

GIG LIFE PH

Understanding the Realities
and Preferences of Filipino
Gig Workers



GIG LIFE PH: UNDERSTANDING THE REALITIES AND PREFERENCES OF FILIPINO GIG WORKERS

Abstract

The gig economy is rapidly evolving across Southeast Asia. Digital platforms have reshaped the landscape of work and the nature of gig work – offering flexible working conditions and autonomy, while facilitating financial resilience. However, gig workers encounter challenges such as variable earnings, discrepancies in pay, and lack of structured social protection.

Through a survey of 1,500 gig workers in the Philippines, the study explores their motivations, experiences, aspirations, and needs.

A significant aspect of the study is the identification of gig workers' motivations and satisfaction levels. While flexibility and the potential for additional income are strong incentives driving participation in the gig economy, there exists a considerable demand for comprehensive social protection measures and fair compensation standards.



Recognizing these needs, the paper explores possible innovations aimed at ensuring fair and transparent earnings along with robust social protection tailored to gig workers' unique circumstances.

The paper concludes with recommendations for creating a balanced ecosystem where gig workers' flexibility is maintained alongside secure benefits. By fostering a supportive environment, the gig economy can continue to contribute robustly to economic growth and labor market transformation in the Philippines.

FOREWORD



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In recent years, Southeast Asia's gig economy has expanded at remarkable speed, reshaping how work is found, performed, and valued. This study brings that transformation into sharp focus for the Philippines, grounding policy debates in the lived realities of 1,500 gig workers surveyed. Their voices reveal a paradox at the heart of gig work: flexibility, autonomy, and pathways to resilience coexisting with volatile earnings, opaque pay practices, and thin social protection.

By mapping motivations and satisfaction—especially the powerful draw of flexibility and supplemental income—the study clarifies why people join, and what must change for

them to continue to thrive. Crucially, it advances practical innovations for fair, transparent compensation and portable, gig-appropriate social protection.

The study looks into the pathways forward for both policymakers and gig platforms, outlining steps that would foster an enabling environment for gig workers such as investing in data infrastructure and promoting gig worker inclusion. We hope this study would as serves as both a reference and catalyst in further deepening the discourse on the ever evolving and growing gig economy in the Philippines.

THE LANDSCAPE OF GIG WORKERS

Defining Gig Work

The gig economy has experienced significant growth in recent years, driven by the expansion of technology-based businesses and the rise of flexible work arrangements. The pandemic played a pivotal role in accelerating the shift to flexible work. As traditional employment opportunities declined, gig work became a critical and viable alternative for those needing income stability. Workers who previously held full-time positions began taking up gig roles, seeing them as a practical way to make ends meet while maintaining autonomy over their schedules.

The World Bank¹ highlights the significant economic impact of the gig economy, showcasing its potential to transform industries. They estimate that the gig economy could account for up to 12% of the global labor market and holds particular promise in developing countries.

According to the Philippines Statistics Authority, approximately 9.9 million Filipinos are engaged in gig work, representing around 22% of the total employed population of 44 million²

Among these workers, about 1.7 million (17%) are employed through online platforms or mobile applications, primarily in the ride-hailing, food delivery, and courier service sectors. These platform-based roles have become especially prominent in urban areas, where demand for quick and efficient services remains high.

The growth of the gig economy in the Philippines is not solely driven by international companies. Local platforms such as Angkas and Joyride have emerged, joining established international players like Grab, Foodpanda, and Lalamove. These local businesses are not just replicating the services offered by international brands but are also adapting to local needs and preferences. For example, Angkas primarily caters to motorcycle-based ride-hailing, which is particularly suited to navigating the country's congested city streets. Meanwhile, platforms such as Teko, GoodWork, and Zennya provide various services including cleaning, repair, and massage, tailored to local demands.





Gig Work In the Philippines

In traditional employment settings, structured schedules and defined responsibilities often create a predictable, yet rigid work environment. The shift to remote work, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, disrupted these established norms. However, gig workers, who typically work in more flexible and autonomous employment structures, have long enjoyed the freedom to set their own working hours³.

While there is no standard definition of gig workers in the Philippines, several studies describe them as 'contingent' workers or those in 'alternative employment arrangements,' with many engaged in online platforms. However, some roles, such as tutoring, coaching, and freelancing, can secure work independently offline, despite the widespread use of digital platforms.

Woodcock and Graham (2020), in their introduction to gig work, identified two primary types of work: "geographically tethered work" and "cloudwork", suggesting the categorization of gig work based on whether workers need to be physically present or can work remotely⁴.

Location- and Non-Location-Based Gig Work

Location-based gig work requires workers to be physically present to perform tasks. This category includes jobs where workers provide services directly to clients or customers on-site. Typical examples include ride-hailing drivers, food delivery couriers, and home service providers like cleaners or repair technicians.

Non-location-based gig work, also called "cloudwork," allows workers to complete tasks remotely, usually through online platforms. These jobs do not require a physical presence and can be done from virtually anywhere with an internet connection. Examples include freelance graphic designers, content creators on platforms like UpWork or Freelancer, and data entry workers handling tasks for overseas clients.

Who are the Gig Workers?

In the Philippines, the flexible nature of gig work allows individuals to supplement their primary income, whether from full-time jobs or business ventures. This pattern highlights how gig work is often seen as a way to boost income rather than a complete career shift, using their flexible schedules to balance other commitments⁵.

Despite the rising popularity of gig work in the Philippines, it largely remains a secondary source of income for most. A majority of respondents, 61%, engage in gig work part-time, with only 39% doing it full-time. This suggests that while gig work provides flexibility and some financial benefits, it may not yet be a sufficient source of income to fully replace traditional full-time jobs for most individuals.

Table 1: Profile of Gig Worker

	Total (%)	Location-Based (%)	Non Location-Based (%)
Gender			
Male	64	76	38
Female	36	24	62
Age			
24 years old and below	18	18	20
25 – 34 years old	37	39	32
35 – 44 years old	30	31	28
45 years old and above	15	12	21
Educational Attainment			
Elementary Graduate	6	8	2
High School Graduate	59	66	42
College Graduate	34	25	53
Post-Graduate Degree	2	1	3
Other Employment			
Self-employed / Own business	16	13	25
Full-time / Permanent job	31	31	31
Part-time job (working less than 30 hours a week)	14	13	16
No other employment / Full-time gig worker	39	44	28
Full-time vs Part-time			
Part-time gig workers	61	56	72
Full-time gig workers	39	44	28



Younger Filipinos make up the bulk of the gig workforce, with the 25-34 age group accounting for about 37% of workers.

This trend reflects the appeal of flexible work to younger generations who often seek autonomy and income opportunities while navigating career uncertainties. For many, gig work is not just a temporary solution but a strategic way to build their skills and improve their finances⁶.

There is a noticeable divide in educational attainment between location-based and non-location-based gig workers. While 36% of all gig workers have at least a college degree, the difference between the two categories is significant.

Non-location-based gig workers—often engaged in online freelancing or content creation—are more likely to hold higher qualifications, with about 56% possessing a college degree or higher.

In contrast, 74% of location-based gig workers, such as ride-hailing drivers and delivery couriers, do not hold a college degree. This contrast reflects how non-location-based gig work often requires specific skills, while location-based gig work is more accessible to those with less formal education⁷ – providing a low barrier-to-entry way to earn a livelihood.

Gender also plays a key role in shaping gig work opportunities. Non-location-based gigs tend to attract more women, who make up to 62% of workers in this category. In contrast, location-based gigs, which are often physically demanding, have a male majority of 76%. This distribution highlights how the nature of tasks influence gender participation in different types of gig work⁸.

UNDERSTANDING GIG WORKERS

Motivation for Choosing Gig Work

Gig workers in the Philippines choose this line of work for various reasons, often driven by a combination of financial need and the desire for flexibility. For many, gig work serves as an additional income stream rather than a primary occupation, allowing them to manage their financial responsibilities while maintaining control over their schedules.

Gig workers enjoy flexibility and extra income without giving up full-time employment

The rising cost of living compels many Filipinos to find additional sources of income. The gig economy

offers them a chance to supplement their existing income with flexible work. People with full-time jobs can take on side gigs, or “sidelines,” during evenings or weekends to boost their earnings and provide for their families⁹. Gig workers in the Philippines predominantly engage in part-time roles, often balancing gig responsibilities with other income sources. 59% of gig workers primarily pursue gig work to supplement their income.

Flexibility is a defining characteristic of gig work, empowering workers to control their pace and time, attracting diverse individuals seeking economic opportunities while pursuing other interests¹⁰, with 47% highlighting the ability to choose their working hours, and 35% appreciating the freedom to work from different locations.

Table 2: Motivations to Pursue Gig Work

	Total	Location-Based	Non Location-Based
Earn extra income/ cash	59	55	67
Flexibility in working time	47	46	51
Flexibility in working location	35	34	37
Earn income in between jobs	32	29	41
I enjoy interacting with people	30	29	32
I enjoy driving	28	39	4
It is accessible / easy to get started	24	22	29
To gain experience / build my work portfolio	22	18	32
Earn an income in the interim	17	17	16
Autonomy	11	9	16
To utilize my vehicle more	10	12	3
Could not find any other jobs that are suitable for me	8	8	9
To kill time	5	6	5
Retired	1	1	1

Gig workers want both benefits—work autonomy and social protection—in the form of retirement planning, savings, and healthcare services

While gig work is valued for its flexibility, many workers also express a desire for long-term security. 61% of gig workers actively plan for retirement, reflecting an awareness of the need for financial stability beyond their current earnings.

Table 3: Do you have plans for your retirement in the future?

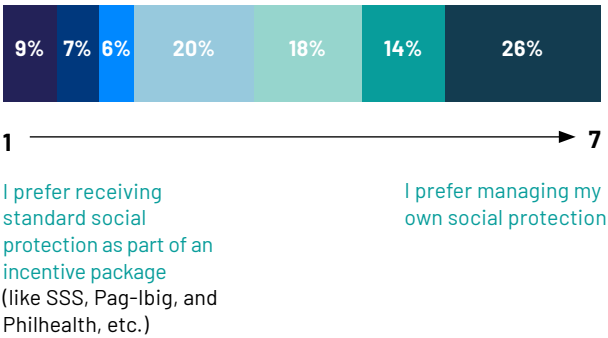
	Total (%)
Yes, I am saving / investing regularly for my retirement	61
Not now, but I will start planning for retirement in the next 1 year	20
No, and I do not intend to plan for retirement yet at least in the next 1 year	5

However, they also express a strong preference for managing their own social benefits to ensure alignment with their individual needs. This extends to retirement planning (64%) and access to health services in case of illness (58%). This proactive approach to retirement planning highlights gig workers’ awareness of their financial future and their desire to secure a stable retirement.

It should be noted however, that this could be because most gig workers have a full-time job, which may already provide these benefits. Consequently, they may not see the need to ‘pay double’ into the same social protection schemes when their employer already provides these benefits.

These charts highlight gig workers’ attitudes towards social protection.

Table 4: Gig workers’ attitudes towards social protection



Legend: This scale measures the level of agreement with pairs of opposing statements, where respondents select a number from 1 to 7 that best represents their viewpoint.

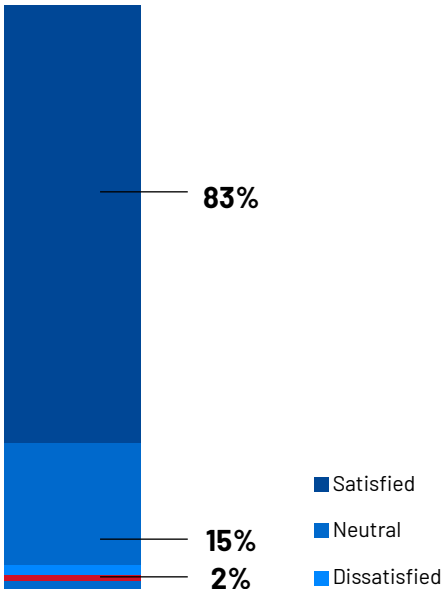
Table 5: Importance of social Protection

	Total
Planning for the future/retirement	64
Access to health services due to illness	58
Protection if you get hurt on the job	48
Peace of mind / safety net when the number of gig jobs are low	43
Save up for big purchases (e.g., owning a home)	20

Satisfaction of Gig Workers

83% of gig workers report a high level of job satisfaction. Many appreciate the autonomy and additional income that gig work provides. The ability to control their work hours while having extra savings are key factors in this positive outlook.

Table 6: Satisfaction Towards Gig Work



The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) establishes Metro Manila’s minimum wage at PHP 645 daily for non-agricultural workers¹¹, translating to roughly PHP 13,545 monthly based on a 21-day work month. While this serves as the legal baseline, the reality of gig work earnings is more complex. 55% of gig workers earn between PHP 15,001 and PHP 50,000 monthly, exceeding the minimum wage and providing opportunities for savings.

Table 7: Total Monthly Income of Gig Workers

	Total
< Php 15,000	29
Php 15,001 - Php 50,000	55
Php 50,0001 and above	15

Table 8: Financial Goal Achieved thru Gig Work

	Total
Extra savings	81
Education	39
I can now afford to make bigger purchases	39
Paid off loans	35
Early retirement	11
Others (Please specify)	1

Gig workers seek commensurate pay for their work

However, this increased earning potential comes with inherent income variability. Most gig workers face earnings inconsistency, with 46% reporting monthly fluctuations ranging between 10% and 30%, and 33% experiencing even greater inconsistencies. However, this is not necessarily negatively perceived by gig workers. Despite this variability, 78% of gig workers are satisfied with the flexibility and earning potential gig work offers. Gig workers can work more to earn more.

Table 9: Satisfaction with job aspect of gig work – Income consistency

	Total (%)	Full-time (%)	Part-time (%)
Very Satisfied	31	34	29
Satisfied	47	47	47
Neutral	19	16	21
Dissatisfied	2	2	2
Very Dissatisfied	1	0	1

Table 9: Consistent of Income

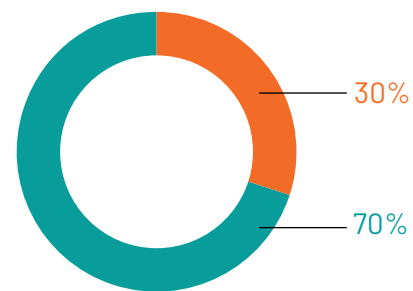
	Total
Varies between 10% - 30% each month	46
Varies more than 30% each month	33
Very consistent each month and does not vary	21

Table 10: % of flexibility to decide how much or how long work from gig work had enabled me to achieve my financial goal

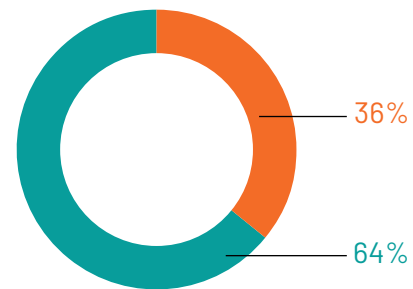
	Total
Strongly Agree	37
Agree	47
Neutral	14
Disagree	2

Many full-time gig workers, particularly those in location-based roles, report spending over 40 hours a week on their gigs. This level of commitment reflects how some gig workers may treat their roles as main source of income rather than part-time supplements. The balance between flexibility and workload is critical, as some workers put in as much time as traditional employees, while still valuing the ability to set their own hours¹².

Table 11: Time Spent in a week on gig work



Ride-sharing Services



Food Delivery Services



Parcel Delivery Services

Less than 30 hours More than 40 hours

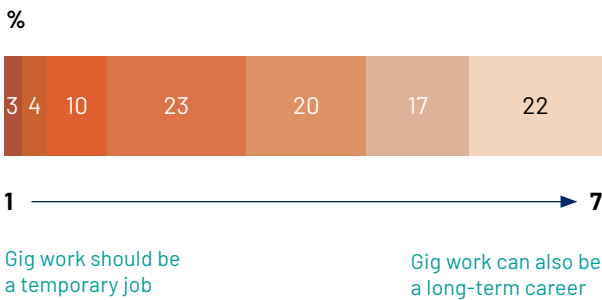
Do Gig Workers See Gig Work as a Long-term Journey?

The role of gig work in the Philippines has evolved from being just a temporary means of income to becoming a strategic career choice for many workers. As gig platforms continue to expand, workers are increasingly viewing flexible income as a way to achieve financial stability, build assets, and pursue long-term professional goals. 59% believe that gig work is a viable long-term career option.

Around 30% of respondents have no plans to stop gig work at all, indicating a commitment to maintaining their gig careers. Another 22% have not decided yet, reflecting the uncertainty that often accompanies non-traditional employment.

Interestingly, 13% of workers plan to continue their gig work for one to two years, while 9% envision staying in the gig economy for more than three years. These figures suggest that while some workers see gig work as a stepping stone, others are committed to making it a long-term part of their professional lives.

Table 12: Gig workers’ attitudes towards statements



Legend: This scale measures the level of agreement with pairs of opposing statements, where respondents select a number from 1 to 7 that best represents their viewpoint.

Table 13: Remaining Tenure as Gig Worker

	Total
Less than 6 months	7
6 months - 1 year	13
1 - 2 years	13
2 -3 years	7
More than 3 years	9
There's no plan to stop my gig work	30
I have not decided yet	22



For many gig workers, flexible work arrangements are not just a means of earning quick cash but a way to support their broader financial and personal goals.

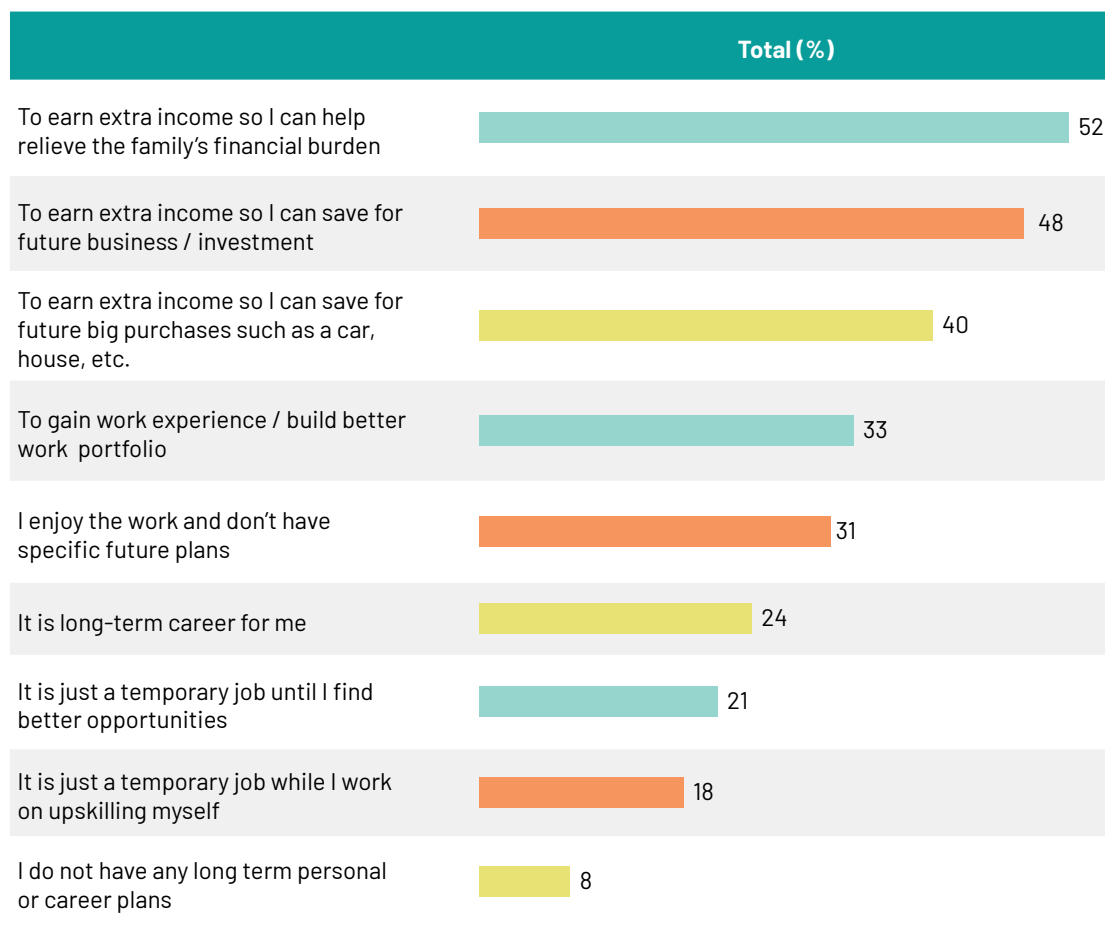
52% of gig workers engage in gig work to help relieve their family's financial burdens, while 48% see it as a way to save for future business ventures, and 40% see it as a way to save for significant purchases.

Moreover, 33% view gig work as an opportunity to gain work experience or build a professional portfolio, highlighting its role as a stepping stone to more stable or advanced careers. While some treat gig work as a transitional phase, others see it as a long-term career path, particularly when it aligns with personal aspirations and professional growth.

Why This Matters

Understanding why gig workers choose this form of employment and how they experience it is crucial for developing policies that protect their interests without limiting their autonomy. By recognizing the balance workers seek between flexibility and stability, stakeholders can better address both short-term and long-term needs.

Table 14: In what way does your gig work fit into your long term personal career plans





Way Forward

The Philippine gig economy presents a significant opportunity for economic growth, but its potential hinges on addressing the needs of its workforce. This study of 1,500 gig workers reveals a desire for flexibility alongside critical social protections, fair compensation, and sustainable career paths. This white paper explores four key strategies for stakeholders to create a more equitable and prosperous gig economy that benefits both workers and the broader Philippine economy, while addressing workers' expressed needs for a balance between the flexibility they value and the stability they require.

1. Ensuring fair and transparent earnings for gig workers

The gig economy has played a significant role in creating livelihoods and earnings opportunities for millions of gig workers in the Philippines. Gig workers have the right to fair and transparent earnings for work done. Encouragingly, survey data reveals that an overwhelming majority, about 93%, of respondents either strongly agree, agree, or remain neutral on the notion that gig work furnishes a fair and equitable model for earnings. Moreover, 78% express satisfaction with the consistency of their gig income, and over 70% earn more than the minimum wage.

At the same time, there are still some areas where interventions from policymakers and gig platforms might be helpful. More than half of gig workers encounter notable fluctuations in their monthly incomes, while a minority segment still earn below the minimum wage. Additionally, 41% of location-based gig workers have faced unexplained discrepancies in their earnings.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

Policymakers should examine the earnings structures for gig workers to ensure that they are fair and in line with market compensation rates for work done, wherein these earning structures are transparent, providing breakdowns of earnings, bonuses, and deductions directly within the apps. A collaborative approach is necessary — policymakers working in partnership with gig platforms and gig workers. Thus, policymakers need access to reliable, firsthand data from the stakeholders themselves. Initiatives that include surveying gig workers about the realities of gig work are powerful references for developing data-driven and realistic policies. Furthermore, policymakers should consider setting gig work principles that establish a common standard of practice for base pay, surge rates, and incentive schemes across platforms are necessary to create a level playing field and facilitate comparison, so that they are reflective of the value provided by gig workers.

Recommendations for Gig Platforms

Gig platforms can consider the development of programs to provide adequate compensation to gig workers based on effort and other criteria (e.g. time spent), and proactively enhance transparency by providing detailed breakdowns of earnings, bonuses, and deductions within their apps. Adopting standardized definitions for base pay, surge rates, and incentive schemes will further build trust with workers. Platforms should also explore implementing fair compensation standards, especially for gig workers highly reliant on their platform. These measures will build worker trust and promote a more sustainable gig economy.

2. Lack of Social Protection and Retirement Security



While gig work offers flexibility, it often lacks the structured social protection that full-time employment provides.

About 63% of gig workers actively plan for retirement, and 58% value access to healthcare, but they are divided on how to achieve financial security. Some prefer managing their own benefits, while others see value in structured schemes. Others who are involved in gig work on a part-time basis may already receive social protection from their primary source of employment, thus negating the need for duplicative contributions to the same schemes. The primary concern is maintaining autonomy while securing long-term benefits.

Recommendations for Policy Makers and Gig Platforms:

The government should study and explore high-tech, high-touch outreach strategies for gig workers that combine digital convenience with impactful, in-person support. This means moving beyond traditional, office-based interactions and leveraging the same technologies that power the gig economy. By deploying mobile hubs at targeted events, such as the “Social Services Exhibition and Registration for Online Freelancing Industry” at the Philippine Online Freelancers Conference, these agencies can effectively eliminate barriers to access. This on-the-ground presence makes registration and compliance straightforward and convenient, ensuring that more gig workers can secure vital social benefits.

The government should take the lead in exploring and rolling out possible benefit schemes for gig workers and allow gig workers to adopt flexible, app-based enrollment and contributions, to create a more inclusive and secure safety net for gig workers. They can collaborate with gig platforms to test how to best support gig workers in managing their social protection plans.

At the same time, gig platforms can play a role by enhancing gig workers’ awareness of these government-led social protection schemes (e.g. via in-app messages, and/or other online/offline events) to encourage gig workers to enroll and contribute to these schemes.

3. Skills Development and Career Progression



Many (60%) of gig workers see their roles as long-term career choices, with 33% of respondents using gig work to build professional portfolios. Workers who treat gig work as a strategic career path need support in skill acquisition to enhance their job prospects and income potential, emphasizing the need for skills development and professional recognition beyond the gig economy.

Recommendations for Gig Platforms

Partnering with institutions like Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) to issue digital credentials for gig work experience, skill mastery, and training completion can formalize skills acquired in the gig economy and enhance worker profiles. Platforms can play a crucial role by developing learning dashboards and offering course incentives, empowering workers to improve service quality, pursue higher-paying gigs, or transition to other careers. The DICT's ASCEND program is one such effort aimed to equip Filipino online freelancers with the skills and knowledge to transition into digital agency owners and establish their homegrown BPO ventures. Integrating these efforts further with platform support could significantly enhance the gig economy's capacity building vehicles.

To boost inclusivity and address potential skill gaps, platforms should extend upskilling support to underrepresented groups, such as women in location-based gigs and older workers. Aligning with initiatives such as The DICT's Strengthening the Philippine Workforce through Adaptive and Responsive Digital Knowledge (SPARK) initiative, with its focus on equipping Filipinos with skills for the digital economy, can provide a framework to contribute to a more sustainable and equitable gig economy, and promote inclusive growth and leveraging the potential of the digital economy.

4. Invest in Data Infrastructure and Gig Worker Inclusion

Accurate data is crucial for effective policy making in the evolving gig economy. Without comprehensive data, gig workers remain invisible and underserved, hindering the development of targeted support systems.

Recommendations for Policy Makers

To ensure the gig economy benefits both workers and the broader Philippine economy, policymakers should prioritize a data-driven approach. A national registry or survey panel of gig workers, updated annually, would provide essential insights into trends in employment, income, and well-being.

Exploring data-sharing agreements between platforms and the government, with robust privacy protections, can build real-time monitoring of the workforce. This data should then inform the development of targeted support systems, including financial literacy, retirement planning, and insurance programs tailored to different gig worker segments. Recognizing connectivity issues in rural areas, the DICT's Digital Transformation Centers (DTCs) can serve as key resources by providing ICT training to equip Filipinos for the digital economy. Integrating DTCs into the data-driven strategy will help bridge the digital divide and empower individuals, especially in underserved regions, to thrive.

Addressing the current data deficit, as highlighted by the Institute for Labor Studies, is essential for evidence-based policymaking. Combining this approach with broader access to ICT development tools provided by DTCs can significantly enhance the readiness and inclusivity of gig workers across the nation.



Recommendations for Gig Platforms

Gig platforms and the government can partner on data collection initiatives while upholding worker privacy. They can contribute valuable insights into the practical realities of gig work, informing the design of more effective policies. Platforms should also leverage data to understand the needs of their workers, enabling them to develop tailored support programs and resources.



Governance Approaches

Legislative Compliance and Amendments

To bolster the gig economy, it is pivotal to align new policy recommendations with existing legislative frameworks, while addressing gaps that may exist. Key areas being explored include securing fair compensation practices, enhancing social protection for gig workers, and institutionalizing skill development opportunities.

Aligning efforts with the Digital Workforce Competitive Act and fast-tracking the Freelance Workers Protection Act are vital steps forward

Policy recommendations should clearly delineate the roles of various governmental bodies such as DICT, SSS, DOLE, and TESDA in executing these reforms, while also defining the contributions and responsibilities of private platforms to create a balanced and cooperative framework. Promoting sustainable worker protections requires embedding mechanisms within a governance framework that ensures access to comprehensive healthcare, transparent earnings practices, and structured skill development pathways. Collaborative efforts with platform operators can fortify these measures by encouraging transparency and accountability. Such partnerships are essential for fostering environments where data sharing, policy adherence, and skill development programs thrive. This collaboration will enhance the implementation and monitoring of gig economy regulations, ensuring they are immediately responsive to worker needs and platform operations and directly benefit the workers involved.

Closing Thoughts

The Philippine gig economy provides workers with a flexible and empowering source of income, presenting a dynamic avenue for economic growth. While challenges remain, there are significant opportunities for government and platforms to further support gig workers—whether through enhanced income opportunities, better access to social protection, or initiatives that promote career growth, safety, and overall well-being. By addressing these areas, we can ensure the gig economy continues to thrive and uplift its workforce.

About the Study

The Ipsos Gig Life PH study conducted by Ipsos Strategy3 in the Philippines. This study reports independent Ipsos research. Consistent with common practice, the project received grant support from various institutions; Ipsos retained independent control over the design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, writing, and publication.

The survey was conducted between March 29th and April 28th, 2025, across Metro Manila, Cebu, and Davao. This study surveyed a total of 1,500 gig workers, age 18+, where around 800 individuals were interviewed face-to-face, and 700 were surveyed online.

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