platforms**	**Number of Drivers**
0 – 2	5	**Uber**	11	**1 Platform**	3
2 – 4	12	**Bolt**	15	**2 Platform(s)**	12
4 – 6	10	**InDriver**	4	**3 Platform(s)**	8
6 – 8	3	**DiDi**[1]	0	**4 Platform(s)**	7
+ 8	0				

5.2 How Ehailing Drivers conduct Career Self-Management

This section discusses the career choices & decision making of ehailing drivers, social and environmental support offered to ehailing drivers and their career outcome expectations. The section presents the constructs identified within the ehailing industry as influential to how ehailing drivers conduct career self-management.

Table 5. 8: Summary of Ehailing drivers' considerations for career self-management.

Categories	**Themes**	**Response Samples**
Career decision before joining ehailing.	**Informal or Self Employed**	*"I did a few things before I joined this driving business, I used to run a small spaza-shop & I had a family buckie for hire when I arrived in South Africa" [Driver 1]*
	Formal Job	*"I worked in Zimbabwe as a bookkeeper for a small company" [Driver 15]*
Career plan & aspiration before joining ehailing	**Previous career no progression**	*"I would still be a waiter and be focusing on growing within that restaurant setup"[Driver 2]*
	New Career	*"The dream was to thrive in IT, but it has been hard for me as a foreigner to get any formal job in this country"[Driver 14]*
	Unsure	*"I have no idea"[Driver 13]*
Rationale for joining ehailing	**Earning Potential**	*"The money was attractive for me given that I had lost my job to Covid and its also a good networking platform" [Driver 32]*

[1] DiDi joined the South African market in 2021 and due to challenges it faced in the operating environment, they exited the market only a year later in 2022 [News24.com, 2023].

	Flexibility	*"Its flexible, I can fix my own working hours and schedule and I work part time" [Driver 12]*
Career plan & aspiration impact of ehailing	**Significant Current and Future Impact**	*"Yes, of course, I don't see myself doing anything else. I have 4 cars now in the ehailing business. 3 of them I employ drivers. I feel like a big boss already" [Driver 4]*
Comparison with Meter Taxi or Formal Driving	**Worse for Career and Aspiration**	*"…no that's not possible, Bolt has thousands of clients who otherwise would not have used meter taxis for one reason or another. So, market size is smaller and hence income is most likely smaller…" [Driver 15]*

5.3 Career Self-Management

5.3.1 Historical Career Backgrounds

To understand the career background of the interviewed drivers, I enquired about the career choices they had made before joining or starting their role as ehailing drivers. The majority (22 of 28 drivers) of ehailing drivers who participated in this study were in formal employment in the following sectors: hospitality, retail, IT, security, financial services, and others. Their jobs were mostly entry level roles except for those who were employed in their home countries before migrating to South Africa to work as ehailing drivers. One driver highlighted that they worked in the insurance industry as a sales representative.

"I worked as a sales rep for an insurance company, I got paid on commission" [Driver 3]

This transition from formal employment to driving for ehailing platforms was common among local and immigrant drivers but four drivers had made the choice to be "*Informally or Self Employed"* before they joined ehailing. Joining ehailing was easy for these drivers because the business model allowed them to transition gradually while maintaining that flexibility of management, control, and time. One immigrant driver highlighted that they had a small retail shop and a "man with van" business.

"I did a few things before I joined this driving business, I used to run a small spaza shop and I had a family buckie for hire when I arrived in South Africa." [Driver 1]

Furthermore, three drivers were previously unemployed, one being a student, another having never worked before and the other having recently relocated from another country. The 18 – 25-year-old *Driver 7* had never worked before and transitioning into ehailing because it was easy to sign up for meant this was the first career decision they had made.

"This is like my first gig ever boetie (boetie means brother)" [Driver 7]

Understanding these initial career choices and how they align with ehailing related factors enabled us to track if and how the career trajectories of these drivers changed from the time they became ehailing drivers until now. While most drivers in this study where formally employed their career aspirations, plans, and expected trajectories represented a gloomy picture with only seven drivers planning to have a new career or significant career progression in their previous role.

5.3.2 Historical Career Aspirations

Most drivers saw themselves continuing with the same job had they not joined ehailing [17 drivers]. Thirteen drivers expected to be stuck in the same job and did not have any aspirations of leaving or progressing in their career. The opportunity to become an ehailing drivers represented a positive career change for these drivers. One driver mentioned that they would have been stuck in an unsatisfying role as a security guard. While another driver expressed lacking or not having any other career aspirations.

"If I had not joined ehailing, I would still be an unsatisfied security guard" [Driver 9]

"I think I would have still been working in admin, I had no other ideas or aspirations from this" [Driver 23]

Other drivers expressed desire or expectations of potential growth within the roles they were doing before joining ehailing. One driver working within the hospitality sector as a Restaurant Waiter, aspired to develop to be a supervisor or get another form of leadership role. They expected trajectory was to grow stepwise on the organizational structure of their employer. While another driver expected to grow within the retail setup of the Wholesale shop they worked in.

"I would still be a waiter and be focusing on growing within that restaurant setup…" [Driver 2]

"…i was hoping to continue in the food industry maybe get a higher position than supervisor, but the job was lost" [Driver 5]

Furthermore, eight drivers desired growth into new careers. Three expected to be in different formal employment, while the other five's expected career trajectories were towards a new career as self-employed. Driver 20 expressed his desire to have joined an academic PhD program and grown to become a Lecture or Research assistant but highlighted how his grades had not been at the required standard to proceed.

"Maybe a teaching assistant or lecturer, but now I had to forget about that because the PhD programs are too tight to get in considering I don't have the best GPAs". [Driver 20]

Another driver mentioned their desire to have started their own trucking business since they had been a truck driver before. Their expected trajectory was based on the knowledge they had acquired while working as a truck driver before joining ehailing. This would have been classified as a form

of career progression but owning the business and being employed as a truck driver represented two different career dynamics.

"The idea was to initially borrow money and buy my own truck then start my business because I knew the ins and outs, even the contracts I could negotiate" [Driver 29]

Three drivers highlighted how unsure they were about any potential career trajectory before joining ehailing. They mentioned previous career stagnation, dropping out of school and having not thought about it in depth as reasons for not having a clear desired direction. One driver appreciated how valuable joining ehailing was because being stagnant was not good for them.

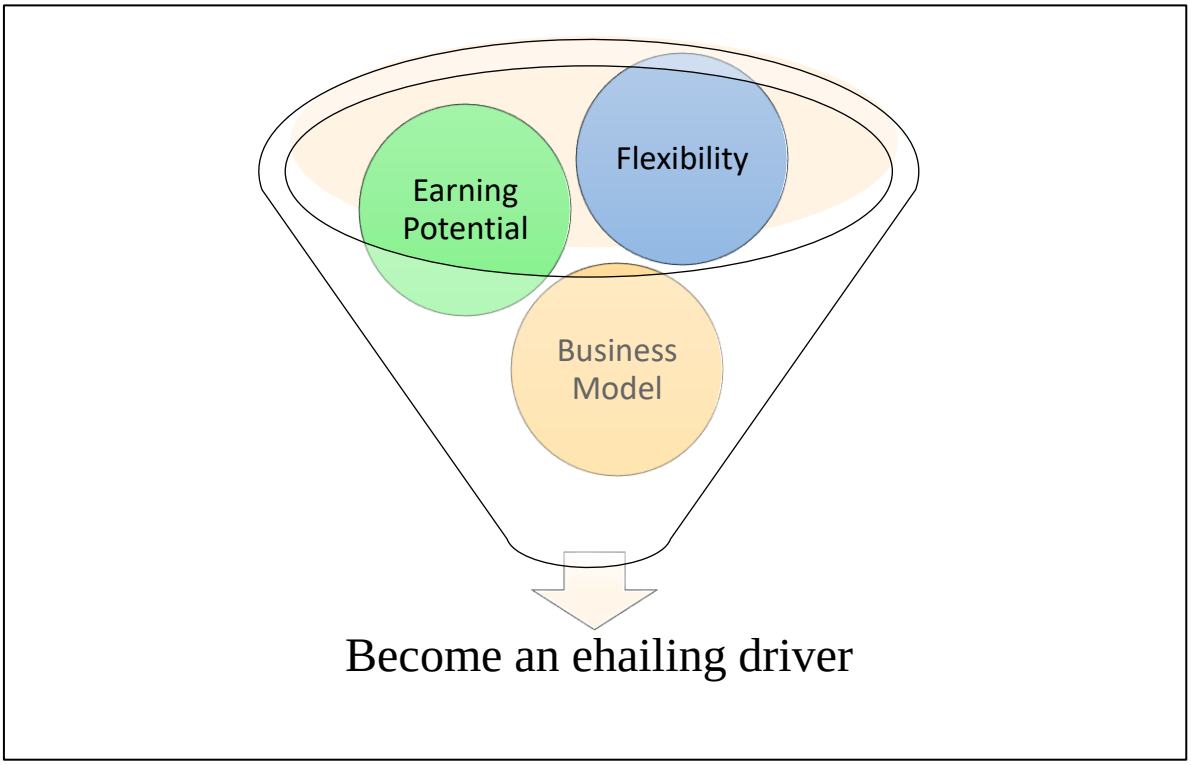
"I was in a very stagnant career; it is good that I joined ehailing." [Driver 11]

One driver within the 55+ age group expressed how they would have decided to retire or stay in retirement had they not joined ehailing. The decision to end they career and move into retirement was affected by the low retirement income, hence their choice to join ehailing to augment that income.

"I should have been a retired pensioner; however, my pension is not enough to meet the college tuition for my children who are still in school." [Driver 5]

5.4 Reasons for Joining

Figure 5. 2: Summary of rationale for becoming an ehailing driver.



5.4.1 Earning Potential and Flexibility

Earning Potential and Flexibility, where the main reasons why most drivers joined ehailing. Twenty-one drivers stated either earning potential or flexibility, individually or jointly as the main reason for joining ehailing. These represent benefits drawn from being an ehailing driver, hence can be classified as pull factors together with the Business Model. Figure 5.1 shows the three main justifications highlighted by drivers as pull factors for them to join ehailing. One driver noted how flexible being an ehailing driver is, hence, they have planned their life around the strategic times they drive and the income they get from using that strategy.

"I do it full time but at structured times [ehailing strategy for pick hours only work], so the flexibility for me was number 1. the income structure was attractive." [Driver 16]

5.4.2 Work Flexibility

Flexibility represents how drivers can decide, manage, and iterate their work schedule without the need for typical formal organisational management approval. It also includes the ability to determine the location and suburbs which the driver can consider a base. The choice of strategy to use to maximise potential income, safety, and the balance with other aspects of their individual day was also a feature under flexibility.

The importance of work flexibility in the ehailing and the gig economy at large is a multifaceted aspect that has garnered significant attention in academic literature. The premium placed on flexibility has been identified in the literature as a key driver for individuals engaging in gig work and represents a pivotal factor in shaping the experiences of gig workers (Anwar & Graham, 2021; Heeks et al., 2020; Khethisa et al., 2020; Marquis et al., 2018). One driver compared how he has more time to spend with his family now that he is an ehailing driver as compared to how they used to spend a minimum of 2 weeks on the road per month as a truck driver.

"The trucking business meant I was away from my family for atleast 2 weeks per months, so this gave me a lesser income but better time with the family. So, I do it fulltime." [Driver 29]

5.4.3 The Ehailing Business Model

The Business Model was highlighted by a few drivers as the main reason why some joined. A driver who previously drove in the city centre as a meter taxi driver explained why the time spent in the transport line or base was affecting income on days or periods of low demand. Meter taxis need to be situated in a line and when riders are looking for a taxi they need to get the taxi in front at that

location. Comparing that business model and the ehailing business model which has a degree of flexibility on location and the taxi hailing process this driver opted to join ehailing.

"I do it full time and vele [zulu word for just] I joined because it is better than the meter taxi, [Probed why he thought its better] I don't have to wait in line at 1 location, but the app just gets me customers" [Driver 28]

5.4.4 Immigration Status and Personal Circumstances

The reasons discussed so far for why participants decided to select a career as an ehailing drivers are mostly pull factors, that is, factors attracting participants to make the career choice of joining ehailing. However, four drivers noted that due to personal circumstances they had no other option, they could either not find a job or had some form of restriction to working in formal employment setups. Two drivers explained how their immigration status and the cost of compliance where restrictive for them to work in their specialist fields while the same restriction did not apply to ehailing.

"My immigration status has made it complicated for me to work in my area of specialisation in this country." ***[Driver 15]***

"I liked the freedom and the money, but more importantly my immigration status does not affect the work I do". ***[Driver 31]***

5.5 Career Plans Future Aspirations

When attempting to understand career trajectories at a fixed point in time it is critical to also enquire the perceived impact on career plans and future choices that becoming an ehailing driver has made to the participants. In addition to that this research also collected the comparative sentiment to having been a formally employed driver or a meter taxi driver to the career choice of becoming an ehailing driver. his comparative analysis serves as a valuable lens through which we can explore the multifaceted dimensions of career choices within the transportation industry.

The gathering of this data followed on research by (Wood et al., 2019) and (Rahman et al., 2022), which highlighted the evolving nature if work, how it impacts individuals and the need to shed light on the outcomes for individuals. This also contributes to the ethics debate surrounding gig work and the ehailing context.

5.5.1 Impact of Ehailing on Career Plans

21 of the 28 ehailing drivers interviewed viewed ehailing as having affected their future career plans. A consistent theme across most drivers was the impact on their lives as a whole. This was a common theme across drivers with different education backgrounds and immigration situations.

"Yes, I don't see myself doing anything else. I have 4 cars now on ehailing. 3 of them I employ drivers and I feel like a big boss already." [Driver 26]

One driver highlighted how they were a specialist in the food industry with plans to grow in their line of work but having lost their job during the pandemic and joined ehailing those initial career plans have changed. The change is significant as this driver does not see themselves going back into the food industry in the future.

"Yes, it has affected my future career path in that I cancelled all plans of going back to work." (Driver 6)

This sentiment was shared by another driver who changed his entire future career plans and cancelled his desire to ever go back to work. Both drivers have not applied for any other jobs since becoming ehailing drivers and do not see a future outside ehailing. An aspiring accountant professional immigrant, whose career plan was to become a Chartered Certified Accountant, having worked part time in ehailing and enjoyed the benefits it offers significantly changed their career plan to focusing on ehailing.

"Yes it has, I started accounting straight from Olevel [Matric] with ACCA and I worked for 4 years before coming to SA, but now I don't even think about leaving this ehailing. It has changed my view of a career." (Driver 15)

However, a few drivers did not see any current or future impact on their careers, career plans or aspirations as ehailing is something they do as a "part-time gig" and the income while they improve themselves or their skill set. One driver explained that as a mechanic they still make time to work on their career.

"I don't think so it's just a side gig for me and I like it that way". (Driver 19)

Another driver who is a studenty nurse shared the same sentiments, explaining that they do not view ehailing as having affected their career plans but just a part time commitment they are flexibly participating in. Similarly, an ehailing driver who also works as a security guard at night felt that joining ehailing had not affected their career or how they viewed their future.

"No, I still work night shifts as security and drive during the day" (Driver 9)

"Not that much because now I still am studying something related to working in a hospital". (Driver 22)

"It will definitely affect my future choices but for now I would not say it has…" (Driver 23)

5.5.2 Comparative Sentiment towards Formal Employment

Most ehailing drivers viewed alternative employment as a formal driver or meter taxi driver as **worse for their careers** or career plans than joining ehailing. They highlighted factors such as the rigid nature of formal employment and the caped income received under such conditions. This was a consistent theme across all most drivers, with one driver describing the potential income from ehailing as around ZAR 25 000 in some peak holiday months.

"No, I think the freedom I have with ehailing is better compared to meter taxi or such companies like Union Cabs. Formal companies have mostly fixed income but for me I earn even 25k per month during peak months like December." [Driver 26]

One driver was indifferent when comparing ehailing and formal driving or meter taxi driving, highlighting that the key difference for him was on client acquisition. However, one driver expected it to be better, given that meter taxi does not have to pay commission to any platform and are mostly safe from persecution by taxi associations as they are affiliated, especially in the city centre.

"..most likely because they don't pay commission to Uber or Bolt, so they could be making more money than us, but see there are high barriers to entry, those Old Madhalas [term refers to Older Man in the meter taxi industry] will not let you operate in the area. Check the issues at OR Tambo in the Uber Driver Facebook Group for SA you will get what i am saying" [Driver 32].

The views on safety and the cost of safety for ehailing drivers was something most drivers did not raise earlier on in the interview sessions. Some drivers had never applied for any other role since joining ehailing and consider that becoming an ehailing driver had a significant impact on their perceived future career choices.

5.6 Career Social and Environmental Support

This section presents the data regarding how the social and environmental support offered to ehailing drivers and the career outcome expectations. Understanding this support can help the researcher make ehailing specific inferences related to career satisfaction.

Drivers in this study limited to no support from ehailing platforms they driver under. The majority (19 of 28 drivers) of drivers highlighted that they were either they have not received or been made aware of any career support being offered by the ehailing platforms. In June 2021, the Uber CEO announced a partnership with Rosetta Language Learning and an intent to extend the platform to enable drivers to further their education or learn other skills (Uber, 2021). Not all drivers in this study were aware of this. One driver said they either do not have any programs or support for us or they deliberately do not publicize it so that we do not take advantage of it.

Table 5. 9: Summary of career support offered to ehailing drivers.

Categories	Themes	Response Samples
Career Support by Platforms	**No Support or Not Aware**	*"…they don't provide us anything, they want their money good ratings and that's it…" [Driver 2]*
	Ehailing Career Support	*"Yes, they support me by unveiling more car slots for me so I can add another car." [Driver 25]*
Career Support by ehailing Drivers	**Support for Ehailing**	*"Support from other drivers is there, over time we have created some groups on WhatsApp which we give advice on doing deals and even private rides." [Driver 1]*
	Support for Other Careers	*"Always, as a mechanic, I always get linked with side jobs. If any of us needs to service or fix their cars, they get referred to me" [Driver 12]*
Platform Safety Support & Issues	**No Support**	*"Safety measures like what, no!! the SOS should not count on this one, maybe let's say they don't do anything." [Driver 2]*
	Need for Security Features	*"They need to improve on security I don't know what they can give us, but something needs to be done. I have lost 4 friends in this business due to driving in dangerous areas or getting robbers requesting you on the platforms" [Driver 32]*

"They don't or they don't advertise it that well if they do" [Driver 15]

The choice to roll out a language learning assistance can be viewed as ehailing career support, and this is the sentiment shared by one driver. First time impound fees (uber only in Cape Town) and proof of income statements can be provided by platforms to support drivers get their cars released from the impound yard or to finance a car for use on the platforms. One driver explained that it may not be financially beneficial for them to help drivers have other careers, so they do not have an incentive to do so.

"Nothing because why would they it is not their core business to help drivers have other careers" [Driver 28]

Drivers have organized themselves over time into social groups to offer each other support for both ehailing driving and other careers. Networking was identified as an important part of the ehailing business, and the majority (22 of 28 drivers) of drivers received some form of career support from other ehailing drivers when compared to the platforms.

The lack of security and safety support from the platforms was raised by the 19 of the drivers interviewed in this study. In a volatile operating environment such as the Cape Town transport sector, drivers felt just having an SOS button on the platforms was not sufficient to assist them in the most common scenarios they find themselves in while working. One driver explained how a collaborative approach between the platforms and authorities could be helpful in improving safety while they are engaging in their ehailing careers.

"It is more a question of awareness I guess, and they can teach us or educate us about this or collaborate with the police" [Driver 3]

Ehailing drivers have self-organized into social groups and are participating in protest action, social support and self-financing stokvels amongst themselves. This has been highlighted by a 24 drivers and the lack of labour unions support has also been one of the key features of the environment in the ehailing sector.

5.7 Career Satisfaction and Well-being.

The findings presented in this section relate to the ehailing drivers expressing the degree of satisfaction they derive from their careers as ehailing drivers.

5.7.1 Career Satisfaction - Ehailing Driver Experiences

Most ehailing drivers agree on having a **positive experience** driving for various platforms on the day to day. They highlight the conversations with clients, networking, refreshing friendships and how some clients take the drive as a therapy session. A few drivers highlighted how the general conversations with clients are mostly positive and the opportunities for networking have been significant.

"I kind of like it, the interaction with clients gives me a perspective in 100ds of lives and different backgrounds. I have made friends and many clients who gave me other business opportunities" [Driver 23]

One driver highlighted how their other business [a laundromat] has benefited immensely from him driving for ehailing platforms. This could represent a violation of platform rules as it constitutes marketing another business, but drivers still do it to argument their incomes.

"Yes, I keep fliers for my laundromat in the car and make new business from the ehailing clients" [Driver 10].

Positive experiences where also derived from comparative analysis with their previous jobs, with one driver highlighting how it is much more enjoyable to be an ehailing driver than to be an insurance sales person.

"it's a good experience better than trying to sell insurance on the corner". [Driver 17].

Some ehailing drivers have had **neutral experiences** while driving. This was a ccommon theme, with drivers expressing a form of neutrality in terms of their day-to-day experience driving for the different ehailing platforms. They highlighted encountering both rude unpleasant clients and having some good interactions as well. An example of this is one driver's view that it's a 50/50 meaning the experiences or interactions between the good and bad approximately equate.

"We meet some crazy people in these side hustles, sometimes a client comes in drunk and vomits in the car, so it's a 50/50 for me" [Driver 15]

The fact that different clients carry different personal circumstances into the ehailing ride which leads to different experiences for drivers was also highlighted by one driver supporting the theme that it has been a neutral experience for them.

"In general, I enjoy it, the conversations are usually good and refreshing but sometimes it's a bad experience".[Driver 2]

"This jobs depends on the days and clients, sometimes I enjoy it but other times it's hard as we work with many people who come from different scenarios" [Driver 1]

Some ehailing drivers have had **negative experiences** while conducting their day-to-day driving. This theme did not capture negative experiences surrounding areas such as the mental health of drivers, their ratings and reputational damage as that was captured in other sections. Multiple factors such as poor treatment from clients and some daily run ins with police as well as meter taxi guys fuelled the negative experiences of drivers on their day-to-day duties.

"Not really enjoyable some clients are good but mostly they are asking me how much I make" [Driver 31]

"I do it for the money, no enjoyment honestly, why because clients treat us like their personal drivers, yet we even make more money than them." [Driver 22]

Table 5. 10: Summary of career support offered to ehailing drivers.

Categories	Themes	Response Samples
Career Satisfaction - Ehailing Driver Experiences	**Positive Experience**	*"I kind of like it, the interaction with clients gives me a perspective in 100ds of lives and different backgrounds. I have made friends and many clients who gave me other business opportunities" [Driver 23]*
		"I have never had lonely days since I started, I enjoy interacting and striking conversations with different people".[Driver 5]
		"it's a good experience better than trying to sell insurance on the corner". [Driver 17].
	Neutral Experience	*"We meet some crazy people in these side hustles, sometimes a client comes in drunk and vomits in the car, so it's a 50/50 for me."[Driver 15]*
		This jobs depends on the days and clients, sometimes I enjoy it but other times it's hard as we work with many people who come from different scenarios [Driver 1]
		In general, I enjoy it, the conversations are usually good and refreshing but sometimes it's a bad experience.[Driver 2]
	Negative Experience	*"I do it for the money, no enjoyment honestly, why because clients treat us like their personal drivers, yet we even make more money than them." [Driver 22]*
		not really enjoyable some clients are good but mostly they are asking me how much I make [Driver 31]

5.7.2 Career Satisfaction - Ehailing Income and Work Conditions

When it comes to satisfaction with the conditions of work, income received and platform considerations for driver wellbeing, the minority of drivers expressed **a degree of satisfaction** with their ehailing careers. Some drivers were mostly satisfied mainly with the earning potential, while others were satisfied that their efforts to work more hours directly translated to potentially more income. One driver mentioned the direct correlation between effort and income earned.

"I am satisfied, it is up to me how much I work and earn for sure" [Driver 13]

Another driver expressed a great degree of satisfaction with being their own boss, that power to self-manage and dictate own working hours. This has a significant impact on how some drivers view their jobs as ehailing drivers and what that entails for their future.

"Being my own boss gave me a sense of power and that's been satisfying thing for me in ehailing, some things like working conditions and the income I can complain but its reasonable that's the truth." [Driver 25]

Other drivers emphasized how the degree of flexibility is a major source of satisfaction together with the nature of how one accumulates income based on effort in ehailing. Drivers highlighted the ease to manage their personal circumstances when working under flexible conditions. However, the majority (19 of 28 drivers) of drivers **expressed dissatisfaction** with the work conditions, net income, and a marked display of no consideration for drivers' well-being by the platforms.

Drivers have attempted collective action and strikes in South Africa to share their sources of dissatisfaction with the platform providers to no avail. 19 of the drivers interviewed highlighted how the income derived from the pricing has not been increasing with the associated expenses such as fuel. This has gradually reduced their purchasing power from net income earned from ehailing. One driver highlighted how platforms are concentrating on fighting competition amongst each other and other growth metrics without looking at the driver plight.

"The income offered is starting to look smaller because since this covid thing. The conditions of work are not okay security is a major issue driver safety if being ignored" [Driver 27]

"No, the money is now not satisfying as it used to be before all these fuel increases" [Driver 2]

The issue of driver safety was highlighted as a source of dissatisfaction for drivers. Multiple robberies and car hijackings are reported across all ownership structures in South Africa but the added harassment from taxi associations, meter taxi drivers and other communities represents an additional risk for ehailing drivers.

"…they also don't prioritize our safety so no satisfaction on this business." [Driver 1]

The unilateral approach to blocking drivers using a complex and sometimes opaque arbitration system was also mentioned as a source for this dissatisfaction. One driver highlighted how the amount of commission collected is high and does not consider the other costs incurred by ehailing drivers.

Table 5. 6: Summary of career support offered to ehailing drivers.

Categories	Themes	Response Samples
Career Satisfaction - Ehailing Income and Work Conditions	**Not Satisfied**	*"The income is not enough, we have tried numerous times to advise the platforms, we even participated in strikes, but they don't care. Given the way prices have been changing, even fuel and maintenance costs, platforms don't adjust the price which is affecting our final income. They also don't prioritize our safety so no satisfaction on this business." [Driver 1]*
		"No, the money is now not satisfying as it used to be before all these fuel increases" [Driver 2]
		"The income offered is starting to look smaller because since this covid thing. The conditions of work are not okay security is a major issue driver safety if being ignored" [Driver 27]
		"Nah, not satisfied man, the platforms don't really care about our wellbeing, they cannot even review the rates to account for fuel price increase". [Driver15]
		"The fact that they can block us for some obscure rating calculated by them is a sure sign that they don't care about our wellbeing. I am not satisfied even by the amount of commission they take its too much considering that they don't contribute to my care maintenance and running cost". [Driver 16]
	Satisfied	*"Being my own boss gave me a sense of power and that's been satisfying thing for me in ehailing, some things like working conditions and the income I can complain but its reasonable that's the truth." [Driver 25]*
		"Yes, I am satisfied, the more hours I put in is the more I make"[Driver 7]
		"I am satisfied, partially because it's good for my arrangement" [Driver 19]
		"...satisfied, they give me my flexibility and I can get my money weekly without a hustle."[Driver 23]

"The fact that they can block us for some obscure rating calculated by them is a sure sign that they don't care about our wellbeing. I am not satisfied even by the amount of commission they take. It's too much considering that they don't contribute to my care maintenance and running cost." [Driver 16]

Overall ehailing drivers are not satisfied with the working conditions but they appreciate the working model for being flexible.

5.8 Mapping Ehailing on the Informality Spectrum

This section presents the general contract, employment and working conditions of ehailing platforms, in relation to how they plot on the spectrum of informality. Ehailing platform driver contract details publicly available and answers from the interviews were used. The income or earnings from ehailing activities are not considered as a salary, therefore no pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) is paid on these earnings. Uber specifically requires or encourages ehailing drivers to register for income tax with the South African Revenue Authority.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines **informal employment** as work that is not subject to labor legislation, social protection, taxes, or employment benefits (Kan & Tansel, 2014). This distinction is crucial in comprehending the quality of employment, as it allows for an explicit objective analysis of both informal and formal employment (Ferreira, 2016) . Informal employment is often characterized by low pay, insecurity, and unregulated working conditions, and it is typically undertaken by marginalized populations excluded from formal jobs and welfare support (Williams, 2015).

However, there is a more nuanced middle ground between formality and informality, characterised as **semi formal**, to mean mostly formal but ranking as informal on other aspects. **Semi-informal** also plots a job closer to informal but with certain aspects ranking as formal or partially formal. The movement from formal to informal employment can be voluntary, as some workers choose informal over formal employment, particularly in developing countries (Kucera & Roncolato, 2008). It is important to note that informal employment is generally considered less favorable, and policymakers often aim to decrease its prevalence and transition workers into the formal labor market (Vidovic & Ritan, 2022). The mapping for ehailing was done based on 7 factors extracted from the literature (detailed in chapter 2), these are wages reported to the tax authority, formal contracts, labour law compliance, minimum legal benefits, hours of work and management & supervision.

5.8.1 Wages Reported to Tax Authority

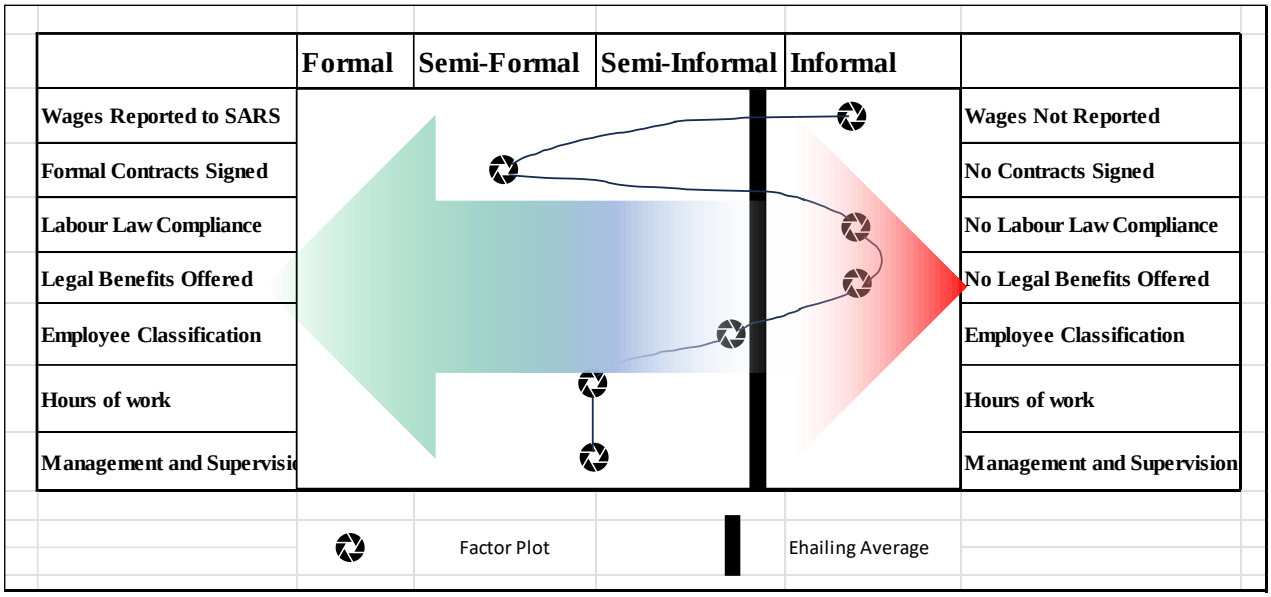
The reporting of wages to the tax authority is usually done to ensure compliance with certain requirements for employer contributions and pay as you earn accounting. Where wages are formally reported and accounted for the job is considered to be a formal and when they are not reported periodically the job is considered informal. Some contractors are required to self-report and that is classified closer to the formal jobs.

The research findings are that there is no formal reporting of incomes made by platform providers as they classify drivers as independent contractors, hence ehailing mapped as informal for wages reported to the tax authorities. Figure 5.8 shows the plot on the spectrum for ehailing.

5.8.2 Formal Contract Signed

The signup process for becoming an ehailing driver typically includes accepting terms and conditions of the platform one will be working on. This is typically the terms of service which governs the driver's relationship with the platform. This is not an employment contract and where there is no formal employment contract or verbal, or common law contract that job is classified as an informal job on the spectrum. Some jobs fall into the default definition of employment as per the South African labour law even though there is no formal signed contract, these can qualify between formal and semi-formal jobs. Therefore, ehailing plots on the semiformal because even though there no formal contract of employment, but since the drivers are classified as independent contractors and they sign a formal terms of service, they qualify as semi-formal. Figure 5.8 shows the plot on the spectrum for ehailing.

Figure 5.2: SOI – Findings on Ehailing Driver Job Mapping.



5.8.3 Labour law compliance and Legal Benefits

The South African Income Tax Act No. 58 of 1962 defines an employee but does not strictly define an independent contractor but offer two tests to determine worker status: the statutory and common law tests. These tests are subjective, and consequently have allowed platform providers to arbitrage

the legislation and strip ehailing drivers of the benefits accrued to them (Goodin & Shaw 2017; Hussein et al., 2021; Reis & Chand 2020).

Therefore, the findings for this research are that ehailing plots as informal for labour law compliance without violating the law but being not liable to comply. Ehailing also plots on the informal side for legal benefits.

5.8.4 Hours of work and Management/Supervision

Where hours of work are defined and determined by an employer, management and supervision are provided a job is classified as formal. Where a degree of flexibility or self-determination of working hours is given, that job plots on the semi-formal to semi-informal side. Conversely where full autonomy and flexibility is afforded that job is mapped as an informal job. Ehailing drivers are limited to work a set number of hours per 24-hour cycle, but they self-determine when exactly they are online. Ehailing drivers also do not have management or supervision in a typical hierarchical manner, but behavior analytics on the platform apps and monitoring by platforms can be considered a degree of supervision. Also, the power to block, ban or punish ehailing drivers assumes a degree of control.

Therefore, the findings for these two factors were that ehailing plots in the middle of the spectrum, between semi-formal and semi-informal.

5.8.5 Ehailing Drivers Perception on Informality

Platforms do not consider drivers as employees rather as partners. These are self-employed drivers who are onboarded onto the platforms to provide a service. The majority (21 of 28 drivers) of drivers mentioned the difference between their terms of business with e-mailing platforms relating to unpaid waiting times while online, sick pay and financial support on the job when compared to their previous formal careers. One driver mentioned how they consider themselves self-employed simply because sick leave or pay-slip as required in the labour law are not considered.

"I am not formally employed because they don't give me a payslip or sick leave or anything similar to that." [Driver 15]

Another driver considered himself not "informally employed" but rather a driver paid on commission. Data collected relating to whether drivers have contracts with the various platforms they work for and if they read and understood those contracts was also collected. Most drivers confirmed having knowledge of contracts or terms of business but explained that they had not fully read or understood these documents. One driver explained how they just signed or agreed to the

terms and conditions without reading them while another had a general idea since their friends were already ehailing drivers.

"I just signed the contract despite of what it said because I was desperate for a hustle." [Driver 7]

"Most of my friends were already drivers so I knew the terms already." [Driver 9]

Formal determination or limitation of working hours and the aspect of disciplinary actions roles or arbitration where considered important by the majority of drivers. Platforms introduced limitations to the total consecutive hours a driver can be online. This is a degree of control or limitation on working time per 2-hour period. Drivers do decide when they can start a work period and have an allowance for a certain number of trips, they can decline without affecting their ratings or risking potential punishment. This was consistent across platforms except for InDriver whose business model involves an auction system.

Platforms also hold an ability to block, suspend or remove permanently a driver from operating on the platform should they violet any of the terms of business they are required to adhere to.

"Sometimes I decline but they block you, especially Bolt and Uber, for declining too much. I was blocked recently for this, what they don't understand is I cannot go to certain areas it is not safe. But inDriver you bid for only what you want."[Driver 1]

The organisation of collective action and unionization is not available in the ehailing sector. Ehailing drivers are self-organizing to try and gain a negotiating voice with the platforms for several issues affecting their work.

5.9 Summary of Findings

In this chapter findings on what careers ehailing drivers were engaged in and what they aspired to become before they became ehailing drivers were presented. Findings on why they joined ehailing and how their current and future career aspirations were impacted were also presented. Data on how the ehailing drivers view the satisfactions and environmental support offered by platforms was also presented. Finally, the work conditions and characteristics of driving for ehailing as a job where presented in the context of the spectrum of informality.

6. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter details the discussion and conclusion based on the findings presented in Chapter 5. This chapter also covers the recommendations for future research based on the observed weaknesses of this research, potential extensions and research gaps identified.

The chapter is organized as follows: Section 6.1 will give an overview of the research; section 6.2 will discuss the research findings as they relate to the main objective of the research and the research questions; section 6.3 discusses the implications of the study and section 6.4 will contextualize the research contribution. Section 6.5 will propose recommendations derived from the findings of this study. Section 6.6 will detail the limitations of this study and section 6.7 will offer suggestions for future research. Section 6.8 will be the conclusion of the research.

6.1 Overview of the research

To address the research objective of 'Investigating the impact of the gig economy on informalisation of employment and individual career trajectories of gig workers', the researcher formulated research questions based on the argument that there is a relationship between career outcomes and working in the gig economy. Therefore, by studying informalisation and career trajectories in the context of the gig economy, we theorised that it was plausible to gain deeper insights into the evolving nature of work and the implications for workers' economic security. The research questions were:

Main Research question:

- What is the impact of the gig economy on informalisation of employment and individual career trajectories of gig workers?

Sub-questions:

1. What is the degree of informality of ehailing drivers work?
2. What are the career expectations of ehailing drivers before joining ehailing?
3. What was the impact of joining ehailing on the career expectations of the drivers?
4. What are the perceptions of ehailing drivers on the role played by ehailing platform providers in shaping their career trajectories?

The following sections situated this study within the contextual body of knowledge. The research summarised literature on informalisation within the Global Souths' context and career trajectories. We observed that the operating model within the gig economy, particularly the ehailing sector is

operating largely outside current labour standards and legal frameworks (Fredman, 2020), hence the need to study how it places on the spectrum of informality and its impact on workers career trajectories.

Following the exploratory nature of the study, the use of qualitative methods was justified and situated within current literature. We justified the adoption of a post-positivist approach and the use of interviews to collect the data. We interviewed 28 ehailing drivers from Cape Town. The research anchored the study on the SCCT and SOI frameworks. The SCCT provided the necessary grounding and flexibility of application by allowing the researcher to focus on non-personal traits that influence career trajectories but rather role related factors to capture the ehailing context.

The researcher then applied a hybrid analysis approach where deductive analysis was followed by inductive analysis. It was evident that ehailing drivers' careers and their aspirations have been impacted working in the gig economy. It was evident that earning potential and flexibility where the key motivations for joining ehailing. The detailed theoretical elaboration and insights drawn from these findings are summaries in the subsequent sections.

6.2 Discussion of Research Findings

This section will detail how the main question and sub questions were addressed in this research.

6.2.1 Research Question One – Degree of informality.

The application of the Spectrum of Informality to plot the placement of ehailing gig work and ascertain how each condition plots on the spectrum revealed a significant degree of informality of the ehailing driver career. This research set out to identify were ehailing placed on the informality spectrum and the majority of ehailing work attributes plotted closer to informal employment than to formal employment, strengthening the notion that the introduction of ehailing has/ is contributing to informalisation of employment in the Global South. We identified that platforms classify workers as independent contractors/partners, and drivers are not fully aware of the contracts or terms and conditions of operating they "*agreed to*".

The classification of ehailing as a semi-informal job on the SOI was in line with the perceived view of ehailing drivers of how formal or informal their job is. Drivers viewed constructs such as classification by platforms and the lack of documents such as payslips to mean ehailing was informal. Figure 6.2 in section 6 captures how each of the other specific factors plotted on the SOI according to the characteristics of ehailing.

Some factors such as formal contracts signed could be argued plot on the more formal side of the spectrum but to address the first research question, this research concluded that the degree of informality of ehailing was significant, hence mapping as semi-informal on the SOI. Other jobs in the gig economy that share the same characteristics or conditions of employment with ehailing be argued to plot similarly as semi-formal.

While platforms may reserve the right to classify ehailing drivers as independent contractors, and drivers in South Africa are enjoying the flexibility that comes with that classification, the implications for other employment benefits are significant. When considered as self-employed with no track record of contributing to the UIF, if a risk event is to prevent you from continuing with ehailing as a driver you will not be entitled to any unemployment benefits. Considerations are also made on the payment or declaration of tax to SARS which most drivers did not raise as one of the activities or expenses for their business.

Being classified as contractors/partners ensures that some of the mandatory benefits in the South African labour law such as sick leave, annual leave, pension contributions and other protections of the law are forgone ehailing drivers. Ehailing platforms have no incentive to provide these benefits to drivers because this would represent a significant portion of their operating expenses. The classification of ehailing drivers is an issue still being contended (Abboud & Wagstaff 2015; Reis & Chand 2020). In 2015, In the US platform providers have been subjected to multiple lawsuits (Brown 2016), with one of the major lawsuits resulting in a $100 million settlement in which Uber conceded that it had misclassified its drivers as independent contractors in California and Massachusetts (Department for Professional Employees 2016; Liss-Riordan & Pagano 2015).

Technology companies offering platforms for labour provision on a contractual bases have been credited with being innovative and maximising the labour laws across the world which are drafted based on the traditional economy. This is prevalent in the gig economy with companies such a Fiver or Upwork operating largely outside common labour laws. This is also common in the ehailing industry in South Africa, with companies such as Uber, Bolt and InDriver operating in a labour law vacuum when it comes to ehailing drivers. Though initially considered an innovate sidestep of the law meant to motivate innovation, ehailing drivers in other countries such as the United Kingdom have taken ehailing platforms to court to mitigate against the implications of this classification. The loss of minimum entitled benefits such as sick leave and pension contributions have been classified closer to infringement of labour rights (Kamei & Nakamura, 2022; Apel et al., 2006; Switasarra & Astanti, 2021).

This classification also affects the access of credit facilities from the formal banking sector which has rigid risk-based measures that require a provable income or tax record. This significantly places ehailing around the self-employed or informal side for credit application purposes, this can be true for other gig economy jobs which do not have a payslip or provable income.

Other forms of protection for independent contractors can come from government institutions or labour unions which can represent these workers. While the Uber website encourages drivers to be registered with the South African Revenue Authority [SARS] for tax purposes, this is not strictly enforced as it is the contractors' own responsibility to comply. This may affect any support which require tax compliance from being accessed by ehailing drivers. When asked about expenses that made up their business expenses all drivers did not mention tax bill, pension contribution or UIF contributions.

Furthermore, the common theme on representation was that there was no expectation from the platforms to have any form of unionisation as that is mostly applicable to employees. Drivers opted to self-represent by organising themselves into regional groups and participating in collective labour actions to force platforms onto the negotiation table on various matters. The implications of this are poor representation that has resulted in poor negotiation outcomes and a placement more on the informal side on the spectrum on informality. The importance of having labour unions has been well documented in labour studies arguing that a lack of such representation can enable a degree of exploitation (Bryson et al., 2019; Marino et al., 2018; Siqueira et al., 2003; Li et al., 2020). Research from the Fairwork Institute that does periodic ratings for how platforms treat their workers and the conditions of work, has demonstrated how a gap exists for fair representation since ehailing platforms entered the South African market.

6.2.2 Research Question Two – Pre-ehailing career expectations.

The second research question sort to understand what the career expectations of ehailing drivers were before joining ehailing?. This was used to lay the foundation for answering the third research question and ascertaining how career trajectories have been impacted by joining ehailing. Whereas the determination of the degree of informality was plotted on the spectrum of informality, the following constructs were extracted from the SCCT-career self-management model and modified to cater for the role specific requirements of this research: career choices, career satisfaction and career support (environmental and social). Ehailing drivers had **historical career growth** as their

career aspiration, that is most drivers were planning to **remain in the careers and progress** over time with promotions or development to higher roles.

Other drivers who focused on ehailing as a part time endeavour also maintained varying career objectives, some being students and others being self-employed individuals or business owners. None of the drivers interviewed viewed joining ehailing as a career aspiration before they joined and the main reasons for joining varied from being let go from their current jobs to being attracted by the flexible working model of ehailing.

6.2.3 Research Question Three – Post ehailing career expectations.

The third research question was about ascertaining the impact of joining ehailing on the career expectations of ehailing drivers. Drivers highlighted how ehailing significantly changed their career plans and trajectories since joining. Studies on multifaceted career growth highlight exposure as a key factor in how career aspirations can change over time (Inkson et al., 2012; Griek et al., 2018; Dik et al., 2017). This is in line with the findings of this research as the majority of drivers changed their career plans after getting exposure to ehailing and gaining experience in the industry. Although this research did not dig deeper into self-perceptions or personality types (Hale, 2020; Conlon et al., 2023; Sawitri & Suryadi, 2020) or the cultural or economic context (Fernando & Jayasekara, 2017), the outcome of leaving previous careers entirely and focusing on developing and growing with the ehailing context were common across most drivers.

Other drivers maintained their historical careers and contended that ehailing had no impact on their career planning and future career trajectories. This was common for drivers who were either students or aiming towards highly paying future roles. The conclusion on the third question was that the gig economy had a significant positive impact on the career trajectories of ehailing drivers, with a smaller no impact view on the careers of high paying or student ehailing drivers career aspirations.

6.2.4 Research Question Four – Ehailing drivers' perceptions.

The fourth research question was determining what the perception of ehailing drivers is on the role played by ehailing platform providers in shaping their career trajectories. To answer this question the research collected data on the support ehailing platforms were providing to drivers and the support drivers were providing to each other as part of the ecosystem. The platforms do not provide much support useful to driver careers outside ehailing. Driver noted the lack of support they may

need within their ehailing careers as many are focused and prepared to grow within ehailing. Drivers expected better security assistance to enhance safety on the day to day and an active engagement from the platform providers for grievances and discussions around pricing determination.

The majority of drivers exhibited a clear dissatisfaction with the ehailing platforms support and across conditions such as income, and dispute management. The lack of career support and a significant impact of career choices post joining ehailing contributed to the understanding of how the drivers perceived the support offered by platforms.

6.3 Implications – SOI and SCCT

The findings of this research showed how the SOI can be operationalised for research in the gig economy. The outcome of gig work contributing to informalisation of employment is largely viewed as negative because of the benefits expected of formal employment. All the constructs discussed from the SOI revolved around the classification of workers and how this carefully navigates related labour acts such as the Labour Relations Act (1995 amended in 2002) and Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1997 amended in 2002). Ordinarily, when a worker is employed and classified as an employee [temporary, permanent, or otherwise] according to South African labour law a contract of employment is not a requirement but the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (No. 75 of 1997 – the BCEA) compels an employer to give an employee a host of prescribed employment details in writing when they start work with that employer.

Armed with the best legal teams, platform providers arbitrage the regulation and ensure that they are not in violation of any of the laws or are not required to comply. The findings of this research show how the benefits of formal employment such a statutory sick leave is lost because of the informalisation of the taxi hailing role especially compared to the traditional taxi driver role.

The existence of a binding contract of employment and some legal documents which employees are entitled to under prevailing labour law is considered a factor in ascertaining if a job role is a formal role or an informal role. Ehailing drivers do not sign a contract of employment, rather agree to or sign terms of service and are classified as contractors by ehailing platforms. Consequently, this made ehailing roles plot closer to the informal classification on the spectrum of informality. Additionally, formalization in the workplace, such as providing guidance, clarifying job responsibilities, and reducing role stress, which was lacking in ehailing was linked to positive outcomes for workers (Lambert & Paoline, 2012; Karyotakis & Moustakis, 2016).

It was evident that drivers are aware of their classification as contractors [partners] and what its implications are. The ability to understand fully understand a legally drafted terms of service document may not be available for all drivers due to their literacy levels and a failure to read the terms of service in detail or seek legal clarification. This was evident when drivers complained of obscure rating or blocking criterion used by ehailing platforms, which could be detailed within the terms of service.

The implication so the SOI framework is that the standard measures of informality may not be sufficient to measure the gig economy context of work just as innovation led to the creation of the platform economy labour law and related benefits should be innovatively crafted to safeguard against loss of the benefits of formalisation. Hence there need to create a gig economy specific spectrum that can measure and classify work efficiently to better capture the nuances.

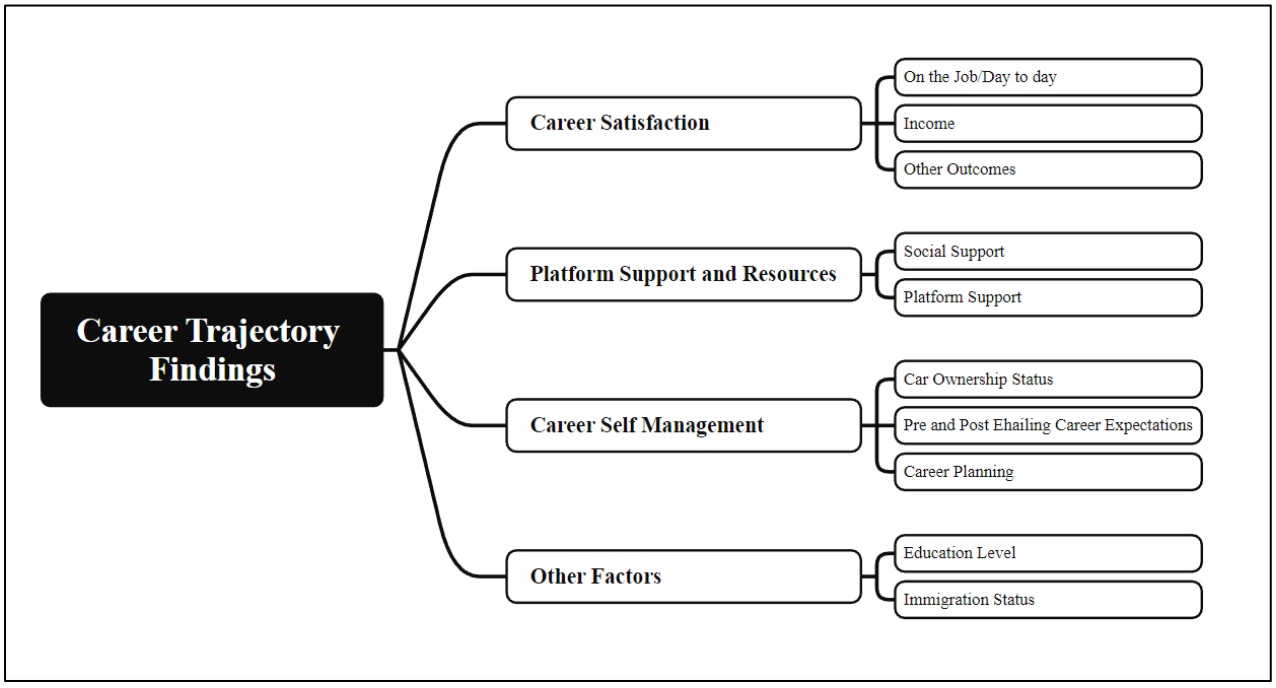
Through the lens of the SCCT under the career satisfaction model by Lent & Brown (2013), the findings highlight that outcomes such as income and day to day on the job satisfaction are key factors determining the career trajectories of ehailing drivers. Figure 6.1 shows these factors and other factors highlighted in this study. The study reinforced the importance of outcomes on career choices in line with studies by Park et al. (2018); Rogers & Creed, (2011); Osei et al., (2023); Kaminsky & Behrend, (2015). Ehailing drivers considered their view of satisfaction derived from the income as a critical factor, how that income has gradually been eroded by inflation and other competition related factors. The daily interactions with the ehailing customers, the conversations and how networking is viewed by ehailing drivers was also highlighted as a significant outcome consideration on how overall career satisfaction is considered.

The study also identified social support and platform support under the lens of the SCCT model. Ehailing drivers showed their negative view of the lack of support from platform providers but showed an understanding that the core business of these platforms remains provision of digital platforms and careers that may not re-enforce ehailing driving or support other facets of the platform's business would likely not be supported. Ehailing drivers showed a desire to foster relationships between themselves and how multi-faceted those relationships have become over time. Some have collaborated on non-ehailing related careers as a result of social support from other drivers and others have strengthened their ehailing daily driving strategy to maximise income as a result of this social support. Drivers have innovatively assisted each other to buy cars for use on the platform and to even expand their fleets to employ other drivers and become bigger players. Figure 6.1 depicts how support and resources forms part of the output model from this study.

In addition, career expectations and career planning of ehailing drivers were significantly influenced by working in ehailing. The ownership status of the driver represented a career progression within ehailing for drivers who rented or are employed under different car ownership models. The career plan of the drivers who do not own the car they driver at the moment included continuing to work as an ehailing driver and later buying their own car for use on the platforms. This played a key role in future career planning hence influencing career trajectories. Figure 6.1 shows this and also pre and post ehailing career expectations.

The SCCT model outcome depicting the determinants of career trajectories for ehailing drivers is captured in figure 6.1. The implications for the SCCT are that the ehailing context can sufficiently interrogate gig economy specific factors without the need to focus on individual factors, this can represent a further extension of the CSM model to a non-personal CSM. Further research is needed to ascertain the robustness and applicability to other sectors of the gig economy.

Figure 6. 2: SCCT – Findings on Ehailing Drivers Career Trajectory Determinants.



There is a common thread of ehailing drivers who noted their immigration status as “other”, being all changing their career trajectories to growth within ehailing and not continuing with their historical careers. This can be interpreted partially by the difficulty to secure jobs within the traditional economy when immigration status is a consideration. Were immigration status was classified as naturalised or work permit there was a degree of variability on the impact of ehailing on their career plans carried over from before they became ehailing drivers.

Most drivers within the 18-25 age group perceived ehailing to not having an impact on their career trajectories as some were students completing their studies and intended to complete their studies and continue with their profession. Driver in the 35+ age groups and have been driving for more than 3 years were owners of the cars they used for ehailing and some of them are fleet owners.

6.4 Research Contributions

The review of how different jobs place on the SOI have been limited with focus mostly given to macroeconomic views of informal economy instead of informal jobs. Current views focused on decent work conditions and adoption of platforms. This research addressed specifically the mapping and placement of ehailing driving on the SOI, showing how distinctive characteristics of ehailing driving as a job place on the spectrum. This can help policy makers when drafting or thing about interventions to support formality and protect the benefits of the ehailing drivers.

Although the SCCT allows for flexibility in extending the factors that determine career trajectories, the typical application of the framework has been in other areas, without any application into ehailing or the gig economy as at the time of this research. Applying the SCCT to ehailing drivers can be considered a novel application but still needs further expansion and to be evaluated with the standards of peer review to determine if it will satisfy the dynamic context of gig economy work.

The context of immigration status and a peculiar take on employment status to mean ownership, rental or non-ownership of the vehicle used for ehailing are constructs whose consideration in SCCT applications has not been significantly discussed. According to Lent & Brown (2013) the SCCT framework has highlighted the importance of personality traits, self-efficacy expectations and learning experiences to career trajectories. Other variance of the SCCT framework have put forward control factors such as career self-management. This study focused on the work side views of organisational career support and social career support without maintaining the same significance of personality traits. This offered a lens more focused on ehailing related issues while acknowledging the traditional application of SCCT.

The research offered a view into the career trajectories of ehailing drivers which is largely an unexplored construct and together with current literature on decent work standards can form a point of further research to understand the sustainability of ehailing driving as a career and the implications for ehailing drivers.

6.5 Recommendations

The researcher puts forward the following recommendations on how ehailing drivers could be assisted by platform providers in their career trajectory planning:

1. Financial Planning support – most drivers intend to grow and become fleet owners within the ehailing business model and offering them proper financial planning support can aid them attain their career trajectory goals. This can also assist drivers plan their post ehailing retirement planning. This can be offered by platform providers in conjunction with different financial institutions.
2. Mentorship and professional development programs – majority of drivers with less than 2 years' experience in ehailing all complained about the income earned from ehailing as being not satisfactory but with proper mentorship from experienced drivers they could improve their strategy around timing and locations to target so as to maximise income earned. Ehailing platforms can also create a repository of resources that can assist ehailing drivers in their career planning.
3. Collective bargaining – platforms can assist or encourage drivers to belong to or participate in setting up trade unions. This can help prevent strikes and better collective communication to improve efficiency of any support programs for career growth.

The researcher puts forward the following recommendations on how ehailing drivers could be assisted to reduce the impact of the degree of informality on their labour rights when compared to formal employment:

1. Policy changes - The policy formulation groups including the South African government authority and the ILO can modernise labour laws without stifling innovation from platform providers but striking a balance on the benefits of formalisation.
2. Legal challenges – multiple lawsuits in the USA have compelled Uber to reclassify their drivers in California. A class action lawsuit against multiple actors within the South African ehailing sector could attain comparable results or force the platforms to a collective negotiating table with drivers to negate or reduce the impact of informalisation.

6.6 Limitations of the study

The research limitations encountered in this study were noted in the research process and understanding & acknowledging these limitations is crucial for maintaining the integrity and

validity of the research outcomes. This study managed to investigate informalisation of employment and career trajectories: evidence from ehailing drivers in Cape Town. The particular focus on Cape Town and the application of convenience sampling may mean generalisation or transferability of results may not be dependable beyond Cape Town. The conclusions can arguably be applicable to other areas in South Africa; however, Bryman (2008) highlights the inherent limitations of this sampling methodology, however there is potential for extending the research across different methodology.

Another limitation of the study was a lack of information systems specific related literature with a focus on generally the ehailing economy and more specifically the ehailing sector. Most of the research on informalisation of employment and career trajectories was adopted from other disciplines such as Labour Economics, Education, Psychology and Behavioural Studies.

Apart from the methodological limitations mentioned earlier in this section, the study also encountered practical limitations. Conduction interviews over the phone has an advantage of ease of recording conversations where consent is given, but that was not realised in this case due to fear of persecution by ehailing drivers. The face-to-face interviews would have been significantly better with nonverbal cues missed completely on phone interviews. The sample population also seemed to land towards the migrant ehailing drivers due to the researcher having better access to that demographic.

6.7 Suggestions for Future Research

This research aimed to study the career trajectories of ehailing drivers and informalisation of employment. Having interviewed ehailing drivers and mapped their work on the spectrum of informality the research gave a snapshot (a cross sectional view) of the state of career trajectories, expectations, and placement on the SOI. Further interrogation of the constructs making use of a longitudinal study where ehailing drivers can be surveyed at different intervals over a period of time can offer more data to track and map ehailing drivers' careers on the SCCT. The interview population was limited and an opportunity for group discussions on social media platforms such as WhatsApp groups and Facebook groups can offer future researchers better data quality and an opportunity for textual analysis.

Future research can explore the Fairwork framework as a guiding lens to combine both the mapping of work on a novel Gig Economy Informality Spectrum and an in-depth analysis of data to fully apply the SCCT across the gig economy. Future studies may explore national driver samples and

partnership with ehailing platform companies to make use of the outcomes in improving how the offer career support. Future studies may conduct a comparative study between traditional taxi or meter taxi drivers and ehailing drivers, their career trajectories and the potential causal relationship between platform vehicle thresholds and driver participation.

6.8 Conclusion

The career trajectories of ehailing drivers are unique to their industry and studying the specific impact of being in the ehailing sector and how that links with informalisation formed the main thrust of this research. The mapping of the characteristics of the ehailing driver's role on the spectrum of informality depicted the role as on the informal to semi-informal point. The determination of working hours, documentation, contract state, classification, and income stability were key factors to map the ehailing drivers' job. The need to incorporate some the gains of formalisation without stifling technological innovation in the gig economy will be an important implication for policy makers. Drivers considered the flexibility of the ehailing driver role as a critical factor in determining their career planning choices across all time frames (short, medium to long term). There is undoubtedly a significant lack of support and proper line management from the platforms towards the drivers, but this research showed that this stems from how platform providers classify ehailing drivers as contractors or partners rather than employees hence the requirement to line manage is not there but rather to provide support.

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Appendix A: Research Instrument - Semi Structured Interviews

This interview manual is part of a master's research being conducted by Samson Zimuto, a Master of Commerce in Information Systems student at the University of Cape Town. The interview questions will focus on the constructs identified from the literature on the topic: "Informalisation of employment in the gig economy and career trajectories: evidence from ehailing drivers in Capetown".

The Interview Procedure

The procedure will involve me giving a brief introduction of myself to establish a good rapport with the interviewee. I will then explain the aim of the interview and the study, then give context why interviewing them about their career trajectory will assist in the research.

The interview will be conducted through phone calls, which can either be direct calls or WhatsApp call. The interview will take approximately 25 to 40minutes and follow-up questions will be influenced by each participant's answer. The answers of each participant and their personal details (phone number) will be kept confidential, and they will be advised of the option to withdraw from the interview at any point.

a. Demographic information

1. What is your Age-group?
2. What is your highest Education Level? "E.g None (No education), Matric, Diploma, Degree, Postgraduate, and PhD.
3. What is your country of birth?
4. What is your immigration status? "E.g. Naturalised (i.e. South African nationality acquired); Work Permit/Visa, Refugee Status, Other (and no need to explain)."
5. What is the main platform you work for?
6. How long have you been working on this platform?
7. Do you work on other platforms as well?

b. Career Self-Management

8. What is your employment history before joining ehailing?
9. Why did you join ehailing and is it a full time or part-time job?
10. What do you think would have been your career if you had not joined ehailing and your career aspirations before you joined ehailing?
11. Do you think ehailing has or will affect your future career choice?
12. Do you think driving as a meter taxi or formal taxi driver employment such as "Union Cabs" would be better for your career and career aspirations?
13. Have you been searching for other jobs since you started driving on ehailing?

c. Environmental Supports and Resources

14. Does the ehailing platform(s) you work with provide resources for career development in support of your career aspirations?
15. Do you receive support from other drivers towards your career aspirations and do you think this has helped your career?
16. Do you own, partner, rent or lease the car you use for ehailing, and do you receive support?

d. Career Satisfaction and Well-being

17. Do you enjoy driving on ehailing platforms, interacting with ehailing clients and the overall ehailing experience?
18. Do you feel satisfied with the conditions of work, income received and platform considerations for driver wellbeing?

e. Fair Working Conditions

Principle 1: Fair Pay

19. Are there unpaid hours e.g. waiting or bidding for work, or admin, learning, etc.? (Probing further on how many minutes/hours a day are unpaid?)
20. What proportion of your total income is that? Who else do you work for?

Principle 2: Fair Conditions

21. Who controls your work and working hours?

Principle 3: Fair Contracts

22. Do you enjoy driving on ehailing platforms, interacting with ehailing clients and the overall ehailing experience?
23. Do you think of yourself as formally employed by platform____ or do you think of yourself as self-employed?

Principle 5: Fair Representation

24. Do you meet up with other platform workers (face to face and or online forums like WhatsApp or Facebook groups)? What kinds of things do you talk about?
25. Are you in a union or workers' association? [Probe] Previous strikes, walk-outs or other activities (e.g. collectively cancelling all orders, not accepting orders, etc.). [Probe] If engaged in any strikes or similar activities, how did the platform respond?

Appendix B: UCT Ethics Approval Form

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03 05 2022

Samson Zimuto

Department of Information Systems

University of Cape Town

REF: REC 2022/05/001

INFORMALISATION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE GIG ECONOMY AND CAREER TRAJECTORIES: EVIDENCE FROM E-HAILING DRIVERS IN CAPETOWN.

We are pleased to inform you that your ethics application has been approved. Unless otherwise specified this ethical clearance is valid until 31-Dec-2023 .

Your clearance may be renewed upon application.

Please be aware that you need to notify the Ethics Committee immediately should any aspect of your study regarding the engagement with participants as approved in this application, change. This may include aspects such as changes to the research design, questionnaires, or choice of participants.

The ongoing ethical conduct throughout the duration of the study remains the responsibility of the principal investigator.

We wish you well for your research.

2022.05.03
20:57:39 +02'00'

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