

# The Effects of Cultural and Social Norms, Government Programs, and Digital Technologies Support on Filipino Online Freelancers' Job and Career Satisfaction

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## Abstract

This study aims to help Filipino online freelancers increase their job and career satisfaction by understanding the effects of government programs, digital technologies support, and cultural and social norms on their work. Unlike corporate employees, online freelancers do not get the same benefits such as insurance, training, and social recognition. Not everyone working in the gig economy can also pay their own SSS, PAGIBIG, and PhilHealth, which are essential. Online freelancers are responsible for covering their own local security system and national health insurance through voluntary contributions since they work for themselves (Zoleta, 2022). Moreover, the academe is not yet very aware of the opportunities in the online freelancing industry. Educational institutions often encourage students to pursue a traditional full-time job (Mulachy, 2019). The respondents also believe that the academic sectors do not prioritize helping Filipinos learn the skills to thrive in the gig economy. Further, the study used descriptive and causal research designs to investigate job and career satisfaction factors. Results indicated that government programs did not significantly affect job and career satisfaction. Hence, the recommended intervention programs involve integrating online freelancing subjects into current college curriculums for aspiring Filipino online freelancers and providing the necessary safety nets for existing Filipino online freelancers.

Keywords: Online Freelancers, Gig Economy, Job and Career Satisfaction, Government Programs, Cultural and Social Norms, Digital Technologies Support

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The labor market continues to evolve. Digitalization is now disrupting the traditional working environment that people were all used to. Freelancing is rising fast because of the increasing number of digital nomads and solopreneurs dominating the gig economy.

The Gig Economy, also known as the freelancing industry, is the new business model that has emerged due to digital transformation (Gig Economic Data Hub, 2020). Sokas (2020) said that gig work often includes projects covered in a specific time frame, wherein self-employed specialists perform outsourced tasks via freelancing platforms. These specialists performing offshored tasks are online freelancers (Brinkley, 2016).

Online freelancers are also referred to as part-time employees due to their work. Moreover, these self-employed specialists are entrepreneurs who deal with offshored tasks and are recognized as employees on freelancing platforms (Abubakar & Shneikat, 2017). A study from McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) in 2016 described online freelancers as workers who are self-sufficient with their jobs. They acquire pay on a project basis, have short-term contracts, and have a specific time frame for working with clients.

According to Nawaz, Hafeez, Mansoor, and Ilmudeen (2020), many traditional workers work part-time freelancing to obtain more monetary benefits. Hilario (2015) concurs that most people start as

part-time online freelancers as they devote their after-office evenings and most of their weekends to freelance work.

Online freelancers can vary into copywriters, graphic designers, web developers, SEO specialists, Facebook ads managers, social media managers, analytics experts, and the like. Any job is considered an online freelancing job as long as it is done at home and connects through the internet (Hilario, 2015). Right now, online freelancers are growing in numbers. Payoneer's data (2019) show that the Philippines ranked sixth place worldwide, which is the quickest market to grow in the freelancing industry. Moreover, the country gained 35 percent in online freelance revenue.

The Coronavirus disease caught every Filipino off guard. This unfortunate event disrupted the majority of their livelihoods, with some left unemployed, and other businesses filing for bankruptcy (Tudy, 2021). However, despite what happened in the country's labor force, freelancing became an excellent option for Filipinos to earn a living and thrive during this crisis.

Baitenizov, Dubina, Campbell, Carayannis, and Azatbek (2019) perceive the rise of the freelancing industry to be a catalyst for getting more freedom and flexibility in people's careers. Western online freelancers are also growing in numbers. However, the actual condition of solopreneurs in the area is still arguable (Kuhn & Maleki, 2017). Given the current government data, the actual number of gig workers is not easy to measure. Nevertheless, these researchers did confirm that the online freelancer population is proliferating.

Working online piques the interest of young people to have a source of income (Nielsen et al., 2019). However, being fulfilled and secure in this line of work is different from traditional employment.

Bhattarai (2020) defined job and career satisfaction as a worker's feelings that can shift frequently depending on several factors such as financial, technological, social, government, physical and psychological. Furthermore, online freelancers' work-life balance is discussed more in studies (Kelliher, Richardson, & Boiarintseva, 2019). Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021) added that chaos in work-life balance could cause challenges to online freelancers' job and career satisfaction.

An online freelancer's job and career satisfaction is usually seen from macroeconomic factors (Hudek, Tominc & Sirec, 2021). Furthermore, Musah and Ghazali's study (2018) showed a significant relationship between career satisfaction and communication. However, an online freelancer's job and career satisfaction still have more to them.

Online freelancers do not have adequate support systems similar to corporate employees. The researcher saw three problems to work on the study. First is the lack of support groups for Filipino online freelancers. They are prone to be isolated because of their setup. They need a support group to keep them accountable, motivated, and informed. Second is the lack of insurance. Unlike employed people, many Filipino online freelancers do not have health and life insurance. Not everyone also gets to pay their own SSS, PAG-IBIG, and PhilHealth, which are very important. The third pertains to the lack of skills of Filipino online freelancers. Many Filipino online freelancers fall into the trap of becoming broad generalists. As a result, they do not become too valuable in the clients' eyes and become a commodity instead. Many online freelancers do not know their value and are not charging high enough to their clients.

An online freelancer's job and career satisfaction is always seen through uncontrollable factors (Hudek, Tominc, & Sirec, 2021). The researcher's study aims to help Filipino online freelancers understand the effect of cultural and social norms, government programs, and digitalization on their job and career satisfaction. The researcher used the framework of Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021) to determine the effects of cultural and social norms, government programs, and digital technologies support on Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction.

Although freelancing is a thriving industry in this country, the data on thriving Filipino online freelancers who are not in traditional employment is still limited and has more future research opportunities (Tudy, 2021).

Finally, the study will create a relevant effect for existing and aspiring Filipino online freelancers by making the quality of their lives as solopreneurs better than what it is today. This research will also increase

the available data about Filipino online freelancers because the researcher will learn closely what affects their job and career satisfaction.

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

There are two Sustainable Development Goals addressed in the study. First is GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. The United Nations (n.d.) states that this goal focuses on adding value to labor-intensive sectors. Second is GOAL 4: Quality Education. This promotes life-changing learning opportunities for the next generation (Joint SDG Fund, n.d.).

The study dealt with determining the effects of cultural and social norms, government programs, and digital technologies support on Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction. The research sought to answer the following statements:

1. What is the perception of Filipino online freelancers on the following for freelancing:
  - a. government programs
  - b. digital technologies support
  - c. cultural and social norms
  - d. job and career satisfaction
2. What is the effect of government programs on Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction?
3. What is the effect of cultural and social norms on Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction?
4. What is the effect of digital technologies support on Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction?
5. What is the effect of digital technologies support on government programs?
6. What is the effect of digital technologies support on cultural and social norms?
7. What is the effect of government programs on cultural and social norms?

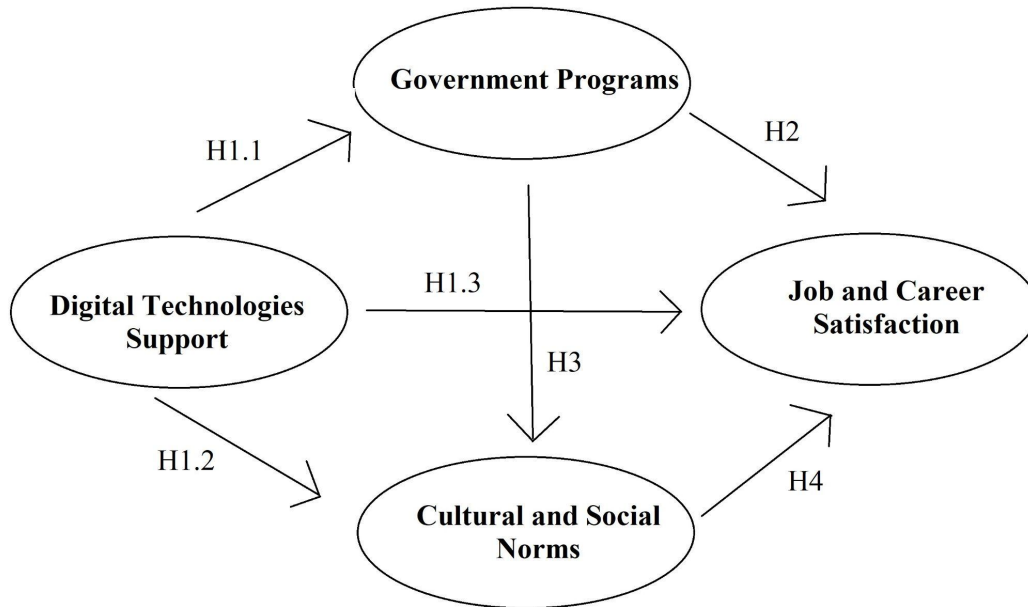
### 1.2 Conceptual Framework

The primary basis of the research was the framework from the study of Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021) entitled "The Impact of Social and Cultural Norms, Government Programs and Digitalization as Entrepreneurial Environment Factors on Job and Career Satisfaction of Freelancers."

In their study, the independent variables are government programs, digital technologies support, and cultural and social norms. In contrast, the dependent variable is job and career satisfaction.

The authors first determined the impact of digital technology support on government programs, cultural and social norms, and digital technologies support. Then, they examined the impact between government programs and job and career satisfaction. Afterward, they looked into the impact between government programs and cultural and social norms. Finally, they sought the impact between cultural and social norms and job and career satisfaction.

In the results of their study, the digital technologies support has a positive and highly significant effect on government programs, cultural and social norms, and job and career satisfaction. Meanwhile, government programs have a negative and not significant impact on job and career satisfaction, but they have a significant positive influence on cultural and social norms. Lastly, cultural and social norms positively and significantly affect job and career satisfaction.



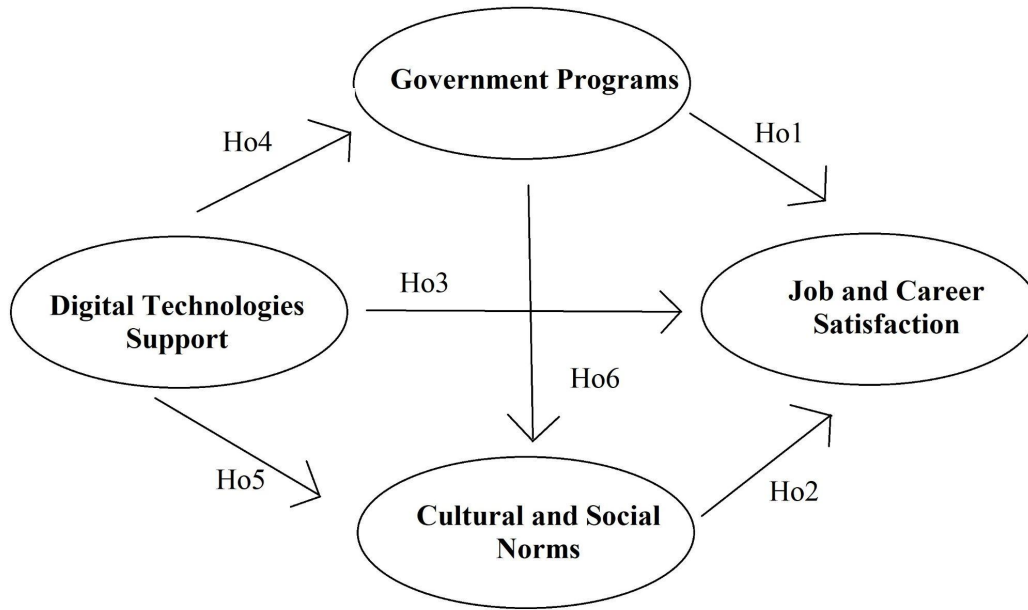
**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework**

Source: Impact of Social and Cultural Norms, Government Programs and Digitalization as Entrepreneurial Environment Factors on Job and Career Satisfaction of Freelancers (Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec, 2021)

### 1.3 Operational Framework

The variables from the conceptual framework remained the same, but the order of the hypotheses was re-arranged. In the operational framework, the independent variables are government programs, digital technologies support, and cultural and social norms. Meanwhile, the dependent variable is job and career satisfaction.

The researcher first examined the effects of government programs, cultural and social norms, and digital technologies support on job and career satisfaction. Then, the study looked into the relationship between digital technologies support for government programs and cultural and social norms. Finally, the researcher determined the effect of government programs on cultural and social norms.



**Figure 2. Operational Framework**

#### 1.4 Hypotheses

The researcher tested the following hypotheses:

- Ho1: Government programs does not affect job and career satisfaction
- Ho2: Cultural and social norms does not affect job and career satisfaction
- Ho3: Digital technologies support does not affect job and career satisfaction
- Ho4: Digital technologies support does not affect government programs
- Ho5: Digital technologies support does not affect cultural and social norms
- Ho6: Government programs does not affect cultural and social norms

#### 1.5 Objectives of the Study

In general, the study aims to determine the effect of government programs, digital technologies support, and cultural and social norms on Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction.

This study intends to give Filipino online freelancers a better understanding of the effects of cultural and social norms, government programs, and digital technologies support on their job and career satisfaction. In addition, intervention programs will be created to help improve the quality of life of Filipino online freelancers.

Specifically, this study intends to achieve the following:

1. Determine Filipino online freelancers' perception of government programs for freelancing.
2. Determine Filipino online freelancers' perception of digital technologies support for freelancing.
3. Determine Filipino online freelancers' perception of cultural and social norms for freelancing.
4. Determine Filipino online freelancers' perception of job and career satisfaction for freelancing.

5. Determine the effect of government programs on Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction.
6. Determine the effect of cultural and social norms on Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction.
7. Determine the effect of digital technologies support on Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction.
8. Determine the effect of digital technologies support on government programs.
9. Determine the effect of digital technologies support on cultural and social norms.
10. Determine the effect of government programs on cultural and social norms.

### *1.6 Significance of the Study*

The study aims to create a meaningful effect on Filipino online freelancers by improving the overall quality of their lives as solopreneurs.

Two SDGs are being addressed. First is GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth. The United Nations (n.d.) states that this goal focuses on adding value to labor-intensive sectors. Second is GOAL 4: Quality Education. This promotes life-changing learning opportunities for the next generation (Joint SDG Fund, n.d.). Furthermore, the research will benefit the following people and sectors:

First, it can help Filipino online freelancers get better benefits in their careers. This will also give them a better understanding of the effects of cultural and social norms, government programs, and digital technologies support on their job and career satisfaction.

Second, the research can help aspiring Filipino online freelancers. This will give the youth a firmer grasp of how the freelancing industry works in the Philippines.

Third, the study will deepen the researcher's understanding of Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction. Likewise, this would help improve and hone the researcher's skills in doing research.

Last, it can help future researchers can use this study as a reference to have a better understanding of how the freelancing industry works in the Philippines.

### *1.6 Scope and Limitations*

The study's respondents were 154 Filipino online freelancers across the country. These are people ages 18 years old and above. According to Llamas (2018), gig workers on Freelancer.com often start opening accounts at this age. The respondents' professions may vary from copywriters, graphic designers, web developers, ads specialists, SEO specialists, general virtual assistants, and the like.

The researcher acquired inputs from former colleagues, online freelancers from paid membership programs, online freelancing platforms, and connections enrolled in exclusive mentorship programs for online freelancers.

### *1.7 Related Literature*

#### Online Freelancers

The Gig Economy is one of the new business models that emerged because of digital transformation (Gig Economic Data Hub, 2020). According to Horowitz (2015), around one-in-three workers in America have livelihoods that are not close to the traditional office jobs. Furthermore, Sokas (2020) stated that gig work often includes projects covered in a specific time frame, wherein self-employed specialists perform outsourced tasks via freelancing platforms. These specialists performing offshored tasks are online freelancers (Brinkley, 2016).

The freelancing industry provides a marketplace that generates digital services on demand for clients across the globe (Abubakar & Shneikat, 2017). Online freelancers are also referred to as part-time employees due to their work. These self-employed specialists are entrepreneurs who deal with offshored tasks and are recognized as employees on freelancing platforms (Abubakar & Shneikat, 2017).

Online freelancers vary into several fields: copywriters, graphic designers, web developers, SEO specialists, Facebook ads managers, social media managers, analytics experts, and the like. Any job is considered an online freelancing job. As long as it is done at home and connects through the internet (Hilario, 2015).

Freelancing platforms connect both clients and gig workers. They usually earn commissions from both (financesonline.com, n.d.). Thus, these mediums are essential for clients and gig workers. Upwork (2017) shows that 80% of big enterprises consider outsourcing online freelancers for their operations.

According to Akhmetshin (2018), an online freelancer's profession is always associated with a hopeless unemployed person, but this misconception will end. The demand for online gig workers continues to grow in this country. Payoneer's data shows that the Philippines ranked sixth place worldwide, the quickest market to grow in the freelancing industry, showcasing a massive increase of 35 percent in freelance earnings (Payoneer, 2019).

Although freelancing is a thriving industry in this country, the data on thriving Filipino online freelancers who are not in traditional employment is still limited and has more future research opportunities (Tudy, 2021).

### Job and Career Satisfaction

Job and career satisfaction have always been present in many studies; because an employee's performance is always dependent on their satisfaction level (Hee, Shi, Kowang, Fei, & Ping, 2020).

An employee's job and career satisfaction help empower workers to get better output in their work (Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015). According to Dziuba, Ingaldi, and Zhuravskaya (2020), a satisfied employee devotes himself to his job, performs tasks better, and cares for his colleagues. Furthermore, studies prove that career satisfaction is a positive emotion an employee receives when they enjoy their work (Umaru & Ombugus, 2017).

According to Jenkins, in 2017, corporate departments such as HR have always focused on their employee's job and career satisfaction. However, job and career satisfaction for online freelancers is not always prioritized, even though the gig economy is growing fast right now.

People who work in a virtual setting are more satisfied with their work given the flexibility. However, it can be a challenge to communicate with their leaders (Mansfield, 2018). Concerning this, Lockwood's study in 2015 showed some possible challenges of engaging the leader's communication technology in the digital setup. He mentions that online workers are prone to misunderstandings because of cultural diversity.

On the other hand, daily commuting is another challenging activity in a face-to-face setup. Bhattarai (2020) concurs that freelancing could save commuting time and use the time they save for their loved ones. Furthermore, in Janssen's study (2017), he saw a positive correlation between commuting time and job and career satisfaction.

Another significant factor influencing an online freelancer's job and career satisfaction is the opportunity of attaining higher income. According to Marabut (2020), freelancing gives Filipinos the opportunity to earn USD. He also mentioned that the standard salary in the US is equivalent to a premium pay in the Philippines. Furthermore, Napone (2021) concurs that Filipino online freelancers have more opportunities to earn six figures in less time compared to climbing the corporate ladder.

### Government Programs

The outbreak of the Coronavirus disease forced government shutdowns of firms resulting in inevitable disruptions in working conditions (Kalenkoski & Pabilonia, 2020). The need for employees to work from home is also caused by the pandemic today (Barrero, Bloom, & Davis, 2020).

In relation, Pulignano, Domecka, Muszynski, Vermeerbergen, and Riemann (2021) said that national government policy measures aim to alleviate the pandemic's impact by doing something about the livelihood of workers. However, their efforts are still lacking in helping online freelancers in the long run.



Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021) concluded that government programs do not directly influence online freelancers' job and career satisfaction. In relation, the Philippine government does offer some basic freelancing training programs from the DICT. However, some graduates voiced out that the DICT only produces a group of low-wage and unskilled students; this can remove the freelancing industry, cultivating a wrong picture of success after training (Soriano, 2020).

Furthermore, online freelancers still need to settle their taxes and avail their insurance. Unfortunately, as of now, the government only put little focus on making programs for online freelancers.

#### Digital technologies support

A new business model was created where people sell their skills to clients across the globe using freelancing platforms (Schor & Fitzmaurice, 2014). Now, digitalization affects working conditions in the workforce. Because of this, traditional employment is no longer the first option for workers; instead, there is a choice to work with more freedom and flexibility. (Hudek, Tominc, & Sirec, 2021).

Furthermore, digital technologies support enabled the rise of a trend called the freelancing industry, wherein two parties benefit from digital transactions (Toth, Heinanen, & Blomqvist, 2020).

The gig economy business model provides a virtual platform to enable online freelancers to sell their skills to their clients through technology. The outsourcing model has three main stakeholders. First are online freelancers who provide digital services. Second are clients who receive the online freelancer's services. Third are freelancing platforms that provide a virtual market for online gig workers and clients. Many online gig workers get their clients through these platforms.

Freelancing platforms serve as an intermediary for businesses and freelance workers worldwide; these intermediaries often earn a certain commission from both the client and online freelancer (financesonline.com, n.d.). Some of the most commonly used freelancing platforms are Upwork, Hubstaff, Onlinejobs.ph, Fiverr, and Freelancer.com. Online freelancers and clients also gain value from the freelancing platforms they use. This is called a freelancer value proposition.

Employer Value Proposition came from Customer Value Proposition, a famous discipline in marketing management. Freelancer Value Proposition is a "Sum of values which freelancers gain from freelancing platforms in return for services" (Rabbi, Ahad, Kousar, & Ali, 2015).

The freelancer value proposition can aid platforms in cultivating an understanding of workers. Proper talent management promotes a competitive edge in a professional environment (Rabbi, Ahad, Kousar, & Ali, 2015).

#### Cultural and Social Norms

Some online freelancers are obliged to provide social value for themselves. Furthermore, their freedom from work gives them the liberty to socialize and engage in communities (Barker, Sissons, Broughton, Lazell, & Agnus, 2021).

In relation, Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021) said that cultural and social norms could also support or oppose activities that have the potential to increase income (Hudek, Tominc, & Sirec, 2021). However, the possible difficulty of using technology in communication can easily cause misunderstandings caused by cultural diversity and the lack of non-verbal signals that are only seen in a physical setting (Lockwood, 2015).

Barker, Sissons, Broughton, Lazell, and Agnus' study (2021) prove how vital economic, cultural, and social value layers are to online freelancers' motivation. Similarly, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor in 2020 also sees cultural and social norms as one factor that affects an online freelancer's job and career satisfaction. Moreover, Brenned and Kreiss (2016) also mentioned digitization projects intending to enable significant business improvements representing a system that includes technology in different aspects of social life.

According to Akhmetshin (2018), an online freelancer's profession is always associated with a hopeless unemployed person, but this misconception will end. The gig economy offers online freelancers many opportunities, such as flexible work hours, working in areas of interest, and access to international job



postings. However, it still poses many challenges to online freelancers in the form of less payment, lack of social benefits, and job security (Roy & Shrivastava 2020).

### *1.8 Related Studies*

In some research, government programs play a significant role in job and career satisfaction, but they are not adequately addressed. For example, online freelancer survey respondents from Pulignano, Domecka, Muszynski, Vermeerbergen, and Riemann's study (2021) voiced their frustration with national measures falling short and not fully addressing the difficulties they were encountering in their work. Furthermore, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2019) states that the legal environment is critical for starting new businesses using government programs.

Likewise, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor in 2020 also treats cultural and social norms as one area that affects an online freelancer's job and career satisfaction. Barker, Sissons, Broughton, Lazell, and Agnus' study (2021) stated that gig workers articulate a robust value orientation towards culture and creativity.

In Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec's study (2021), cultural and social norms and digitalization positively affect online freelancers' job and career satisfaction. Roy & Shrivastava (2020) concurred in their study that the role of digital platforms is vital for showing the freelancing culture to developing countries. The gig economy offers many gig workers opportunities, such as a flexible work environment, exciting areas, and global job postings. It threatens online freelancers with lower job security.

Meanwhile, new online freelancers entering the industry may not be equipped with proper professional training for their chosen specialization. However, they still hope to be seen as valuable assets, not as commodities, with the proper training (Soriano, 2021). The DICT has organized freelancing training in the country since 2018, which is reported to have produced over 2,000 graduates. Unfortunately, some former students voiced out that the DICT only produces a group of low-wage and unskilled graduates; this can obliterate the freelancing industry, cultivating a wrong picture of accomplishment after training (Soriano, 2020).

The DICT still thinks about providing ways to upskill online freelancers with more quality training. However, the organization is more worried about its budget since a higher level of training costs a lot more. (Delfin, 2020).

### *1.9 Synthesis*

Filipinos are now finding a lucrative career path different from traditional employment. During this pandemic, freelancing is becoming a great option, especially for the unemployed, corporate people looking for a career shift, and people looking for more freedom in their work. Freelancing is the act of selling an online freelancer's skills to clients on different online and freelancing platforms across the globe.

An online freelancer's work may vary depending on their expertise, such as copywriting, content writing, graphic designing, video editing, animation web development, Facebook ads, Google Ad Words, Search Engine Optimization, Digital Support, General Virtual Assistance, and the like. In addition, they can choose their work to be working with full-time clients, part-time clients, project-based gigs, or a combination of the three.

They also have the liberty to choose their rate, working schedule, and clients. The tasks given to online freelancers from their clients are usually outsourced projects. In some cases, clients will let online freelancers choose their shifting hours and their payday.

There are benefits associated with freelancing. First, Filipinos can access more premium pay than the Philippines' standard salary. Thus, they have the opportunity to earn US dollars in the comfort of their home. Further, online freelancers can choose when, where, and whom to work with. They can fire clients anytime they want. Last, there is no need to endure long commute hours and heavy traffic. There is also less risk of getting the virus since they will not be required to shift in offices.

There are perks in the freelancing industry, but not everyone is fulfilled with their work. Job and career satisfaction is crucial for online freelancers to stay committed and motivated as they work with their clients. Several areas influence an online freelancer's job and career satisfaction:

First is government programs. The government in the Philippines does offer introductory freelancing courses from the DICT. However, some graduates expressed concern that their program will only saturate the freelancing market with workers with limited skills. This may degrade the value of Filipino online freelancers in the long run.

Moreover, online freelancers are not getting the benefits traditional employees are getting. They have to settle their taxes and avail their insurance. As of now, the government only put little focus on making programs for online freelancers.

The second is digital technologies support. The technology available right now is one of the biggest reasons the labor market changes. There are no more barriers to time and space for people to work online and be productive.

In most cases, online freelancers find their clients through freelancing platforms like Upwork, Hubstaff, Onlinejobs.ph, Freelancer.com, and Fiverr. However, other online freelancers use organic methods to get leads, such as cold email outreach, Facebook groups, and LinkedIn. Others establish their brand while going deep in a niche they want to specialize in.

Furthermore, clients use project management tools like Trello, Asana, Basecamp, Teamwork, and ClickUp to organize tasks they will outsource to online freelancers. Finally, they make their systems and share them with online freelancers to finish an output.

The third is cultural and social norms. Freelancers and clients should overcome their cultural differences. For example, new online freelancers find it hard to adapt to the slang clients use. The potential challenge of engaging communication technology in freelancing is a misunderstanding because of the lack of non-verbal cues and cultural differences.

An online freelancer's profession is always associated with a hopeless unemployed person. Nevertheless, online freelancers often do not get the same status and corporate recognition people get when being promoted. Further, one great way to elevate an online freelancer's visibility is through personal branding.

Overall, the researcher will choose only one of the three factors to create an intervention program that can potentially help Filipino online freelancers.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the materials and methods, research design, sampling design, ethical considerations, and expected output.

### 2.1 Materials and Methods

The nature of the study was quantitative. This type of research is used to confirm assumptions and facts through numbers and statistics (Streefkerk, 2019). The researcher used a modified survey from the study of Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec in 2021. The survey was prepared using Google Forms and was distributed online. A statistician aided the researcher to analyze the outcome of the research. It contains questions about the variables of job and career satisfaction, government programs, digital technologies support, and cultural and social norms.

Moreover, the study utilized descriptive and causal research designs. The researcher prepared a Google Form survey questionnaire modified from the study of Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021).

A test (Chronbach's Alpha) was implemented to measure the reliability of variables. The value was 7.64. According to Horodnic, Ursachi, and Zait (2015), the alpha value around 0.6-0.7 is acceptable. While

results within 0.8 above are at a very good level. Furthermore, this ensures that the data is sound and replicable (Haradhan, 2017). By that, the result of 7.64 is acceptable.

## 2.2 Research Design

The study used both descriptive and causal research designs to examine the independent variables' effects on Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction.

The descriptive type was employed to determine respondents' perceptions. Then, the causal research design determined the cause and effect relationship among variables. Further, linear regression was used to measure the relationships among variables.

Moreover, the study used non-probability sampling, specifically the purposive sampling technique. The samples chosen were based on a specific criterion: Filipino online freelancers.

GPower was utilized to know the sample size for the study. GPower is a software for determining the sample size. This provided the means to measure the power of statistical tests such as t-tests, F-tests,  $\chi^2$  tests, z tests, and the like. The sample size was 154 respondents.

## 2.3 Sampling Design

The study's respondents were Filipino online freelancers across the country. These are people ages 18 years old and above. According to Llamas (2018), gig workers on Freelancer.com usually start at this age (Llamas, 2018). Their professions may vary from copywriters, graphic designers, web developers, ads specialists, SEO specialists, general virtual assistants, and the like.

The researcher approached former colleagues from previous work, online freelancers from paid membership programs, gig workers from online freelancing platforms, and connections enrolled in exclusive mentorship programs for online freelancers.

The distribution of the survey was conducted using Google Forms since thousands of Filipino online freelancers are active in the digital space. In addition, the survey questionnaire was sent using different platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Onlinejobs.ph, and Gmail.

The research employed a modified survey questionnaire from the study of Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021) entitled "The Impact of Social and Cultural Norms, Government Programs and Digitalization as Entrepreneurial Environment Factors on Job and Career Satisfaction of Freelancers."

The questionnaire consists of four parts: job and career satisfaction, government programs, digital technologies support, and cultural and social norms. The survey specifications and response category is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Survey Specifications and Response Category**

Variable	No. of Questions	Question No.	Response Category
<b>Job and Career Satisfaction</b>	6	1-6	1 – Strongly Disagree
<b>Digital technologies support</b>	5	7-11	2 – Disagree
<b>Government Programs</b>	5	12-16	3 – Agree
<b>Cultural and Social Norms</b>	5	18-21	4 – Strongly Agree

To gather the data needed, the researcher checked the completeness of the survey questionnaires. Then the survey questionnaires were distributed using different platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Onlinejobs.ph, and Gmail. Finally, the data was gathered and tabulated for statistical analysis.

The following statistical tools were utilized to analyze the data:

1. The weighted mean determined the respondents' perception of government programs, digital technologies support, and cultural and social norms on job and career satisfaction. Table 2 shows the mean result interpretation.

**Table 2. Mean Result Interpretation**

Variable	Response Category	Level	Mean Ranges
4	Strongly Agree	Very High	3.50 - 4.00
3	Agree	High	2.50 - 3.49
2	Disagree	Low	1.50 - 2.49
1	Strongly Disagree	Very Low	Below 1.49

2. Simple linear regression determined the effect of government programs, digital technologies support, and cultural and social norms towards job and career satisfaction since each independent variable only affects one dependent variable.

#### 2.4 Ethical Consideration

The researcher approached former colleagues from previous work, online freelancers from paid membership programs, and connections enrolled in exclusive mentorship programs for online freelancers. A disclaimer in the questionnaire assured that all the respondents' answers will be kept private and will only be used for this research.

#### 2.5 Expected Output

The output of the study is two intervention programs for both existing and aspiring Filipino online freelancers. The researcher found that the academic sector does not prioritize helping Filipinos learn the necessary skills to thrive in the freelancing industry. Hence, it was recommended to encourage the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to integrate educating college students with online freelancing by including it in the curriculum.

On the other hand, the study results also found that there are little to no government programs made to support online freelancers. Furthermore, Filipino online freelancers do not get a similar safety net as corporate employees. Hence, the researcher also recommended encouraging the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to create government programs that involve online training and workshops. Its goal is to help existing Filipino online freelancers apply for their health insurance and life insurance. Moreover, they will be educated on paying for their own SSS, PAG-IBIG, and PhilHealth.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter shows the results of data analysis and discusses the implication of the findings.

#### 3.1 Perception of Filipino Online Freelancers on Government Programs for Freelancing

Through the composite mean of 1.73, results show that the government has low involvement in the freelancing industry. This means that the Philippine government is not yet seeing the potential in the gig economy.

The item with the highest mean rating pertains to the presence of government programs made to support freelance activities, which is at 1.78 and is still considered low, indicating that Filipino online freelancers feel that there is little to no amount of government programs supporting them. When in fact, the government is expected to pay attention to the opportunity in the gig economy and improve the quality of life

of online freelancers, and not just traditional employees (Riaz, Syed, Bhatti, Noureen, Rahman, & Abbas, 2021).

Meanwhile, two questions resulted in the lowest means with both resulting in 1.70. Respondents believe that there are little to no government programs for Filipino online freelancers. Furthermore, they also feel that the government is not yet doing much to provide any help that can be relevant to their profession. In some countries, government programs are too distant from providing benefits to workers in the gig economy (Ro, 2022). Furthermore, many policymakers do not even recognize freelancing as a basic form of work (Natabaalo, n.d.).

Table 3. Respondents' Perception of Government Programs

	Mean	Interpretation
The government provides science parks, business incubators, and other relevant public spaces that promote effective support for freelancing activities.	1.76	Low provision of public spaces from the government
There are a good amount of government programs in my country supporting online freelancers.	1.70	Low government programs
Government workers in my country are competent in supporting online freelancers.	1.73	Low availability of competent government workers
Almost any online freelancer who needs help from the government can find what they need.	1.70	Low help available from the government
There are government programs that are made to support freelancing activities.	1.78	Low availability of government programs
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>1.73</b>	<b>Low</b>

In another study, Anis and Hamid (2017) studied the perception of employees in Egypt about corporate governance and found that most respondents lack proper knowledge about the government's issues and their importance to their profession. In relation, Pew Research findings in 2015 found that public distrust, difficulties in retaining motivated public employees, and public policy problems are also factors why the government cannot provide adequate services to employees.

Similarly, Muhammad, Tahir, and Zaman (2021) studied the perceptions of online freelancers in Pakistan towards the government and found that policies are not usually tailored to gig workers. In general, when the government thinks about improving employment, they would instead focus their influence on full-time workers rather than provide online freelancers benefits (Romeo, 2021). Moreover, managing complex technology platforms related to the freelancing industry is not a skill that people would expect the government to have (Henderson, 2020).

Further, Lourenco, Rathke, Santana, and Branco (2018) expressed distrust in the government within developed and emerging countries. The presence of corruption in such countries is evident because areas fail to provide government services relevant to their people (Taffoli & Krauter, 2018).

### 3.2 Perception of Filipino Online Freelancers on Digital Technologies Support for Freelancing

Of the five items contributing to the respondents' perception of digital technologies support, the statement about the availability of technologies for online freelancers had the highest mean (at 3.78). Today's technology allows online freelancers to have more flexibility and productivity in their work (Parkbot, 2020). Likewise, gig workers stay on top of their work using the best tools available such as Google Drive, Trello, Canva, Adobe, Klaviyo, and the like (Cailas, 2019).

The question that garnered the lowest mean, with 1.80, discusses about the academic sector not seeing the opportunity in the freelancing industry. Today's graduates are joining a workforce where the gig

economy dominates 40% of the US workforce (Mulcahy, 2019). However, Mulcahy (2016) said that the academic sector has been slow to adapt despite the industry's rapid growth. Their degrees are still designed to prepare students to be full-time employees in traditional jobs.

The respondents believe that the Philippines is not yet considered a digitalized nation. The results have a composite mean of 2.40.

Table 4. Respondents' Perception of Digital Technologies Support

	Mean	Interpretation
There are many technologies available that online freelancers can use in a convenient manner.	3.78	Very high availability of technologies
In the Philippines, people are aware of the opportunities in the freelancing industry.	2.44	Low awareness of freelancing opportunities
In the Philippines, we have programs that support public working spaces for online freelancers.	2.11	Low availability of programs for public working spaces
In the Philippines, the academic sector prioritizes helping Filipinos learn digital/freelancing skills.	1.81	Low priority from the academic sector
Government support is properly implemented in the Philippines, making this country to be considered a digitalized nation.	1.84	Low implementation of government support
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.40</b>	<b>Low</b>

Digitalization has enabled many industries to operate conveniently (Schneider, 2018). It has also allowed millions of people to offer their services whenever and wherever they want (Hudek, Tominc & Sirec, 2021). According to the findings of Bueechl, Harting, and Schroder (2021), the technologies people are using today can be beneficial in providing a flexible working setup.

According to Deloitte's findings in 2015, digital technologies have brought opportunities for livelihood in knowledge-based industries such as business process outsourcing. People should also be aware that technology is also an opportunity for workers to improve the quality of their job (Bessen, 2014).

Meanwhile, Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021) found that the traditional employment model in Slovenia is transforming because of the digital technologies available. A Gallup research from 2020 shows that 29% of workers in the United States are moving to more flexible working arrangements because of the technologies available.

### 3.3 Perception of Filipino Online Freelancers on Cultural and Social Norms for Freelancing

According to the respondents, the Filipino culture is fond of freedom, flexibility, and personal initiative. The results garnered a mean of 2.81 and are considered as highest among the five factors affecting the respondents' perception of cultural and social norms. Charlton (2021) said that one of the main motives for



working in the freelancing industry is having more flexible working hours and earning additional income. Furthermore, these solopreneurs can choose whom to work with since they can hire or fire their clients (Cuadra, 2021).

Meanwhile, with a mean of 2.31, respondents believe that Filipinos do not encourage risk-taking through freelancing and the Filipino culture prefers having traditional employment more. The traditional employment that Filipinos are accustomed to has a consistent monthly income, insurance, retirement plans, profit-sharing, and bonuses, unavailable to online freelancers (Saeed, 2020). Workers in the gig economy are also prone to isolation and loneliness, unlike corporate employees who get their fair share of face-to-face interactions with colleagues (CFI, n.d.).

The results exhibit that the Filipino culture recognizes the opportunities in the freelancing industry, with a composite mean of 2.56. This indicates that numerous Filipinos know the gig economy's potential.

Table 5. Respondents' Perception of Cultural and Social Norms

	Mean	Interpretation
Filipino culture recognizes and supports online freelancers' success.	2.38	Low recognition of online freelancers' success
Filipino culture is fond of freedom, flexibility, and personal initiative.	2.81	High fondness for freedom, flexibility, and initiative
Filipino culture encourages risk-taking through freelancing rather than traditional employment.	2.31	Low encouragement of risk-taking
Filipino culture encourages creativity and innovativeness.	2.82	High encouragement of creativity and innovativeness
The Filipino culture is more fond of careers in a remote setup (rather than the traditional employment) that involves managing his or her own life.	2.44	Low fondness of careers in remote setup
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.55</b>	<b>High</b>

Cultural and social norms are expected to differ across societies and careers (Ketelaar et al., 2016). According to the study by Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021), cultural and social norms are important factors for online freelancers in Slovenia concerning their work. In relation, DESI (2020) stated that people can socialize online and be familiar with each other's culture using today's technology.

Entrepreneurs in Pakistan perceive that social norms influence their work and they believe that social acceptance can help their businesses rise above others (Ketelaar et al., 2016). Moreover, Verdugo (2021) agrees that social norms affect a country's economic development. In addition, entrepreneurship is always shaped by a country's culture (Lee & Peterson, 2020).

### 3.4 Perception of Filipino Online Freelancers on Job and Career Satisfaction for Freelancing

The highest mean rating is 3.40, which pertains to the statement of considering oneself to be highly content with the support their clients give while working as an online freelancer. According to Alabulththim and Green (2018), job satisfaction mostly depends on the type of work the online freelancer is looking for. Some are searching for quick project-based tasks, while others are more comfortable looking for long-term projects (Kallenberg & Dunn, 2016). Moreover, online freelancers can manage their environment since they have the freedom to work wherever they want, whenever they want, and with whomever they want (Cuadra, 2021).

While the item with the lowest mean rating, with 3.27, which is considered still as high, tells that the respondents are content with the accomplishments they attained in online freelancing. According to Personal Finance (2021), one advantage of working in the gig economy is earning US dollars without leaving the country. Furthermore, online freelancers can also achieve work-life balance easier because they are primarily in control of their time (Hudek, Tominc & Sirec, 2021).

The respondents have a high perception of their job and career satisfaction, with a composite mean of 3.33. Results showed that many Filipino online freelancers are content with their work in the gig economy.

Table 6. Respondents' Perception of Job and Career Satisfaction

	Mean	Interpretation
I am content with the accomplishments I attained in my freelancing job.	3.27	High contentment with freelancing accomplishments
I feel content with my freelancing job.	3.32	High contentment with freelancing job
I am content with the opportunities in my freelancing job.	3.34	High contentment with freelancing opportunities
I am content with the advancement I attained in meeting my goals for my overall daily life while working as an online freelancer..	3.32	High contentment with overall daily life
I am content about the advancement I attained in meeting my goals for developing my skills while working as an online freelancer.	3.31	High contentment with developing skills
I am content with the support my clients give me while working as an online freelancer.	3.40	High contentment of client support
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>High</b>

Job and career satisfaction are how online freelancers perceive and think about their accomplishments in their work (Nelson, Monsoon & Adibifar, 2019). Some factors affecting online freelancers' satisfaction are flexibility, payment, career advancement, and client relationship (Cailas, 2019). According to Statista, in 2021, 77% of workers in the gig economy will be satisfied with their jobs.

In the study of Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021), Slovenian freelancers' job and career satisfaction is very reliant on the external environment. In relation to Nawaz, Zhang, Rafiq, and Ilmudeen's research in 2019, the freedom of freelancers to take charge of their time, have access to competitive pay, have no formal dress code, absence of vehicular traffic, and have work-life balance are the biggest advantages of online freelancing.

Likewise, the findings of Ali, Hossain, and Udin (2018) indicate that employees who are prone to depression, anxiety, fatigue, and sleep deprivation affect their job satisfaction negatively. Furthermore, employers tend to realize that people desire the right amount of time to dedicate to their personal and professional lives and if addressed correctly, the motivation of employees will increase (Xinxin, 2021).

### *3.5 Effect of Government Programs on Filipino Online Freelancers' Job and Career Satisfaction*

It is revealed that government programs positively affect Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction. This means that the better the government programs are, the higher the Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction. Further such effect is not significant ( $\beta = .044$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Overall, the regression results indicate that government programs explained .30 % of the variance of Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction ( $R^2 = .003$ ,  $F = 4.29$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

Results showed that the Philippine government does not provide enough benefits to Filipino online freelancers. According to Cailas (2019), gig workers should take the initiative to invest in their health and their family's safety net by providing their own health and life insurance. This would ensure that emergencies would not take away a huge portion of their household's savings. Moreover, not everyone gets to pay their own SSS, PAGIBIG, and PhilHealth, which are also important. Zoleta (2022) said that online freelancers should be encouraged to cover their local security system and national health insurance through voluntary contributions because they work for themselves. This would allow them to avail personal and housing loans, sickness benefits, pensions, and the like (Baroro, 2019).

Moreover, the results indicate that the academic sector does not see the potential in the online freelancing industry. The respondents also believe that the youth is not yet aware of the opportunity in the gig economy. According to Mulachy (2019), educational institutions still encourage students to pursue a traditional full-time job while ignoring the possibility of doing gig work. The best preparation for students is helping them build skill sets that would allow them to succeed in independent work. The youth should be encouraged to gain personal freedom as they thrive, not only be part of the workforce (Mulcahy, 2016).

Currently, the government lacks efforts to help existing and aspiring online freelancers in the long run (Pulignano, Domecka, Muszynski, Vermeerbergen, & Riemann, 2021).

Table 7. Effect of Government Programs on Job and Career Satisfaction

Coefficients						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig	Interpretation
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	3.250	.127		25.656	.000	
Government Programs	.044	.067	.053	.655	.513	Not significant
a. Dependent Variable: online freelancers' job and career satisfaction						
R <sup>2</sup> = .003			F = .429		p-value = .513	

The results are similar to the findings of Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021), which concluded that government programs do not significantly affect Slovenian online freelancers' job and career satisfaction and are not statistically significant. Furthermore, the government is expected to make more efforts to create a more stable form of employment to give workers better security in their jobs (Walwei, 2016). In addition, survey responses from Pulignano, Domecka, Muszynski, Vermeerbergen, and Riemann's research (2021) voiced their concern with the government not fully addressing the difficulties with the work of online freelancers in their area.

Meanwhile, in Anis and Hamid's (2017) study, they found that employees in Egypt lack proper knowledge about the government's issues and their importance to their jobs. When in fact, the government is expected to take charge of making workers knowledgeable of their privileges (Audretsch, Gosling, Stuetzer, Potter & Rentfrow, 2017).

The study by Candelario, Tindowen, Mendezabal, and Quilang (2020) also stated that Northern Filipino government employees' level of commitment does not vary on their tenure, salary, and location. It may be too much to expect from the government to be able to precisely manage complex technological platforms related to freelancing (Henderson, 2020). Moreover, many policymakers do not recognize freelancing as a real form of occupation (Natabaalo, n.d.).

### 3.6 Effect of Cultural and Social Norms on Filipino Online Freelancers' Job and Career Satisfaction

Results showed that cultural and social norms positively affect Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction. This means that the better the cultural and social norms are, the higher the Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction. Further, such effect is significant ( $\beta = .145$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Overall, the regression results indicate that cultural and social norms explained 3.60% of the variance in Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction ( $R^2 = .036$ ,  $F = 5.651$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

It was revealed that Filipinos prefer a career where they can work wherever they want, whenever they want, and with whomever they want. Furthermore, respondents perceive the Filipino culture is fond of freedom, flexibility, and personal initiative. Many Filipino online freelancers who were formerly working in the corporate world realized they wanted to free themselves from office politics, long hours of commute, and being underpaid (Napone, 2021). Hilario (2015) concurs that Filipinos would rather work in an environment where they can earn dollars from home, eliminate daily stress, and embrace their family more. At the end of the day, Filipino online freelancers would choose a positive working culture and environment where they are the ones who are in control.

Table 8. Effect of Cultural and Social Norms on Job and Career Satisfaction

Coefficients						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig	Interpretation
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	2.957	.163		18.165	.000	
Cultural and Social Norms	.145	.061	.189	2.377	.019	Significant
a. Dependent Variable: online freelancers' job and career satisfaction						
R2 =.036			F = 5.651		p-value =.019	

The results are similar to the findings of Rachman (2017) which stated that the working culture of bank employees in Indonesia had a significant effect on their job satisfaction. Moreover, an employee's performance is thoroughly enhanced or diminished by a culture in a certain environment (Opoku, Hongqin & Aram, 2022). Hence, different cultures in the workplace create different performance levels for every individual (Janićijević, Nikcevic & Vasic, 2018).

Likewise, studies from Rismawati et al. (2015) corroborate the results that implicate that work culture positively affected employee job satisfaction. Moreover, Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2020) also sees culture as one factor affecting freelancers' satisfaction with their job. If one knows how the culture works in a vicinity, then they can perform much better in their jobs (Rajeshwari, 2020).

In addition, Hudek Tominc, and Sirec (2021) found that cultural and social norms significantly affect Slovenian online freelancers' job and career satisfaction. Unlike traditional employees, online freelancers have the freedom to create their own working environment and create their own culture (DESI, 2020).

### 3.7 Effect of Digital Technologies Support on Filipino Online Freelancers' Job and Career Satisfaction

The results display that digital technologies support positively affects Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction. This means that the better the digital technologies support is, the higher the Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction. Further such effect is significant ( $\beta = .042$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Overall, the regression results indicated that digital technologies support explained 2.7% of the variance of Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction ( $R^2 = .027$ ,  $F = 4.19$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

It was revealed that today's technologies are helping Filipino online freelancers with their client work. Online freelancers can find clients using freelancing platforms such as Upwork, Onlinejobs.ph, Fiver, and the like (financesonline.com, n.d.). Moreover, it is easier for gig workers to stay on top with the tools necessary for their projects. For instance, copywriters use Grammarly and Hemingway to improve their writing (Marabut, 2020). Some copywriters have access to AI (artificial intelligence) tools that help them write faster than they can imagine, such as Jasper AI (Whitham, 2022). These tools would allow gig workers to finish work with less effort while providing the quality clients are looking for.

Table 9. Effect of Digital Technologies Support on Job and Career Satisfaction

Coefficients						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig	Interpretation
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	2.909	.210		13.85	.000	
Digital Technologies Support	.175	.085	.164	2.047	.042	Significant
a. Dependent Variable: online freelancers' job and career satisfaction						
R2 = .027			F = 4.19		p-value = .042	

The findings of Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021) also showed that digital technologies support positively and significantly impact Slovenian online freelancers' job and career satisfaction. Today's technologies allow many workers to do their tasks remotely online with more efficiency (Warner & Wager, 2019). Moreover, online freelancers stay on top of their work using the best tools for their professions, such as Google Suite, Adobe, Canva, Hootsuite, and the like (Cailas, 2019).

Similarly, the study by Bolli and Pusteria (2021) agrees that digital technologies increase job satisfaction since it helps create flexible working hours, increase productivity, and make the job more enjoyable. Because of the evolution of technology, traditional employment is no longer the first option for workers; instead, they can choose to pursue a career in online freelancing, giving them more freedom and flexibility (Hudek, Tominc, & Sirec, 2021).

The results also agree with Sukranh's (2020) findings, which said that digitalization positively affects employee satisfaction and productivity. Hence, digital technologies are becoming catalysts to change the economy for the better (OECD, n.d.).

### 3.8 Effect of Digital Technologies Support on Government Programs

The findings exhibit that digital technologies support positively affects government programs. This means that the better the digital technologies support is, the higher the government programs. Further such effect is significant ( $\beta = .952$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Overall, the regression results indicated that cultural and social norms explained 55.2% of the variance of government programs ( $R^2 = .552$ ,  $F = 186.913$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

It was revealed that the digital technologies available today can help the government be more productive, the same with how it is helping online freelancers deliver more value to clients. According to Intalio (2020), government organizations have acknowledged the presence of technology to enhance their services to citizens. Moreover, the government sector should take the initiative to maximize these tools to properly address the needs of underserved groups such as online freelancers.

Table 10. Effect of Digital Technologies Support on Government Programs

Coefficients						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig	Interpretation
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	-.548	.172		-3.196	.002	
Digital Technologies Support	.952	.070	.743	13.672	.000	Significant
a. Dependent Variable: government programs						
R2 = .552			F = 186.913		p-value = .000	

In the study of Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021), digital technologies support has a positive and highly significant effect on government programs in Slovenia. Furthermore, the government has the responsibility to promote secure and flexible forms of employment to better support the livelihood of workers (Walwei, 2016).

Similarly, the results of Abubakar and Shrestha's study (2020) results showed that digitalization is relevant to public sectors in Ljungby, Sweden. They found that the area's government has become more adaptable to innovation. Digitalization was able to change the labor landscape in the government sector by improving the quality of work of public employees (Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec, 2021).

On the other hand, the findings from Kuldosheva (2021) contradict the results of the preceding study mentioned. They found that government programs in Uzbekistan are still not pushing through with helping online freelancers despite the presence of enhanced digital technologies in their vicinity. According to EGDC (2018), one possible reason is that there is no system available for monitoring the performance of government officials. Furthermore, managing complex technological platforms related to the gig economy is not a skill people would expect the government to possess immediately (Henderson, 2020).

### 3.9 Effect of Digital Technologies Support on Cultural and Social Norms

The results reveal that government programs positively affect Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction. This means that the better the digital technologies support is, the higher the cultural and social norms. Further such effect is significant ( $\beta = .643$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Overall, the regression results indicated that digital technology support explained 21.3% of the variance of cultural and social norms ( $R^2 = .213$ ,  $F = 41.153$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

It was shown that digital technologies allow online freelancers to connect with clients across the globe and their location does not matter at all. Gig workers can easily find clients using freelancing platforms such as Upwork, Hubstaff, Freelancer.com, and the like (financesonline.com, n.d.). Moreover, these platforms also allow online freelancers to properly brand themselves in the niche that they want to pursue.



Table 11. Effect of Digital Technologies Support on Cultural and Social Norms

Coefficients						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig	Interpretation
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	1.010	.247		4.091	.000	
Digital Technologies Support	.643	.100	.462	6.415	.000	Significant
a. Dependent Variable: cultural and social norms						
R2 = .213			F = 41.153		p-value = .000	

The study by Levin and Malmok (2021) found that the accessibility of communication platforms and digital technologies are parts of the cultural change people experience in this age. Such technologies reform, reshape, and disrupt human behaviors (Yampolskiy, 2020). DESI (2020) also said that nowadays, people can socialize online and become familiar with each other's culture.

Meanwhile, the findings of Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021) stated that digital technologies support positively and significantly affect cultural and social norms. According to the Digital Economy and Society Index of Slovenia (2020), the current technologies in the vicinity are frequently used to connect with potential clients and personal branding. Furthermore, the personal identity projected online plays a big role in exhibiting an individual in the digital space, affecting one's social standing (Vignoles, 2017).

### 3.10 Effect of Government Programs on Cultural and Social Norms

Results showed that government programs positively affect cultural and social norms. This means that the better the government programs are, the higher the cultural and social norms. Further such effect is significant ( $\beta = .529$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Overall, the regression results indicated that government programs explained 23.7% of the variance of social and cultural norms ( $R^2 = .237$ ,  $F = 47.165$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

It was revealed that the government is expected to serve citizens well while being earnest about it. The Philippine government has the capability of helping both existing and aspiring online freelancers. The government does offer some basic freelancing training programs from the DICT, but it is not enough. However, some graduates voiced out that the DICT only produces a group of low-wage and unskilled students (Soriano, 2020). This means that the government is capable of helping online freelancers; however, they are not putting in the work needed to help them properly.

Table 12. Effect of Government Programs on Cultural and Social Norms

Coefficients						
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig	Interpretation
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	1.634	.145		11.279	.000	
Digital Technologies Support	.529	.077	.487	6.868	.000	Significant
a. Dependent Variable: cultural and social norms						
R2 = .237			F = 47.165		p-value = .000	

The findings of Hudek, Tominc, and Sirec (2021) contradict the results of the study. They found that government programs have a negative effect on Slovenian freelancers' cultural and social norms and are not significant. They added that policymakers should support Slovenian freelancers in their livelihood. Moreover, the government has the responsibility to create a more stable type of employment culture for workers (Walwei, 2016).

Likewise, the study of Thorman, Whitmarsh, and Demski in 2019 also concluded that the government should find ways to properly influence the social norms of workers to improve the quality of livelihoods in the UK. Furthermore, the government is expected to implement new business programs and cultures (Bosma & Kelley, 2019).

On the other hand, Chizerma and Pogrebna's (2019) findings agree with the results, which found that government integrity positively impacts social norms. In emerging and developed countries, people do not usually trust their governments (Satnana & Branco, 2018). The presence of corruption in such countries is evident because the government in such areas can still not provide relevant programs for the people living there (Taffoli & Krauter, 2018).

### 3.11 Conclusion

This study was conducted to determine the effects of government programs, cultural and social norms, and digital technologies support on Filipino online freelancers' job and career satisfaction. Furthermore, it also finds the effects of digital technologies on government programs and cultural and social norms. Finally, the research looks for the effect of government programs on cultural and social norms.

It was revealed that government programs have little to no involvement in the freelancing industry. This means that the Philippine government is not yet seeing the potential in the gig economy. In this regard, the first hypothesis, which states that government programs does not affect job and career satisfaction, is rejected. On the other hand, the study found that cultural and social norms and digital technologies support significantly affect job and career satisfaction. Therefore, the researcher failed to reject the second and third hypotheses.

Additionally, the results showed that digital technologies support significantly affects government programs. The study also found that both digital technologies support and government programs significantly affect cultural and social norms. Hence, the researcher also failed to reject the fourth, fifth, and sixth hypotheses.

### 3.12 Recommendation

Considering the study's findings, the researcher recommends the government to develop relevant programs that will benefit both aspiring and existing Filipino online freelancers. Based on the results of the

study, most Filipinos are not yet aware of the opportunities in the freelancing industry. Thus, government programs should be able to increase awareness by supporting online freelancing activities.

Respondents also perceive that the academic sector does not prioritize helping Filipinos learn the necessary skills to thrive in the freelancing industry. Moreover, during this study, the researcher found out that there are younger Filipino online freelancers who are only in senior high school and college but are already earning extra money because of this opportunity. Some of these young online freelancers were able to maximize the opportunity because they invested in online courses and mentorship programs. The researcher believes that if the academic sector can replicate the success of these successful online courses and mentorship programs, more aspiring Filipino online freelancers will be given a better chance of thriving in the gig economy.

For the first recommendation, the researcher encourages the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to integrate educating college students with online freelancing by including it in the curriculum. This will help ignite the interest of aspiring Filipino online freelancers.

For instance, the CHED can integrate a subject that teaches copywriting with existing college courses like Marketing Management and AB English. Likewise, they can also integrate search engine optimization (SEO) into courses like Computer Science and Information Technology. Similarly, the education department can add ESL tutoring to elementary education and secondary education courses.

Furthermore, with permission from the CHED, the academic sector can also consider creating subjects geared towards encouraging students to practice online freelancing, not just diving into theories. There will be two additional subjects. First is client lead generation, wherein students will learn how to look for clients and communicate with them effectively. Second is personal branding, wherein students will learn to properly package themselves as online freelancers, build their portfolio samples, and explore freelancing platforms (such as Upwork and Onlinejobs.ph).

Moreover, this project will also allow college students to practice their niche, test the waters in online freelancing, and earn extra income if they want to work with clients while still in school. Likewise, this will also give working students more options to earn additional cash flow that is more lucrative and flexible than working part-time in fast food chains, call centers, and the like.

For the second recommendation, the researcher encourages the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to create government programs that involve online training and workshops. Its goal is to help existing Filipino online freelancers apply for their health insurance and life insurance. Moreover, they will be educated on paying for their own SSS, PAG-IBIG, and PhilHealth.

Respondents also believe that little to no government programs are made to support online freelancers. Furthermore, Filipino online freelancers do not get the same basic protection benefits as traditional employees. Hence, this study also aims to give online freelancers a safety net resembling corporate employers.

The online training and workshop will be split into three days. The first day will educate Filipino online freelancers on how to avail their health insurance. Representatives from leading HMO companies will take charge of this specific session.

The second day will educate Filipino online freelancers on buying their life insurance. Representatives from leading insurance companies will be speaking to give Filipino online freelancers practical advice on how to avail their life insurance.

Finally, the third day will involve educating Filipino online freelancers on settling their SSS, PAG-IBIG, and PhilHealth. Representatives from these organizations will guide Filipino online freelancers every step along the way.

To conclude, the researcher recommends two government programs for both aspiring and existing Filipino online freelancers. The first program targets aspiring online freelancers, which involves educating college students about online freelancing by integrating new subjects into the current curriculum. Approval from the CHED will be crucial. Finally, the second program involves targeting existing online freelancers,

formally educating them about settling for their health insurance, life insurance, SSS, PAG-IBIG, and PhilHealth. Approval from the DOLE will be crucial. Further details about the two projects.

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