Why Take the Risk? Motivations of Highly Skilled Workers to Participate in Crowdworking Platforms

Short Paper

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Abstract

Crowdwork is a new class of work arrangement that involves compensated work organized through online labor platforms. Crowdwork platforms that focus on complex projects and require skillful, creative workers rely on winner-takes-all competition among multiple crowdworkers, where the likelihood of winning and getting paid is relatively small. Given that skillful, creative workers are in high demand, it begs the question why they would take the risk involved in crowdwork in lieu of the certainty that comes with traditional work arrangements. Subsequently, in this short paper, we explore what motivates such professionals to seek work in crowdwork platforms. We conducted an exploratory qualitative study based on interviews with crowdworkers on the Topcoder platform. Our preliminary findings suggest that while highly-skilled, creative crowdworkers may exhibit risk-seeking behavior in the context of employment, they are motivated to endure the assumed risk by a sense of psychological safety, a sense of autonomy as well as self-growth opportunities, which are critical to attracting and retaining professional workers. This intriguing finding suggests that gig economy platforms may offer not only ephemeral jobs, but also an appealing work environment that can nurture professional workers and cultivate sustainable communities of practice.

Keywords: crowdwork, creative work, risk, motivation, psychological safety, Topcoder

Introduction

Crowdwork involves various types of compensated work that are organized through an online labor platform, which selects, organizes, evaluates and pays crowdworkers (Kittur et al., 2013). Workers' participation in crowdwork platforms is vital, as the platforms' success depends on the workers' availability and engagement in bidding on job tenders (Hossain, 2012). The motivations of workers to take part in this competitive market are a key driver for a successful crowdwork platform and need close investigation (Hossain, 2012). Broadly speaking, there are crowdwork platforms for routine work and platforms for creative work (Margaryan, 2016). Routine work platforms, such as Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT), focus on micro-tasks that are usually repetitive, can be accomplished in seconds or minutes, and do not require a high level of skill (e.g., filling surveys) (De Stefano, 2016). Although payment for these tasks is minimal,

compensation for work done is almost guaranteed (with sporadic exceptions of wage theft and unfair rejection of work) (Deng et al., 2016; Kittur et al., 2013). In contrast, creative work platforms, such as Upwork, 99 designs, and Topcoder, focus on professional and creative work, which generally require higher skills and facilitate bigger and more complex projects that take longer to perform (Margaryan, 2016). Such projects usually rely on competition among members of a crowd of independent professionals, such as developers and designers (Margaryan, 2016). Thus, the likelihood of winning a competition and getting paid for creative crowdwork is relatively small. For example, statistics from Topcoder (see topcoder.com) show that the "highest percentage of wins" is about 23% for experts and 12% for novices. Given that skillful, creative workers are in high demand, it begs the question – why would they take the risk involved in crowdwork platforms?

Crowdworkers and other gig workers are often presented as barely scraping together a living and suffering from poor conditions stemming from non-standard employment (De Stefano, 2016; Deng et al., 2016). However, our study suggests that when it comes to highly skilled professional workers, there is more to the story and that the drive to take part in crowdwork goes far beyond short-term economic incentives. Specifically, we set out to explore what motivates highly-skilled professionals to seek work in crowdwork platforms. We conducted an exploratory qualitative study to understand such workers' motivation to take the risk of not being paid and keep working via creative crowdwork platforms. The world's largest competitive software development portal, TopCoder, served as our research context.

Surprisingly, we found that most of the expert workers in our study preferred working through (for) Topcoder in lieu of taking full-time employment. Furthermore, it was evident that trust in the platform and learning opportunity were the most important factors that lead workers to prefer working through Topcoder. These findings contribute to prior research on crowdwork and worker motivations (Brabham, 2010; Popiel, 2017). The findings highlight that the motivations of highly-skilled, creative workers go beyond personal intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Ryan and Deci, 2000) and also include work environment "psychological safety" (Edmondson, 1999), which surprisingly can be provided by a crowdwork platform despite the lack of formal employment contracts or benefits.

Theoretical Background

There are quite a few studies on workers' motivation in different crowdsourcing domains (e.g., Brabham, 2008; Brabham, 2010; Kaufmann, et al., 2011). However, there are very few studies on highly-skilled professional workers' motivations¹ (Brabham, 2010; Popiel, 2017), especially with a focus on workers, such as software engineers, who have many work opportunities outside crowdwork platforms. This study seeks to explore the motivations of the latter.

Accordingly, we build on the literature on worker's motivations in crowdwork platforms operating in the context of highly skilled work, such as self-employment, skill improvement, financial compensation, etc. (Brabham, 2010; Popiel, 2017; Zheng et al., 2011). Notwithstanding the centrality of motivation theories, we acknowledge that one's selection between crowdwork platforms, traditional employment, and some combination thereof can also be informed by decision-making theory (Bazerman and Moore, 2013). Economic theory and the consequent rational choice theory predict that people would generally prefer the option that generates the highest expected utility (Fishburn, 1970). Accordingly, in our case, the utility of crowdwork employment would be discounted to factor in the risk of not being paid due to competition.

Furthermore, prospect theory predicts a framing effect (Tversky and Kahneman, 1981), which states that while facing a gain opportunity, most people display risk-averse behavior; while facing a potential loss, most display risk-seeking behavior. Subsequently, the implication of the framing effect with regard to a choice between traditional work and crowdwork opportunities is expected to be a further discount of the crowdwork utility, given that most people display risk-averse behavior when facing income gain. However, regardless of the predicted unattractiveness of crowdwork platforms due to their inherent risk, there are

¹ Highly-skilled workers have the ability to complete complex projects on professional online platforms such as oDesk or Topcoder or work for long periods on R&D projects on open innovation platforms such as Innocentive. Meanwhile, anyone can accomplish micro-tasks on routine platforms such as Amazon's Mechanical Turk (Kittur et al., 2013).

platforms that are thriving and showing continuous growth (e.g., Topcoder²). In other words, we can observe risk-seeking behavior among the highly skilled workers on crowdwork platforms. Perhaps the fact that work is framed as a (risky) competition and not as work for hire is one way to reconcile this discrepancy and explain the observed effect. This begs the question: are highly skilled crowdworkers, thus, merely gamblers?

What Motivates Creative, Highly Skilled Professionals?

According to Pink (2011), professionals are essentially motivated to work by three key drivers: (1) autonomy, i.e., the desire to self-direct and control one's work; (2) mastery, i.e., the urge to improve one's skills and domain knowledge through continuous learning; and (3) purpose, i.e., the yearning to work in the service of something larger and more enduring than oneself. We believe that Pink's theory can explain in part what motivates highly-skilled crowdworkers. As highlighted earlier, many freelance platforms such as Topcoder are based on self-selection and merit: work is distributed as an open call and workers can choose any job they like, with the reward belonging to the best submission. This governance model of work not only entices individuals who seek autonomy and self-direction (Chatterjee et al., 2015), it also provides direct incentives for mastery and excellence.

Furthermore, it is well-established that work motivation is largely based on intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation is expressed in doing an activity "for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence" (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 3). Intrinsically motivated people perform for the fun or challenge involved, the pleasure of the activity itself, in lieu of material rewards, recognition, external prods or pressures (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Based on this definition, we can group Pink's three motivators into the intrinsic category. Conversely, extrinsic motivation is expressed in doing an activity "to attain some separable outcome" (Ryan and Deci, 2000, p. 2). Therefore, extrinsic motivation refers to performing an activity for its instrumental value, such as for the financial, reputational or other concrete rewards. Most studies on crowdworker motivation are grounded on data collected in routine platforms such as AMT and iStockphoto (Brabham, 2008; Kaufmann, et al., 2011; Moussawi and Koufaris, 2013). Immediate and delayed payoffs (e.g., financial compensation) were found as key extrinsic motivators on such platforms, while task autonomy and skill variety were shown to be key intrinsic motivators (Kaufmann et al., 2011; Moussawi and Koufaris, 2013).

While studies on highly skilled crowdworkers are scant, it has been shown that financial compensation and diversity in work (e.g., skill, variety) are important motivators of skilled crowdworkers (Popiel, 2017; Zheng et al., 2011). Research also shows that creative workers are intrinsically motivated by autonomy, mastery and purpose (Pink, 2011), as well as extrinsically motivated by reputation (past success leads to new interesting jobs). We summarize the primary intrinsic and extrinsic motivators identified in prior studies on highly skilled workers in Table 1. The table lists the key motivations that are most frequently discussed in the literature. Instead of providing an exhaustive list of all the different motivators considered in the literature, we provide top-level groupings of similar motivating factors. For example, the literature discusses 'community factor' in different terms, such as networking, social relationships and communication.

Intrinsic motivations						
Pink's drivers	Key motivation factors	Definition	Example crowdwork studies on non- routine platforms (based on Taskcn, Threadless and Upwork)			
Auto- nomy	Self- employment	The degree to which a job gives freedom to workers in scheduling the work and	High job autonomy provides a stronger feeling of responsibility and works as an intrinsic motivator (Zheng et al., 2011).			

² According to Mike Morris' Topcoder CEO, the platform had 1.2 million software developer freelancers in December 2017 and it grows through viral word of mouth by a rate of 50,000 developers a quarter (Talley, 2017).

		choosing how to do it (Zheng et al., 2011).			
Mastery Skill improvement		The degree of opportunity to develop creative skills (Brabham, 2010).	Getting feedback on their work from peers helps creative workers improve their design skills; self-improvement works as an intrins motivator (Brabham, 2010).		
	Diversity in work (task & skill variety)	The degree to which a job requires workers to apply a varied range of skills and do various activities in the process (Zheng et al., 2011).	If a job involves different activities and procedures, it will be more interesting for the workers. Thus, variety is considered as an intrinsic motivator (Zheng et al., 2011).		
Purpose	Community	The degree of networking with friends and other creative workers via the platform (Brabham, 2010).	"The chatty pulse" of the community entices many workers to join a crowdwork platform (Brabham, 2010, p.14); community fosters a feeling of belonging, working as an intrinsic motivator.		
Extrinsic motivations					
Financial compensation		The level of potential earnings possible from online freelancing (Popiel, 2017).	Potential wage is one of the most important extrinsic factors motivating highly skilled crowdworkers (Popiel, 2017).		
Ability to work remotely		The degree to which a job allows choice in the location of work (Popiel, 2017).	Working from home makes online freelancing attractive (Popiel, 2017) as it allows balancing work and non-work commitments (instrumental value).		
Better job opportunities		The degree to which a job is likely to create further job opportunities on and off the platform (Brabham, 2010).	Past success in design contests can lead to further opportunities and success (Brabhan 2010), functioning as an extrinsic motivator		

Table 1. Key motivations of highly skilled workers to crowdwork

Research Method

Overall, the study applies the research design practices of an exploratory qualitative case study to examine workers on a non-routine crowdwork platform (Topcoder), based on semi-structured interviews that were followed by open-ended and theory-driven thematic analysis (Bowen, 2008).

Data Collection and Analysis

We conducted the study on the Topcoder platform. The single-platform design allowed us to focus on crowdwork, and control for a platform-related variance. We chose Topcoder because it is well-known for having a large pool of highly skilled workers that attracts established companies (e.g., IBM, Google and NASA) as job providers. Topcoder also serves the market for different types of skilled jobs, including development, design and data science. Moreover, Topcoder is known for involving crowdworkers in different managerial roles within the platform, including "copilots" and "reviewers" – expert workers promoted inside Topcoder. The reviewer role involves evaluating and determining the winners of a challenge, as well as providing opportunities for skill growth via feedback for participating members in each challenge. The copilot role involves running the challenges (including liaising with the client and writing the job specifications) and answering the participants' questions during the challenge. The success of Topcoder makes it an interesting context in which to investigate highly-skilled crowdworkers' reasons for working through Topcoder, despite the small likelihood of financial gain.

As part of this preliminary study, we carried out interviews via Skype with 12 crowdworkers (all male) in February 2018. Each interview lasted approximately 40 to 50 minutes. We focused on two groups of workers: experts (including reviewers and copilots) and novices (see Table 2), located across the world (e.g.,

Indonesia, India, Chile, Greece). We did not know beforehand whether the people interviewed only work through Topcoder or have another job on the side. Moreover, the anonymity of crowdworkers on Topcoder posed some limitations in collecting the data. We searched for prospective interviewees through LinkedIn where many workers indicate their participation on Topcoder on their profiles. This naturally introduces some self-selection bias to our study, as we only have access to workers who explicitly communicate their involvement with Topcoder. As we continue this research, we will employ snowball sampling and utilize recommendations from previous interviewees to get access to workers with diverging attitudes and of different genders. In addition to the 12 interviews with workers, we also conducted two interviews with employees of Topcoder: a community architect (this person works with clients on their projects to understand their needs, breaks down the project into separate challenges, and then integrates the code that was created in separate challenges into a whole solution), and a senior community evangelist (this person interacts with the community members personally and helps them with any issues that they are facing).

The interviews were open-ended and semi-structured. For workers, we included questions such as "What do you find motivates you to use Topcoder?", "Do you consider crowdworking as your full-time job? Why/why not?", "Why did you choose Topcoder instead of another platform?", and "What would you suggest to improve the platform in a way that would be more convenient for you as a worker?" The interviews with employees included questions about how the platform incentivizes the workers.

Interviewee Experience	Number of interviews	Education	Role	Area of expertise	Topcoder is a part-time job	Topcoder is a full- time job
Novice crowdworker	7	Undergraduate student and higher	Competitor	Development, design and data science, programming	6	1
Expert crowdworker	5	Undergraduate degree and higher	Competitor Copilot Reviewer	Development, design, data science	1	4
Platform workers	2	Undergraduate degree	Architect Evangelist	Community development	0	2

Table 2. Overview of Interviewees

We followed the procedures outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) to conduct qualitative data analysis. We coded and analyzed the data iteratively, firstly by means of open coding, then by grouping and revising the codes based on both theory and data. We coded for the motivational factors suggested both by the literature review (Table 1) and the exploration of the data (e.g., self-employment, skill improvement and learning, relationships, communication, collaboration, job opportunities, trust in the platform, financial compensation, reputation, flexible time, remote work). New factors not mentioned in the previous literature, such as trust in the platform, emerged from the data. We grouped the codes based on the categories of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and according to Pink's three drivers of motivation (autonomy, mastery and purpose) (see Table 3) to identify the most fruitful way of categorizing our findings. We also counted the prevalence (%) of the derived motivation factors (see Table 3).

Findings

Table 3 provides an overview of the identified intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of highly-skilled workers. The three motivation drivers of Pink — autonomy, mastery and purpose — were used to provide the basis for classifying many of the intrinsically motivating factors. However, we found one key intrinsic motivation factor that was not spotted in earlier studies on crowdwork: trust in the platform. We draw on the concept of psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) to make sense of this discovery.

Intrinsic motivation					
Category	Key motivation factors	Count (%) in data			
Autonomy	Self-employment (flexibility)	58%			
	Self-control over time	42%			
Mastery	Matching skills and tasks	42%			
	Learning	75%			
	Diversity in work	50%			
Purpose	Communication, collaboration and friendships	67%			
Psychological safety	Trust in the platform	92%			
Extrinsic motivation					
High financial compe	58%				
Reputation	33%				

Table 3. Motivations of highly skilled workers to do crowdwork on Topcoder

Intrinsic Motivations: Autonomy, Mastery, Purpose and Psychological Safety

Autonomy refers to a worker "being able to control the task (i.e., what they do), time (when the work is done), team (who they do the work with), and technique (how the work is done)" (Griesdorn, 2012). According to Pink, individuals have an inherent yearning to be autonomous and self-directed. Being "self-employed" is one of the key reasons for people to opt for crowdworking (Zheng et al., 2011). Our data confirm this observation. A substantial number of workers on Topcoder choose the platform because of their desire for self-direction: "*I quit my office about 5 years ago. I was a software developer in the company and used to work on Topcoder during the night. So, I found Topcoder better and decided to work for that. Actually, I am my own boss"* [interview P1]. The ability to have control over scheduling is an important element in this, as two expert workers reveal: they like being their own boss and having control over their time. They appreciate being able to work during the day or in the night or during vacations [P2, P5]. Thus, autonomy over time and responsibilities provided by self-employment is one of the reasons for workers to opt for the risky choice and work on the Topcoder platform.

Mastery "begins with 'flow' – optimal experiences when the challenges we face are exquisitely matched to our abilities" (Pink, 2011, p. 222). Thus, when the workers' skills and tasks are well-matched, they are more likely to feel the urge to get better at what they do and be intrinsically motivated. In Topcoder, the system is designed to offer copilots the challenges matched to their skills: "*We have a profile page and they can see our skills there, and there is a system that matches the required skills with our skills automatically and assigns projects to the copilots, and we can say yes or no based on our favorite"* [P3].

Furthermore, mastery is also a mindset that focuses on the "learning process, competing against oneself, striving to do better, or learning more" (Griesdorn, 2012, p. 5). Feedback is thus essential for mastery because timely and task-specific constructive evaluation is essential for learning and improvement. On Topcoder, getting feedback and learning from each other is an important reason for many workers to participate in contests, even though the chance of winning is low. For instance, one of the novices mentioned: "Topcoder is very famous in the universities and we like to participate in its competitions. During the contests we can learn through getting feedback from reviewers, so it is very helpful for us to participate. Topcoder community brings many of the world's best talent together in one place to compete, collaborate and learn from one another" [P6]. Similarly, three experts mentioned that one of the appealing aspects of Topcoder is that the final competitors to keep improving [P1, P2, P5]. In addition, Topcoder has an onboarding program to teach interested workers who want to get promoted to either the Reviewer or Copilot role.

Mastery at one's job also includes diversity in work, which on Topcoder, refers to different challenges requiring different technological and skill sets. That may serve as another reason to encourage workers to

participate (Zheng et al., 2011). As one expert argued: "*I solve challenges that I've never met before. I learn a lot about the new technologies and it helps me a lot as a teacher*" [P4].

In sum, mastery at one's job provided by the ability to work on projects matched with one's skills, useful feedback from peers and reviewers, as well as different types of challenges with different technology requirements motivate highly skilled crowdworkers to work on the Topcoder platform — both in lieu of more traditional employment as well as a side job.

Purpose refers to "doing something that matters to you, doing it well, and doing it in the cause of something larger than yourself" (Griesdorn, 2012, p.5) On Topcoder, we find that many workers are motivated to participate because they can collaborate with other workers to win a challenge, get promoted within the platform and conduct informative communication with other workers via formal and informal channels inside and outside the platform. This community is part of what makes working on Topcoder meaningful and significant to them. As one of the novices emphasized: "*I feel Topcoder is an extension of my family right now, because I talk to members and Topcoder managers every day. It is like a real office for me. I spend the whole day talking about the project, challenge, and it is just for fun. Actually, the best friends that I already have are from Topcoder. They are from India, Romania, France, Italy... around the world. When I got started, I really liked this communication, because I felt I'm part of something. The communication of Topcoder, especially with the new members, is really good" [P7]. Thus, purpose provided by the close communication, collaboration and friendships among highly skilled crowdworkers can be another reason for workers to keep participating in competitions on Topcoder.*

One of the most important motivating factors that we found was trust in the platform. Trust is an expression of confidence among individuals in a relationship of some kind, e.g., confidence that one's vulnerability will not be exploited by others, and that nobody will be hurt or put at risk by the others. Trust evokes behavioral expectations among individuals who trust one another, which allow them to manage the risk and uncertainty associated with their interaction (Jones and George, 1998). Therefore, we suggest that trust in the platform is part of **psychological safety** (Edmondson, 1999), which refers to the "individuals' perceptions of the consequences of taking interpersonal risks in their work environment" (Kark and Carmeli, 2009, p. 787). When individuals feel psychologically safe, they are able to show and employ themselves without fear of negative consequences to self-image, status, or career (Kahn, 1990, p. 708). We find that on Topcoder, workers trust the platform to make sure they receive feedback (so they can learn even if they do not win) as well as guarantee payment for work performed. For example, one of the expert workers mentioned: "It doesn't matter if the project will be successful or not, we always receive our payment on time. I'm a member of Topcoder from 2009 and I have never seen anything wrong with the payment. As a copilot and as a competitor I always get paid on time" [P2]. Moreover, another worker mentioned that: "I don't like other platforms' systems. Because you should submit your work and if a job provider likes it, they pay you; if not, he rejects you without any reason. But in Topcoder, everything is clear, and we get feedback from the copilot and client" [P8]. Interestingly, feelings of safety were also related to being able to keep one's work protected, as one expert mentioned: "In other platforms our submission is obvious to other workers. So, they can copy it. I don't participate in these kinds of platforms anymore" [P3]. Also, another expert mentioned: "I like Topcoder as it shares the winner submission only with the finalists, not all the members who had participated in the competition. As a freelancer, I had a chance to work on other platforms, but they don't have a process like Topcoder" [P4].

In sum, we find that psychological safety or the feeling of being comfortable to take a risk without harmful consequences, provided by timely and guaranteed payment, feedback on rejections and the ability to keep one's work secret, is another important reason for workers to keep working on Topcoder.

Extrinsic Motivations

A number of extrinsic motivations also drove crowdworkers' participation on Topcoder — most notably, financial compensation, but also reputation, which can lead to potential job opportunities in the future. The primary external motivation was high financial compensation. For example, seven of the workers mentioned that payment for jobs is higher on Topcoder than on other platforms [P1...P5, P9, P12], and according to one of the experts: *"If you are an active member, you can earn a lot of money here in comparison with other platforms"* [P1]. Furthermore, if the workers can receive a promotion inside the platform, they can request more money for running a specific project, as described by one expert: "*We can*

request extra payment and get more based on the quality of our work or if we complete the project earlier than expected or with less budget than expected" [P5].

Reputation is another important external motivator, which helps crowdworkers to get promotions within and outside the platform and earn more money. For example, one of the experts mentioned: "*We do a lot of cool projects for big companies like IBM, which is great for my reputation*" [P2].

Expected Contributions

This study aims to advance the current knowledge on non-routine crowdwork platforms by investigating further the motivation factors that lead highly-skilled, creative workers to choose the seemingly risky life of a crowdworker. Moreover, shedding light on these motivation factors can help platforms like Topcoder to better attract and, most importantly, retain workers to ensure the long-term success of the platform in the market. The outcomes of our initial data analysis suggest, surprisingly, that on Topcoder it is the trust in the platform which is the top motivation factor (92%). This trust in the platform is driven largely by transparency (e.g., rejected submissions receive feedback, payment rules are clear and always followed, rules of submission visibility are clear). To our knowledge, this motivating factor has not been explicitly considered in previous research on crowdworker motivation – either in routine or creative work (Brabham, 2010: Deng and Joshi, 2016: Popiel, 2017). Yet, based on research conducted outside of the crowdwork phenomenon, this factor, alongside other potential elements of psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999), may be particularly important in creative, professional crowdwork. For example, Kark and Carmeli (2009) found that a workers' sense of psychological safety can result in higher involvement in creative work. As we continue this research, we will further unpack the category of psychological safety as a motivating factor for highly-skilled creative crowdworkers, examining whether and what other factors besides trust in the platform may be part of it. Furthermore, we will expand the research to explore further how the platform (through policies and design) incentivize highly-skilled workers, including how it may foster psychological safety even without traditional employment contracts and benefits (e.g., healthcare).

The second most important factor motivating creative workers is learning (75%). This finding reconfirms prior research insights (Brabham, 2010; Zheng et al., 2011). For highly skilled workers, challenging work and self-improvement through feedback is essential to stay intrinsically motivated. Our initial findings suggest that Topcoder has many policies and design elements to support learning and professional self-development (e.g., a well-organized feedback system relying on reviewers, events for teaching their workers how to improve and achieve promotion, and a system to match projects to worker skills). The findings indicate that novices are motivated to join Topcoder largely because it presents an opportunity to learn; as they become experts and build up a reputation, they are motivated to stay due to promotion opportunities inside Topcoder. As we continue this research, we intend to investigate further how varied factors may motivate novice and expert workers differently. Moreover, it will be important to extend the generalizability of this study by examining whether psychological safety and the other motivating factors also apply to creative, highly-skilled workers other than software developers.

From a practical perspective, this study suggests that successful crowdwork platforms for creative work should be designed and operated with utmost care regarding the psychological safety and self-growth opportunities provided to workers, which seem to be critical to attracting and retaining highly skilled workers. Transparency and learning opportunities, combined with the thrill of professional competition, seem to mitigate the risk of not being paid.

Conclusion

In this paper, still research in progress, we explored what motivates highly-skilled, creative workers to engage in the risky employment constellation of a crowdworker. By providing an initial analysis of crowdworkers' perceptions, this exploratory study takes a small yet significant step forward. Our preliminary findings suggest that while highly-skilled, creative crowdworkers may display unexpected risk-seeking behavior (Tversky and Kahneman, 1981), they are motivated to risk their income in a safe work environment that offers fair competition, grants high rewards for excellence, and guarantees professional development. This intriguingly suggests that gig economy platforms may find ways to offer safety and security through other means than standard employment contracts and employee benefits.

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