

**TOWARDS DECENT WORK ON ONLINE LABOUR PLATFORMS:
IMPLICATIONS OF WORKING CONDITIONS IN ONLINE FREELANCE WORK ON
THE WELLBEING OF YOUTHS IN NAIROBI COUNTY**

BY

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God Almighty, in whom I live and move and have my being. It is also dedicate to my wife, daughter and son- Mary, Wonder and Tindel -who have been my closest companion in this journey and to my parents who have always encouraged me to take this path.

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My friend, colleagues, brothers and sisters, I am grateful. Special thanks goes to my sister Felister and my friends Kamau and Kimetu. Continue doing the great work you do. The limits are always ours to break.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

Local Platform Work	It refers to work that is transacted via platforms but delivered locally meaning the workers have to be physically present.
Microwork	It refers to a series of small tasks that make part of a large complex tasks. A firms receive large complex tasks and breaks them into a series of microwork, which potential workers can complete in seconds or minutes
Remote Platform Work	It refers to work that is transacted and delivered remotely via platforms. It consists of the remote provision of a numerous digital services ranging from software development to data entry via online labour platforms such as Upwork, Fiverr, Freelancer.com and Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT)
Online Freelance Work	It is also known as online freelancing or e-lancing. It is a form of remote platform work where work is sourced, completed, and delivered online through an online marketplace. The tasks tend to be larger, complex and require longer durations of time to complete
Online Work	It is also known as platform work, gig work or crowdwork. It refers to a form of work that is generated as businesses and individuals outsource work to workers (often overseas) through digital labour platforms
Paid Work	It refers to the actual work tasks that the worker is paid to do
Unpaid Work	It refers to the time spent looking for tasks, earning qualifications, researching clients through online forums, communicating with clients and leaving reviews, as well as unpaid/rejected tasks/tasks ultimately not submitted

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMT	Amazon Mechanical Turk
DGE	Digital Gig Economy
EMCONET	Employment Conditions Knowledge Network
EU	European Union
GoK	Government of Kenya
ICRIER	Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MoICT	Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology
NEA	National Employment Authority
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLI	Online Labour Index
PPH	People per Hour
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
ROSCAs	Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs)
SACCOS	Savings and credit co-operative societies
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programs
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
STEM	Science, Technology, and Engineering and Mathematics
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USA	United States of America
USD	United States Dollars

ABSTRACT

This research examined the implication of the working conditions in online freelance work on the wellbeing of youths working on online labour platforms in Nairobi County. In doing so, it examined the characteristics of these youths and their working conditions with a particular attention on how these working conditions compare to the decent digital work standards proposed for the remote platform economy.

It holds that the confluence of information-communication technologies and the worker power - balance of bargaining power between the clients and workers- yields organisational forms which shape the working conditions (job quality outcomes) of online freelance workers (Rubery and Grimshaw, 2001). In this case, working conditions refers to the earnings, working time, availability of work and the work process on the online labour platforms. These working conditions in turn affect the wellbeing (household income, health and skills acquisition and development) of the online freelance workers.

The research used mixed methods research design. The quantitative method involved the use of a semi-structured questionnaire administered to 133 youths doing online freelance work and living continuously in Nairobi County. The qualitative method involved the use of interview guides administered to five key informants, , who are opinion leaders and policy makers on information and communication technology for development, business process outsourcing, online outsourcing, digital work and youth employment in Kenya.

The findings show that online freelance work is characterized with decent work deficits that need an immediate intervention. The earnings, working time, work process on the online labour platforms met the decent digital work standards. However, this obscures various decent work deficits related to these working conditions. Availability of work-also known as stability of work-did not meet the decent digital work standards. The research found that the youths are underemployed with most of them not getting enough freelance work regularly.

These working conditions have tremendous implications on their wellbeing with most of them living in a precarious financial situation-not able to meet their basic needs and cover emergency expenses. On the contrary, these working conditions had no significant effect on the health of the youths apart from a general feeling of anxiety and fatigue emanating from the irregular working

schedules and insufficient work on the platform. Moreover, the findings showed that online freelance work facilitates skills acquisition and development.

Furthermore, the research provides multi-stakeholder recommendations that can be adopted to bridge the decent work deficits and yield quick gains for the investment that the government has made in online work as an employment strategy for the youth. In general, the research concludes that the government of Kenya needs to pay a particular attention to decent work. It also needs to overhaul Ajira digital programme from a training that introduces high potential but disadvantaged youths to online work to a training that seeks to position the youths in the high-skill macro-task niche. Currently, most youths in Kenya are in the low skill-micro task niche which has meagre earnings and is flooded with workers from other countries in Africa and Asia.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

According to the International Labour Organisation (2007), employment provides incomes that workers can use to improve their standards of living. Apart from procuring food, shelter and clothing, workers can invest this income in their education and become more creative, innovative and able to do more diverse work. They can also invest it in their health and lead longer and more productive lives. Besides, they can save their disposal income and become financially secure. The government can also tax this income and use it to generate resources for development thus reducing the levels of poverty and inequality in the economy (UNDP, 2015).

Although employment is important towards enriching economies and human lives, even more important is its nature and condition. It is decent work, and not just work, that promotes the well-being of workers and leads to sustainable development. Juan Somavia, the former director general of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), said that before labour is regarded as a commodity it must first be seen as a human activity. As such, attention needs to be paid to the nature and condition of work (ILO, 2007).

According to decent work agenda, work is regarded as decent when it permits or promotes certain work-related rights; provides adequate employment opportunities; provides an essential minimum of social protection and permits workers to form and join collective entities or worker organizations such as trade unions among other conditions. These conditions are encapsulated in four interrelated components that make up the decent work agenda. These components include rights at work, social dialogue, employment creation and social protection (ILO, 2012; Ghai, 2006).

Decent work also is among the sustainable development goals (SDGs) that the world seeks to achieve in 2030. Goal number eight appeals for the promotion of full and productive employment and decent work. This means that countries need to create decent and productive work opportunities, and not just work, in their labour markets (UNDP, 2015).

The government of Kenya launched Ajira Digital program in 2016 in response to the high rates of youth unemployment in the country. This program aims to introduce high potential but disadvantaged youths to online work and provide them with the tools, training, certification and

mentorship needed for them to work and earn a decent wage. There are more than 40,000 people working online in Kenya (GoK, 2018a).

Online work - also known as platform work, gig work or crowdwork-refers to a form of work that is generated as businesses and individuals outsource work to workers (often overseas) through digital labour platforms (Heeks, 2017b). Kuek et al. (2015) estimated in 2016 that there were more than 70 million remote platform workers all over the world doing work valued at US\$4.4 billion. Approximately, 80 % of these workers come from the world's economic margins (Heeks, 2017). Standing, (2016) also predicted that digital labour platforms will facilitate a third of all labour transactions in 2025.

According to Graham, Hjorth and Lehdonvirta (2017), national labour laws rarely apply to online freelance work because the transactions often take place across national borders. As such online freelance work is disembedded from local moral economies and local norms that would conventionally regulate the relationship between an employer and employee (Wood, Graham & Lehdonvirta, 2016). As such labour is regarded entirely as a commodity without acknowledging that it is first and foremost human activity. This makes online freelance work at the global economic margins to be precarious in nature.

In spite of the nature of this work, there is a dearth of information on the working conditions of online freelance workers in Kenya. Besides, there is a dearth of information on the implication of these working conditions on the wellbeing of youths doing online freelance work in Kenya. According to Wood et al. (2019) the confluence of information-communication technologies and the worker power - balance of bargaining power between the clients and workers- yields organisational forms which shape the working conditions (job quality outcomes) of online freelance workers (Rubery and Grimshaw, 2001;). In this case, working conditions refers to the earnings, working time, work that is available to the workers and the work process on the online labour platforms. These working conditions in turn affect the wellbeing (household income, health and skills acquisition and development) of the online freelance workers

This research explores the working conditions of youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County. These conditions are then compared to a set of decent working standards to determine if online freelance work is a decent form of employment for youths in Nairobi County. It further examines the implication of these working conditions on the wellbeing of these youths.

1.1 Background of the Research

Unemployment remains a great challenge in Kenya. Nonetheless, it is more pronounced among the youths. According to the Constitution of Kenya 2010, youths are individuals aged from 18 to 35 years. Although they make up two thirds of the working population aged between 15 and 64, their unemployment rate was estimated to be 26.21% in 2017, which was thrice the national unemployment rate (“strict” definition) that was about 7.4 per cent in 2017 (GoK, 2018b).

Besides, approximately 76.1% of the population in Kenya is aged below 35, an indication that Kenya is facing a “youth bulge” (GoK, 2016). Youth bulge is a phenomenon that occurs when more than 20% of the population is composed of young people (UNDP, 2015). This bulge can either yield dividend in the economy in terms of productivity, innovation and growth in the consumer market. On the other hand, it can breed insecurity, political instability, a high dependency ratio and a stunted economic growth (UNDP, 2015).

In spite of these developments, there has been a slow growth of employment opportunities in the formal sector (Wausi, Mgendi & Ngwenyi, 2013). According to GoK (2018b), employment in the formal sector grew from 2,686, 000 in 2016 to 2,796,000 in 2017. There was a 4% overall increase in employment in the sector in 2017. Conversely, employment in the informal sector grew from 13,309,700 in 2016 to 16,893, 500 in 2017(GoK, 2018a). This is an indication of a declining rate of workforce absorption in the formal sector and a rising rate of workforce absorption in the informal sector.

According to GoK (2016), approximately 750,000 youth enter the job market as new job seekers every year in Kenya. However, just 125,000 get employment in the formal sector with the rest opting for informal employment such as small scale farming and pastoralists’ activities and non-wage earning activities or unemployment.

1.1.1 Digital Dividends

Nonetheless, information and communication technologies, also known as digital technologies, have been lauded as a potential pathway towards youth employment around the globe (Graham et al., 2017; Dalberg, 2013). The increased access to technologies in the form of telephone, mobile phone, internet and broadband has had a far reaching returns, also known as digital dividend. These

dividends are in form of economic growth, increase access to public service and employment among others (World Bank, 2016).

There are several means through which these technologies create employment. Among them, is employment created as clients-companies and individuals- outsource work to third party workers-firms and individuals (often overseas) through digital labour platforms in a bid to cut costs and streamline their operations. This form of work is known as platform work, gig work, crowdwork or online work. The outsourcing process is known as online outsourcing since it follows the broad trends of business process outsourcing (Kuek et al., 2015).

There are two forms of platform work namely local platform work and remote platform work. Local platform work refers to work that is transacted via platforms but delivered locally meaning the workers have to be physically present. This work includes food delivery (Glovo and Senty), couriering, transport (Uber and Bolt) and manual labour. On the other hand, remote platform work refers to work that is transacted and delivered remotely via platforms. It consists of the remote provision of a numerous digital services ranging from software development to data entry via online labour platforms such as Upwork, Fiverr, Freelancer.com and Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT)

There are two forms of remote platform work namely online freelancing (often referred to online freelance work or e-lancing) and microwork. Online freelancing is a form of remote platform work where work is sourced, completed, and delivered online through an online marketplace. The tasks tend to be larger, complex and require longer durations of time to complete. On the other hand, Microwork refers to a series of small tasks that make part of a large complex tasks. A firms receive large complex tasks and breaks them into a series of microwork, which potential workers can complete in seconds or minutes. This research focusses on online freelance work.

The clients, also known as providers, are motivated to outsource their work through the digital labour platforms because it provides them with a broader access to specialized skills. These platforms also reduce their transaction costs since they can hire extra hand (s) any time without worrying about their food, sitting space among other office necessities. Besides, outsourcing enables them to concentrate on their core business thus enhancing their productivity (Kuek et. al, 2015). The majority of clients in the platform economy are from United States of America (USA), Germany, Australia, and United Kingdom (UK).

The digital labour platforms act as an intermediary between the clients and the online freelance workers, regardless of their location. Customers are able to search through the personal profiles of workers, who have registered on the platform, and make hiring decisions (Hannak et al., 2017). It also enables them to conduct secure and trustworthy transactions that are based on a contract, in most cases, and guarantee payments to the online freelance workers. There are times when the role of these platforms is limited to only that of match-making, for which they charge a fee from the client, online freelance workers or both of them (Hannak et al., 2017; Dalberg, 2013). The examples of digital labour platforms include Upwork, Fiverr, Freelancer, AMT, Guru, PeoplePerHour (PPH), Kuhustle, Crowdsourcing Africa, and Cloudfactory among others.

The online freelance workers, also known as requesters or digital labour, refer to people who use the internet to find, complete and submit work. These workers are motivated to work online because of the flexible nature of online freelance work. They can work any time, either on a full or part-time basis, on a project of their choice, from anywhere even from the comfort of their homes, provided they have a computer, internet connection and requisite skills. Besides, these workers are able to transcend geographical distances, time lags and reach a greater variety of clients thus lowering their transaction costs (ICRIER, 2017). According to Heeks (2017), a majority of the online freelance workers come from USA, UK, Eastern Europe and Asia, the rest of Europe, South America and Africa.

There is a varied opinion on the employment status of online freelance workers (Heeks, 2017). Nonetheless, there is a general consensus that these workers partly meet the criteria for an independent employee since they can choose whether and when to work like anyone that is self-employed. There is also a general consensus that they partly meet the criteria for employees since the platforms set many of their working conditions, and has the right to dismiss them. Cherry and Poster (2016) affirm these workers are employees to a greater extent because the availability of work and their earnings depends on the platform.

1.1.2 Online Freelance Work in Kenya

The increased utilization of information and communication technologies such as the internet has created numerous employment opportunities in the form of online freelance work. According to GoK (2018b), more than 40,000 workers from Kenya, most of which are youths, are registered on leading digital labour platforms around the globe. These workers are active in various forms of

online freelance work that can be classified into various categories such as software development and technology, clerical and data entry, and writing and translation; work among others (Kässi & Lehdonvirta, 2016).

After training the youth through Ajira digital, the government of Kenya links them to potential employers on digital labour platforms, where they bid for jobs in their areas of interest and earn a wage. The government has partnered with several credible digital labour platforms and offline firms that are involved in online outsourcing so as to facilitate this linkage. The wages earned in the digital labour platforms are subjected to a five per cent tax. This program aims to make Kenya a choice destination for multinational companies seeking to outsource their work.

Online Labour Index (OLI)-an indicator that measures the supply and demand of online freelancers across the globe- ranked Kenya second in Africa after Egypt in the supply of remote platform workers in the global platform economy in 2017. Kenya is active in writing, translation, software development and technology work. It further ranked Kenya as the 13th biggest global supplier of remote platform workers even though its share of online freelance work is small. India leads the globe in the supply of remote platform workers. This ranking can be attributed to the abundant, skilled English-speaking manpower in Kenya and high end information and communication technologies that are at par with global (Kässi & Lehdonvirta, 2016).

Although online freelance work can be undertaken from anywhere within the country, most online freelance workers are presumed to be concentrated in urban counties such as Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. This trend can be attributed to the increased internet penetration and electricity distribution in these counties. Furthermore, Nairobi County is presumed to have the highest number of workers since it has the highest internet penetration in Kenya (County Government of Nairobi, 2018).

1.2 Problem Statement

According to World Bank (2016), online work holds a potential of creating numerous employment opportunities in the global economic margins (Dalberg 2013). It is upon this basis that the government of Kenya invested in this sub-sector in 2016 so as to generate employment opportunities for the youths and equip them with the skills to take up these opportunities. Thus far, there are over 40,000 online workers from Kenya registered on various digital labour platforms across the globe.

However, empirical literature on working conditions of online freelance workers around the globe has shown that online freelancing is associated with structural inequalities and is precarious in nature. In other words, it is ridden with poor working conditions such as low income, long and irregular hours, intense yet inadequate work and opaque work process. Besides, the workers do not have an ability to collectively bargain and negotiate for better working conditions (Heeks, 2017).

Nonetheless, there is a dearth of literature on the working conditions of online freelance workers in Kenya. There is also a dearth of literature on the implication of these working conditions on the wellbeing of these workers, who are predominantly youths. As such, it is unclear whether online freelance work in Kenya meets the standards for decent work as provided in ILO's decent work agenda. The implication of not giving particular attention to the working conditions of online freelance workers in Kenya is immense (ILO, 2007; Ghai, 2006). It is likely to undermine the wellbeing of the over 40,000 workers and push them into poverty traps.

According to the decent work agenda, having a job may not be sufficient to obtain even a basic standard of living. The job needs to be decent since it is decent work and not just work that promote the wellbeing of workers and sustainable development. A decent work has decent working condition such as a decent wage, flexible working time (shorter working hours, availability of rest periods, and flexible work schedules), sufficient work, transparent work process and safe working environment among other characteristics.

There is an urgent need to determine the working conditions of these workers and the implications of these working conditions on their wellbeing. This research intends to provide knowledge on the working conditions of youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County. It further compares these working conditions to decent digital work standards to determine if online freelance work in Kenya meets decent work standards. It also determines the implications of these working conditions on the wellbeing of youths working online in Nairobi County and provide policy recommendations.

1.3 Research Questions

The overarching research question is: what is the implication of the working conditions in online freelance work on the wellbeing of youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County? The following specific research questions are relevant towards answering this overarching question.

1. What are the characteristics of youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County?
2. What are the working conditions of youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County?
3. What is the implication of these working conditions on the wellbeing of youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County?

1.4 Research Objectives

The overall research objective is: to determine the implication of the working conditions in online freelance work on the wellbeing of youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County. The following specific research objectives are relevant towards answering this overarching question.

1. To establish the characteristics of youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County
2. To examine working conditions of youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County
3. To determine the implication of the working conditions on the wellbeing of youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County

1.5 Justification

The findings of this research are not only essential to policymakers but also to the various stakeholders who are counting on online work as a pathway to youth employment. It brings to their attention the need to focus on decent online freelance work and not just online freelance work. This is important because it is decent work and not just work that promotes wellbeing of workers and leads to sustainable development.

The findings of this research are also important to those working online and those intending to take up online freelance work as a form of employment. It enables them to know the nature and conditions of online freelance work in Kenya. It further recommends to them the actions they can take to remedy the decent work deficits in online freelancing. Furthermore, this research is instrumental towards the realization of United Nations Sustainable Goal number eight.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section highlights the structural transformation that has taken place in the labour market until the advent of remote platform work. It further reviews the theoretical literature that conceptualises job quality and decent work agenda while noting their strengths and weaknesses. Most important, it details the decent work standards that have been proposed for the digital gig economy and conceptualizes the determinants of the working conditions and job quality in the remote platform work. The empirical literature presents existing literature on the characteristics of online freelance workers, their working conditions and the implication of these working conditions on their wellbeing. A summary highlighting the overall strengths and weaknesses of existing literature is presented at the end of this chapter.

2.1 Structural Transformation in the Labour Market

The quest for better working conditions among industrial workers in the global north after World War I led to the adoption of labour laws and regulations that precipitated the growth of standard employment relationships, also known as a closed employment relationship or direct employment relationships (Lewchuk, 2017). According to Walton (2016), a standard employment relationship refers to work arrangement between a unitary employer and dependent, full-time employees that is stable, open ended and has employment benefits.

However, the growth of this employment relationship was not just confined in the global north. It transcended to the global south. The growth of capitalism - in the pre and post-colonial period- also deteriorated working conditions among workers in the global south. Consequently, various forms of state corporatism emerged as the new post-colonial states integrated the labour movements that were part of the national liberation struggles in the formal economy and granted them certain guarantees and legal rights over their working conditions. Nonetheless, a majority of the workers remained in the parallel informal economy -excluded from the guarantees and legal rights in the formal economy (Webster, Lambert & Bezuidenhout, 2008).

Not so long after the inception of standard employment relationship in the global south, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) introduced the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). These programs aimed to foster flexibility in the labour market, among other objectives (Wood, Graham, Lehtonvirta, & Hjorth, 2019; Webster, Lambert, & Bezuidenhout, 2008). This

development meant that job outcomes in the labour market were to be left to the whims of market mechanisms, unlike in the closed employment relationships where administrative rules determined job outcomes. As a result, the legal rights and guarantees over working conditions that were part of the standard employment relationship began to fizzle out leading to weaker labour market institutions that could no longer guarantee workers stable employment and benefits. According to Kalleberg (2011), firms could no longer bear the economic risks and responsibility of providing security and training to their workforces, among other responsibilities.

Consequently, an alternative form of employment relationship known as non-standard employment relationship – also known as open employment relationship, market mediated employment relationship or precarious employment relationship – became more pronounced in the global south and around the globe. Unlike employment in the closed employment relationship that is full-time permanent employment with benefits and includes social protection, this employment is temporary and less secure. Besides, the ability of the workers to bargain improved working conditions is limited (Lewchuk, 2017; Kalleberg, 2011).

Numerous literature further reiterates the emergence of precarious employment relationship around the globe. Hacker (2006) argues that workers are increasingly shouldering labour market risks as employers vacate long-term employment. Weil (2014) reports that the popularity of franchising model among corporations has resulted in more precarious forms of employment. Standing (2011) also highlights the emergence of the "precariat", a new class of workers doing insecure jobs with limited employment benefits and social protections.

Despite the sheer volume of literature on labour market restructuring-all signalling a decline in standard employment relationship- there is a significant minority perspective across the globe that the economic events of the last several decades have not led to a significant transition in the labour market. This assertion is drawn from the minimal evidences of precarious employment in official labour market statistics across the globe. Nonetheless, it is essential to note that labour market data measures are simplistic in nature and do not highlight the extensive changes that have been taking place in the labour market since the 1980s (Lewchuk, 2017).

According to Standing (2016), the digital gig economy can be situated within the open employment relationship since it is associated with the casualization, precarisation and fragmentation of work. Lewchuk (2017) also reiterates that the dominant forms of employment in the platform economy

are freelancing, self-employment and short term contract work. These are an indication that precarious forms of employment are continuing, perhaps even accelerating due to increased global connectivity through digital technologies.

This transition in the labour market across the globe is more devastating, especially to young workers in the periphery. These workers are overrepresented amongst the unemployed. A majority of them are employed doing temporary jobs, and others are working reluctantly in part-time jobs not to mention the many that are working without pay in exchange for “experience” (Lewchuk, 2017).

2.2 Job Quality and Decent Work

As the labour market evolved, researchers recognised that just having a job may not guarantee even a basic standard of living for many workers across the globe. As a result, diverse theoretical literature on what makes up a good job emerged, including methodological discussions on how to measure the theories. These literature and discussions are spread between academic and institutional publications.

According to Burchell, Sehnbruch, Piasna and Agloni (2014), the inability of the measures of economic growth (gross domestic product and unemployment) to explain various living conditions in the 1960s and 1970s triggered research on an alternative paradigm, the quality of life approach. The nature of employment and quality of work became part of this research agenda as parallel research on the quality of employment aspects emerged on the implications of globalisation and deindustrialisation on employment conditions in developed countries.

Consequently, various diffuse terminologies emerged namely ‘quality of working life’, ‘job quality’, ‘quality of work’, ‘quality of employment’ and ‘decent work’. Although these terminologies are always used interchangeably they have different meaning. ‘Quality of working life’ is mainly linked to the worker’s subjective evaluation of their job. On the other hand, ‘quality of work’ or ‘job quality’, in most cases, focuses on the content of the job and the work environment. ‘Decent work’ and ‘quality of employment’ encompasses all the previous terminologies, including issues such as work-life balance, gender gaps, labour relations and rights. In general, the existence of these diffuse terms is an indication of the complexity and breadth of issues on this subject (Burchell et al., 2014).

Furthermore, the process of academic research leading to the literature on quality of employment and decent work has been organic, non-linear and diffuse. Burchell et al. (2014) pointed out that independent literature in various domains such as economics, psychology and sociology evolved in parallel into the current theoretical literature entwined with methodological discussions of the measurement decent work and quality of employment. Nonetheless, the literature can be subdivided into three groups, namely those that use self-reported data to estimate the quality of working life; those that use objective data; and those that use a mixed approach.

2.2.1 Subjective Model

There are theoretical approaches that rely on the workers own evaluation of their work to determine the quality of working life. The theories on quality of working life namely need satisfaction and spill over fall within this domain. These theoretical approaches use job satisfaction to estimate the quality of working life.

The needs satisfaction approach argues that individuals have basic needs that they seek to fulfil through work and they become satisfied with their job when these needs are met. This approach is grounded in theories of motivation such as Herzberg's two factor theory of motivation and Abraham Maslow's theory of motivation (Sirgy et al., 2001).

On the other hand, the spill over approach argues that an improvement of quality of work life leads to job satisfaction, which in turn leads to satisfaction in non-work life domains, personal happiness, well-being and overall life (Sirgy et al., 2001). Job satisfaction, in this context, does not necessarily refer to what employees like and dislike. It also refers to the availability of opportunities that enable the employees to make meaningful contributions to the organizations. This implies that the implication of job satisfaction transcends the work domain to non-work domain (Brooks & Gawel, 2001).

According to Sirgy et al. (2001), satisfaction in one life domain can influence satisfaction on other neighbouring domain, a phenomenon known as horizontal spill over. For example, workers satisfaction with their work may influence satisfaction with other life domains such as health, finances, social and family among others.

Sirgy et al. (2001) divulges further that people organize life domains in a hierarchical manner in their mind. At the top of this hierarchy is subjective well-being, personal happiness and life satisfaction. The other life domains namely job, family, leisure and community come second in the hierarchy. Therefore, satisfaction or dissatisfaction with each of these life domains “spills over” to the domains at the apex of the hierarchy thus affecting life satisfaction, a phenomenon also known as vertical spill over.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that developing a measure for subjective theoretical approaches is quite challenging because of several reasons. First, people can adapt to poor working conditions and thus become unable to give an objective evaluation of their quality of the employment (Comin & Teschl, 2005). Second, expectations of workers concerning their employment vary considerably across various categories of workers and countries. More often than not, workers in developed countries have a lower average job satisfaction than workers in developing countries. Furthermore, these theoretical approaches do not highlight how information and communication technologies affect the quality of employment (Burchell et al., 2014). These issues somewhat make job satisfaction measures unsuitable in explaining job quality in the digital gig economy.

2.2.2 Objective Model

The theoretical approaches that use objective data to estimate the quality of employment focus on the objective characteristics of a job, that is, the intrinsic qualities of a job. The theories that fall within this domain include neo-Marxist theories that stress on worker’s autonomy and self-development, and those that incorporate variety of features conducive to the motivation of workers such as task significance, task identity, skill variety, job feedback and autonomy. There are also approaches that avoiding perceptual data from employees altogether and use variables such as working hours, income, health benefits, contractual status, tenure, vocational training, job security and nonwage benefits such as the provision of child care programs (Floro & Messier 2011; Sehnbruch, 2007; Hunter, 2000).

The effort-reward imbalance model is an example of an approach that uses objective data to estimate the quality of employment. It suggests that a combination of high effort (extrinsic demands of a job and the intrinsic motivation to accomplish those demands) and low rewards (salaries, esteem reward, security and career opportunities in the form of promotion, job security and status consistency) arouses and leads to stress among workers, which may subsequently lead

to cardiovascular risks among other stress disorders (Siegrist, 2008). Further studies have found that the combination of high effort and low reward at work is a risk factor for mild psychiatric disorders, cardiovascular health and burnout (Siegrist, 2008; Tsutsumi and Kawakami, 2004). According to De Jonge Bosma, Peter, and Siegrist, (2000), personal components such as over commitment and personality may moderate the relationship between effort–reward imbalance and the worker’s wellbeing.

The other theoretical approach that uses objective data to estimate the quality of employment is the demand control model. It argues that jobs with high demand and low control, also known as “high strain jobs”, attribute to high levels of stress among workers. On the other hand, jobs with a high demands and high control, also known as “active learning jobs”, attribute to high levels of task enjoyment, personal growth and learning among workers (Taris, Kompier, De Lange, Schaufeli & Schreurs, 2003) Although these jobs are intensively demanding, workers possessing adequate decision latitude can utilize their skills to convert the stimulated energy into action and thus learning in the process.

Although the demand control model has acquired prominence in literature, its empirical evidence is mixed (De Lange, Taris, Kompier, Houtman, and Bongers, 2003). Several studies on the effects of job demand and job control on the wellbeing of workers have failed to yield the interaction effect suggested in the demand-control model (Taris, 2006). Taris et al. (2003) attributes the inadequate evidence to the methodological and conceptual limitations of the model.

The job characteristics model asserts that responses of workers to jobs is as a result of job characteristics. The responses of workers include sickness, job satisfaction absenteeism and personnel turnover. On the other hand, the job characteristics include autonomy, task identity, variety of skills used at work, the impact the work has on other people’s lives (task significance) and the feedback on performance at work.

In general, these theoretical approaches rectified the limitations of the approaches that rely on the workers own evaluation of their work to determine the quality of working life. Nonetheless, they do not highlight role that information and communication technologies play in determining job quality. As such these theoretical approaches are somewhat not suitable in explaining job quality in the digital gig economy.

2.2.3 Mixed Approach

There are also theoretical approaches that use both subjective and objective data to estimate the quality of employment. For instance, the index of job desirability uses worker's evaluation to determine the most desirable objective characteristics of jobs. However, this approach has not had a substantial impact because it is pegged on the assumption that all workers are conversant with their job.

Furthermore, Körner et al. (2009) also developed a model that consists of seven dimensions of quality of employment arranged in hierarchical manner. At the top of the hierarchy is workplace relations and motivation. Skill development and training comes in second. Then social dialogue follows. The other dimensions are employment security and social protection, working hours and work life balance, and income and other employment benefits. At the bottom of the hierarchy is ethics and safety of employment. This model is suitable in measuring quality of employment at the national level. However, unless detailed sectorial data exists, it cannot be used to perform a comparative analysis between workers in a given country. Although this model can be used to explain the quality of employment in the digital gig economy it fails highlight role of technology in relations to job quality outcomes.

Green and Mostafa (2012) also developed a quality of employment model that consists of four dimensions namely working time, earnings, job prospects, and intrinsic quality of the job. Unlike the previous models, it is possible to use this model to do a comparative analysis of average job quality between any subgroup because it derived from a singular dataset. Although this model can be used to explain the quality of employment in the digital gig economy it also fails highlight role of technology in relations to job quality outcomes.

2.2.4 Organizational Approach

International institutions have also tried to come up with theoretical concepts on quality of employment and operationalize them. Unlike the approaches from academia, these approaches are interdisciplinary in nature and as such recognize that the methods for evaluating the quality of employment should be same across disciplines. The theoretical concepts on quality of employment that have been developed across organizations include Decent Work Agenda (ILO), quality of work (European Union), Quality of Work Environment (OECD), Job Quality (Eurofound), Quality of Employment (UNCECE) and Fair employment (EMCONET) (Burchell et al., 2014).

Following the increased of importance of quality of employment after the adoption of structural adjustment programs, ILO launched the Decent Work Agenda in an attempt to give a systematic definition to quality of work. The decent work agenda contains four components namely quality of work, compliance with labour standards, social dialogue and social protection. These components are further disaggregated into ten substantive elements. These elements include adequate earnings and productive work, work that is stable and secure, decent working time, ability to combine work, personal life and family, adequate employment opportunities, abolishing of forced and child labour, equal opportunity and treatment in employment, safe work environment, social dialogue, and social security.

These substantive elements are monitored using statistical and legal indicators also known as decent work indicators (DWI) These indicators includes decrease in unemployment rate; improvement in the approval of work conventions; progress in the quality of jobs (reduced informality); increase in the minimum wages; reducing pay gap between the genders; an increase in the degree of unionisation and an increase in the coverage of social protection (ILO, 2012).

However, Heeks (2017) asserts that decent work framework is inclined towards the traditional world of work and not the emergent digital world of work. There are broad issues that are central in the platform economy but are missing in the decent work framework. For instance, it excludes issues on employment status of the workers, their communication on the platform; clarity on task description and its purpose, handling of complaints and disputes, rating systems on the platforms among others. Furthermore, there are also issues in the decent work convection that are irrelevant in the platform economy. For instance, there is no evidence of forced and child labour in the remote platform economy.

Additionally, there are elements that need to be conceptualized in a different manner in order to be concurrent with the needs of workers in the emergent world of gig work. For instance, remuneration in the gig work includes interpretive labour time (the time the workers spend searching for work on the platform, bidding for the same, communicating with the client and waiting for the client to allocate the work to them) unlike in the traditional world of work where remuneration does not include other forms of unpaid work.

2.2.4.1 Decent Work Standards for the Remote Platform Economy

The limitation of decent work agenda to address job quality in the digital gig economy has precipitated the development of various decent work standards to capture issues emerging in the digital gig economy. These standards include standards in impact sourcing, fair crowd work standards contained in Frankfurt Declaration and “decent digital work” standards. Thus far, the decent digital work standard is the most comprehensive standards for the platform economy because it is a synthesis of most, if not all, the proposals and codes proposed for the platform economy.

The decent digital work standards is organized in the same manner as the decent work framework. It has a corresponding decent digital work standard for every element in the decent work framework that is relevant to the digital gig economy. Furthermore, it gives an exclusive focus to the platform economy and not the traditional world of work. Therefore, it the most suitable standards for online freelance work based on the above premise (Heeks, 2017).

The “decent digital work” standards are divided into three components namely employment context, employment and work conditions (Heeks, 2017). Instead of enumerating all the standards, this research shall focus on the standards that relate to the working conditions of workers in the remote platform economy as presented in Table 1. According to Nolte and Ghosheh (2010), working conditions refer to “all the legislated conditions that shape workers’ experience on the job”. In the context of remote platform economy, working conditions entails earnings, working time (hours of work, work schedules and rest periods), work-life balance, stability of work, work process, occupational health and safety of the workers (Heeks, 2017; Forde et al., 2017; Berg, 2016).

Table 1 Decent Digital Work Standards for the Platform Economy (Heeks, 2017)

Working Conditions	Standards
Earnings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Workers should be paid at least a minimum wage that takes into account unpaid time.
Working Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The working time should comply with ILO’s Hours of Work Convention (No. 30) for commerce and offices, and national working time directives

Availability of Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote platform work should permit a combination of stability and flexibility • No discrimination: workers should have an equal opportunity to work and treated in an equal manner
Work Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clients should provide workers with information about their identity and the purpose of the task. • There should be clear information on the platform about payment schedule and conditions for non-payment • Rating system for both clients and workers • The communications between clients, platform and workers should be respectful and prompt. • There should be clear rules on the platform regarding work rejection, revision of work, worker ratings, worker suspension, termination and account upgrade. • There should be neutral third-party dispute resolution mechanism • Human and not algorithm should review complaints from workers

2.2.5 Algorithmic Control in the Platform Economy

Rubery and Grimshaw (2001) argues that the interaction between information communication technologies and the balance of bargaining power between clients and workers lead to organizational forms that affect job quality. Silver (2003) also highlights the effect of information communication technologies on the bargaining power of workers. Based on these arguments, Wood et al. (2019), asserts that the confluence of worker power and technologies yields organizational forms that determine the job quality outcomes among the workers in the platform economy.

According to Karlberg (2011), worker power refers to the balance of bargaining power between clients and workers, and among workers (Karlberg, 2011). Since platform economy is situated within precarious work arrangements, it is the individual worker bargaining power - in terms of reputation, skills, labour demand and other non-wage sources of income - that are more important than collective bargaining power (Standing, 2016; Silver, 2003; Wright, 2000). The market forces

in the labour market make it challenging for workers to form unions and collectively bargain their working conditions.

Therefore, workers with varying market marketplace bargaining power are expected to experience differing job qualities. Put differently, workers with strong marketplace bargaining power (good reputation and high ranking on the platform) are likely to earn more. On the other hand, workers with weak reputation earn low incomes. Often times than not, their earnings is below the minimum wage in their country (Wood et al., 2019).

The workers with strong market bargaining power are also likely to control their working time. According to Wood et al. (2019), workers in the global south generally have a weaker individual marketplace bargaining power relative to their clients. As such, the clients post tasks on the platform and communicate with the workers at the time which is convenient to them. Besides, the task has to be completed in time so as to meet the deadline of the client even if it means working the whole night. This organisational form leads to unstructured work patterns, characterized by unpredictable and irregular working hours.

The organizational forms arising from the confluence of worker power and the technologies is characterized by oversupply of labour relative to demand and intense competition. This oversupply of labour arises partly due an increased global connectivity and inadequate job alternatives for the highly educated workforce in the local labour markets. As such, this organizational form make it difficult to get work on the platforms. In turn this leads to job insecurity among the workers –the workers feel they can be replaced at any time by workers from countries charging less for a task (Wood et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Monteith and Giesbert (2017) affirms that social and environmental conversion factors such as educational systems, gender norms and relations, and health affect the capacity of work to offer certain capabilities and benefit the worker's wellbeing. For instance, Wood et al. (2019) highlights that workers with level of income generated from platform economy in a given country is dependent upon the quality of the countries educational systems. As such, these social and environmental conversion factors together with organisational form explains the job quality in the remote platform economy.

In general, the confluence of worker power and technologies yields organizational form that entail high levels of digital control known as ‘algorithmic management’ facilitated by platform-based reputation and rating systems. This form of digital control positions clients- and not the platforms- as “managers” in the labour market. As such, clients are the ones to be pleased and not the platforms. Workers do their best to deliver work of great quality because if the client is not pleased with their work they risk getting lower ratings which impacts negatively on future income

2.3 Empirical Literature

This section reviews existing literature on the socio demographic characteristics remote platform workers. It also reviews the working conditions of these workers, with a particular focus on conditions such as earnings, working time, availability of work and work process. Having done so, it reviews existing literature on the implication of these working conditions on the wellbeing of remote platform workers. The overall strengths and weakness of the literature is presented in a summary at the end of this review.

2.3.1 Characteristics of Remote Platform Workers

Aleksynska, Bastrakova and Kharchenko (2018) used a mixed method research design to examine the experiences of remote platform workers in Ukraine. These authors surveyed a total of 1000 respondents aged 18 and above and conducted eight in-depth individual interviews and six focus group interviews targeting 49 platform workers. The finding showed that most of the platform workers in Ukraine lived in the urban areas.

Regarding the gender of the platform workers, Onkokame, Schoentgen & Schoentgen (2018) in their examination of state of microwork across seven countries (Kenya, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, and Tanzania in Africa using data from in-depth individual surveys. The findings show that female workers dominate microwork in all the countries except Nigeria. Ipeirotis (2010) also examined the demographics of workers on AMT through a survey research. It found that 70% of the workers were female. The proportion of male turkers was 30%.

On the other hand, Aleksynska et al. (2018) found that male platform workers (52%) were more than female platform workers (48%) in Ukraine. Berg et al. (2018) also reported that out of every three workers on AMT, Clickworker, Microworkers, CrowdFlower and Prolific, one of them was

a woman the rest were men. Berg et al. (2018) found that one out every five workers was a woman an indication that there was no gender balance among the workers from developing countries. World Bank (2016, p. 108) also shows that 44% of the workers on Upwork were women and 56% of them are men.

Regarding the age of remote platform workers, Ipeirotis (2010) also reported that youths were overrepresented in the general population of the workers. To be precise, 54% of the workers were between the ages of 21 and 35. Berg et al. (2018) reported that average age of the crowdworkers in developed countries was 35 years and 28 years in developing countries. Onkokame et al. (2018) also reported that a majority of microwork participants are students who are mostly youth. World Bank (2016, p. 108) also estimated that 57% of workers on freelancer.com platform were youths aged between 16 and 25. According to this literature, youths seem to dominate the digital labour platforms.

Regarding the marital status and household characteristics of the platform workers, Aleksynska et al. (2018), found that most of the remote platform workers in Ukraine were married (49%). Besides, most of them lived in a households of two people (28%) and had one child (30%). Forde et al. (2017), reported that an equal distribution between single and married platform workers in Europe. They further found that the proportion of respondents who had no children or other dependents were 60.4 per cent. Berg et al. (2018) also reported that an almost equal distribution between single crowdworkers (48 per cent) and crowdworkers who were either married or cohabiting (47 per cent). In terms of household characteristics, Berg et al. (2018) reported that most of the crowdworkers lived in a households of four people.

Apparently, remote platform workers are highly educated according to the existing literature. Onkokame et al. (2018) reported that a majority of the microworkers were secondary school certificate holders. Besides, there are a few bachelor degree holders who participate in microwork jobs in most of the countries with the exception of Nigeria were 47% of microworkers are holders of a bachelor degree. Aleksynska et al. (2018) also reported a high level of education among platform workers in Ukraine. A majority of them (73%) had a basic undergraduate degree or complete higher education: 16% basic higher education; 55% complete higher education and 2% have PhDs. There are several other literatures that reported the same (Berg et al., 2018; Forde et al., 2017; Margaryan, 2016; Berg, 2016). Notably, microwork is not attractive to PhD holders –an

even holders of a master degree (4%)-perhaps because the opportunity cost of doing online freelance work is higher for them.

Regarding the health status of the workers, 81% of the respondents in Aleksynska et al. (2018) had good health. Another 16% reported that their health was fair. The remaining 3% indicated that their health was either poor or very poor. According to Berg et al. (2018), 8 percent of the crowdworkers reported they had very good health, 37 percent reported that they had good health and 49 percent said that their health was fair. The proportion of respondents who had poor health were 7 percent: 6 percent had poor health and 1 percent had very poor health.

Kässi & Lehdonvirta (2016) found that online freelance workers from India dominated in software development and technology. The workers from the UK dominated in professional services such as accounting, business consulting and legal services. Furthermore, workers from Kenya were found to be active in writing and translation, software development and technology and clerical and data entry.

Apparently, remote platform work is new to most of the workers according to existing literature. Aleksynska et al. (2018) found that 57% of the respondents had worked on the platforms for less than one year. Just 7% of them had worked on the platform for more than five years. Likewise, Berg et al. (2018) found that 56% of the respondents had worked on the platforms for less than one year. Their finding also showed that just 33% of the workers in Africa had worked on the platforms for more than one year. These results shows that even though remote platform work is a recent phenomenon around the globe, it is more recent to most workers from Africa.

Additionally, literature shows that the turnover among the platform workers is quite high. Aleksynska et al. (2018) found that more than three quarters of the workers in Ukraine (83%) had worked on platforms for less than three years: The proportion of respondents who had worked for more than three years was 17%. Similarly, Berg et al. (2018) also found a high turnover among crowdworkers on AMT, Crowdfunder, Clickworker, Prolific and Microworkers. About 29% of the respondents had crowdwork for more than three years.

As regards the motivation for doing platform work, most workers in Ukraine (43%) indicated that their main motivation is the desire for additional income (Aleksynska et al., 2018). The workers on AMT, Crowdfunder, Clickworker, Prolific and Microworkers also indicated the desire for additional income as their main motivation (Berg et al., 2018; Berg, 2016). Kuek et al. (2015)

found that most crowdworkers signed up to crowdwork to supplement their income for those who had alternative sources of income and to generate income for those who considered remote platform work as their primary source of income.

According to Berg et al. (2018), crowdwork was not the main source of income for workers on AMT, Crowdfunder, Clickworker, Prolific and Microworkers. Only 32% of these workers reported that crowdwork was their primary source of income. Berg (2016) also had a similar finding with nearly 40 per cent of the respondents reporting that crowdwork was their primary source of income. Aleksynska et al. (2018) also reported that just 26% of Ukrainians online freelance workers consider crowdwork as their primary source of income. Brawley and Pury (2016) reported that crowdwork is their primary source of income for 39 % American platform workers and 41% of Indian Platform workers on AMT.

2.3.2 Working Conditions of Remote Platform Workers

This section reviews the literature on elements of working condition such as adequate earnings and productive work; working time (hours of work, work schedules and rest periods), and a safe working environment. These elements have been derived from the decent digital work standard and the decent work framework. Instead of a single overarching literature review of working conditions, this sections reviews literature bordering each working condition element so as to bring out the potential concerns for online freelance workers.

2.3.2.1 Earnings

Wood et al. (2019) evaluated the job quality in the remote platform economy using a face-to-face semi-structured interviews with 107 workers on two leading platforms. These workers were from Sub-Saharan Africa (23 in Nigeria, 19 in South Africa and 29 in Kenya) and Southeast Asia (19 in Vietnam, 12 in the Philippines and five in Malaysia). This research used a purposive sampling to ensure that there was a rough gender balance, various fields of work were represented and the workers had been active on the platform for a period of two months. According to their findings, the average weekly earnings of the respondents were \$165: \$150 for workers in Sub-Saharan Africa and \$181 for workers in Southeast Asia.

Aleksynska et al. (2018) used a mixed method research design to examined remote platform work in Ukraine. These authors surveyed a total of 1000 respondents aged 18 and older and conducted eight in-depth individual interviews and six focus group interviews targeting 49 remote platform

workers. The findings show that platform workers in Ukraine had an average income of \$ 260 USD in December 2017. Furthermore, the respondents who considered platform work as their main source of income had higher earnings than those that did not consider platform work as their main source of income .

Berg, Furrerm, Harmon, Rani and Silberman (2018) used a mixed research design to obtain responses from workers on AMT, Crowdfunder, Microworkers, Prolific and Clickworker. The findings showed that the workers made an average of US\$4.43 per hour when just paid work is considered and US\$3.29 per hour when both paid and unpaid hours are considered. It further showed that a considerable proportion of workers earn less income than the minimum wage in their country.

Graham et al. (2017) examined the impacts of global digital labour platforms on the livelihood of workers in South East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The research used transaction data of 61,447 projects that were completed in March 2013 from one of the world's largest digital labour platforms and a survey of 456 workers. It further used a face to face semi-structured interview of 27 digital work stakeholders, 80 workers in Sub-Saharan Africa (38 in Kenya, 23 in Nigeria and 19 in South Africa) and 45 workers in Southeast Asia (21 in Vietnam, 16 in Philippines and 8 in Malaysia). The interviews of the workers took place between September 2014 and October 2018. Their findings show that workers in these countries earn less on average compared to workers in developed countries due to lower reputational profiles and oversupply of labour from such regions. Nonetheless, in relative terms these workers earn much more than the workers in developed countries.

Berg (2016) assessed the income security of remote platform workers using data from two surveys of crowdworkers on Crowdfunder and AMT that ILO undertook in November and December of 2018. A total of 1167 workers from the USA and India were interviewed in the first survey and a total of 677 workers from the same countries were interviewed second survey. According to her findings, the workers receive low pay which can be attributed to insufficient work and a high ratio of unpaid work to paid work. Besides, it shows that the pay rate for online freelance workers in developing countries is often above the pay rate for an equivalent work in the offline economy. On the contrary, the pay rate for crowdworkers in developed countries is often less than the pay

rate for an equivalent work in the offline economy. It is also less than the minimum wage in those countries.

Kuek et al., (2015) engaged 38 online freelance workers (one from Philippine, one from USA, six from Nigeria and 30 from Kenya) in a qualitative interview in June 2014 and found that workers from developing countries earn between \$250 and \$750. Khanna, Ratan, Davis and Thies (2010) evaluated the usability of AMT for microworkers in India earning low incomes. Their finding showed that these workers from developing countries earn between 10 and 20 times the minimum wage in India. On the other hand, the average earnings of workers from developed countries is around the minimum wage.

There is also concern among researchers that the income paid to online gig workers is not commensurate with the effort, cost and skills that goes towards the execution of tasks. Martin, O'Neill, Gupta and Hanrahan (2016) in their examination on how crowd workers registered on AMT perceive their work, found that the income paid to workers does not take account of the time the workers take to search and bid for work, take qualification tests, learn new skills, provide feedback ratings, understand and accommodate the needs of the clients not to mention the time these workers spend on online forums looking for support and information. It also shows that income does not factor the telecommunications and data costs that workers have to incur in order to access online gig work.

Apart from concerns about unpaid work, there are concerns of late compensations and inadequate clarification on when the payment will be made. Berg (2016) found that crowdworkers registered on AMT have to wait for clients to approve their work before payments are made to them. Besides, the duration that the client should take to approve the work is also not defined. However, D'Cruz (2017) contradicts this assertion in his examination of work and employment in modern India. He reports that payments undertaken via a digital platform may be more certain and less delayed than those in local labour markets.

Berg (2016) further reported that there are cases when clients reject work and fail to pay. When this happens, it is the crowdworkers that suffer the most since there is no compensation for the time and resources expended on the work (Onkokame et al., 2018). While their recourse entails reaching out to the platforms to intervene, there are cases when the platforms fail to do the same.

2.3.2.2 Working Time

Wood et al. (2019) also found that remote platform work requires workers to be available online more or less round the clock. This is prevalent among workers in developing countries whose time zones are different from the time zones of the clients (Schörpf, Flecker & Schönauer, 2017). In other words, these workers are in a different continent from the clients. Despite the seemingly flexible nature of remote platform work, in most cases, these workers have to work at unsocial hours. The findings also showed that minimal work opportunities puts the workers under pressure to accept work at unsocial hours. It also makes them to accept to work on tasks under tight deadlines.

Berg and De Stefano (2017) in their research on regulating the platform economy using the results from surveys conducted by ILO. Their findings showed that workers on microwork platforms worked for an average of 30 hours in a week. Besides, 40% of them reported that they worked seven days a week on a regular basis. The proportion of those who reported that they had worked for more than 10 hours during at least one day in the previous month were 50%. Furthermore, they found that low pay on the platforms forces the workers to take more work thus working for long hours.

Berg (2016) also found that microworkers from developing countries opt to work at odd hours because they cannot get as much work as they would like to get. The oversupply of digital labour in the global digital labour market makes it difficult for these workers to find work. As such, they find themselves in direct competition with workers from their region and those from developed countries. Hence, they have to spend long hours searching for work and even work at odd hours. The long working hours is further attributed to insufficient pay. Workers have to bid and take lots of work in order to obtain a decent wage.

Margaryan (2016) further explored how crowd workers develop skills and knowledge while working on online labour platforms using a survey. He administered a questionnaire to workers on Crowdfunder and Upwork. His finding shows that 20% of the crowd workers work for more than 40 hours in a typical week.

Brawley and Pury (2016), in their study on the working experiences of 255 US workers and 132 Indian workers on AMT. The findings also showed that the overall working hours of workers in

developing countries workers average between 20 and 40 hours per week. This means a majority of workers in these platforms did not overwork themselves.

D'Cruz and Noronha (2016) examined the experiences of crowdworkers on Upwork. Their study was based on telephone interviews with 24 crowdworkers from India. The findings show that the workers had discretion over their place of work. They were able to work from home and as such combine online freelance work with domestic work, care work, study and alternative paid work. On the other hand, most of their time was spent doing unpaid work as opposed to paid work.

2.3.2.3 Availability of Work

Wood et al. (2019) further found that most of the remote platform workers (54%) on two major remote gig platforms did not have enough work. Just 20% of the workers indicated that they had enough work. These authors attributed the insufficient work on the platform to the high global oversupply of labour on online labour platforms relative to the demand for labour. This oversupply of labour rises partly from growing global connectivity that enables requesters from anywhere in the world to connect with providers through the digital labour platforms. The unavailability of local labour market alternatives in developing countries to absorb the highly educated yet unemployed workforce also adds to the oversupply of labour.

According to Aleksynska et al. (2018), platform workers in Ukraine also experienced employment insecurity. Since the workers had no employment relationship with the platform, they did not have a formal assurance that they will have more work once they finish a given task. That the platform had blocked the account of a number of workers without providing a reasonable justification also heightened the employment insecurity among the workers.

Berg et al. (2018) also reported that 88% of crowdworkers on Prolific, Clickworker, Crowdworkers and AMT desired to do more work than they are were doing at that time. The authors reiterated the highest proportion of respondents who were willing to do more work were from Africa (98 per cent). On the other hand, the lowest proportion of respondents who were willing to do more work were from Northern America (80 per cent). In order to obtain more work, these workers registered on other platforms to find work.

According to Graham et al. (2017), the organizational forms arising from remote gig work is characterized with a global oversupply of labour relative to demand and high levels of competition between workers with minimal labour protections make it difficult to get work. It further reveals

evidence of economic inclusion, exclusion and discrimination from work. In their response, they argue that the client do not discriminate upon the workers in the global south because of the colour of their skin. Rather, they do so because they are ignorant about their capabilities to perform tasks. D’Cruz and Noronha (2016) also found that Indian workers faced a challenge in getting work on Upwork. The same was more pronounced among new workers than those who were experienced. In order to obtain work, the workers had to check jobs posted on Upwork, read and understand its requirement and prepare a bid that highlights the suitability of the worker to do it. This had to be done regularly to ensure continuity of their income. These circumstances necessitated working at night.

According to Berg (2016), insufficient work or underemployment is a major challenge for many crowdworkers around the world. At least 90 per cent of the workers interviewed reported that they would like to do more work than they were doing at the time of the interview. When asked to give reasons for not doing more work insufficient work was the reason for 60 per cent of workers on Crowdfunder, 38 per cent of US workers and 36 per cent of Indian workers on AMT. Inadequate pay was the reason for 14 per cent of workers on Crowdfunder, 33 per cent of US workers and 24 per cent of Indian workers on AMT. A minority of the workers answered that “am not qualified for the work” or “I do not have time to do more work”.

Furthermore, most of the workers indicated that they would to do more work that is not crowd work. The findings showed that 46 per cent of workers on Crowdfunder, 23 per cent of US workers and 46 per cent of Indian workers on AMT actively searched for other work besides crowd work during the past four weeks. Responses from individual workers showed that finding work on the platforms is the toughest aspect in crowdwork. There are cases when workers spend much time looking for work than actually doing the work. This erodes the flexibility that is much coveted in crowdwork (Berg, 2016).

2.3.2.4 Work Process

Moreover, Aleksynska et al. (2018) in their examination of work experiences of platform workers in the Ukraine found that the proportion of respondents whose accounts had been blocked was 6%. Most of them reported that the platform did so because they violated the rules on the platforms such as late submission of tasks, complaints from customers, and noncompliance with requests from clients. However, 37% reported that the reasons that the platform gave were not justified.

According to Berg (2016), there are numerous cases when clients reject work from workers and refuse to pay for the same. This assertion is based on findings from ILO survey of workers in AMT and Crowdfunder. The proportion of workers who had had their work either rejected or not paid was 94%. Although 47% of these workers admitted that they had made mistakes, the mistakes were due to unclear instructions on the part of clients, compounded by an inability of the workers to communicate with the clients. The workers further pointed that the platforms were unresponsive to their request for mediating disputes with the clients.

Martin et al. (2016) also found concerns about the opacity of platform procedures especially those dealing with account suspension, termination and upgrade among workers on AMT. According to them, these issues lead to sub-optimal task performance and lower wages. It further inculcated a sense of discrimination among workers, even in cases when that is not the case

Bergvall-Kareborn and Howcroft (2014) in their examination of the commodification of labour in AMT finds that there is information asymmetry between the worker and the client. The workers do not have information on the identity of the client and the purpose of the task. There are also cases when clients do not clarify to workers what is expected of them, that is, what exactly is to be done and to what standard. There are cases when clients alter task briefs without compensating workers for what tasks already executed.

2.3.3 Implication of the Working Conditions on Wellbeing of Remote Platform Workers

2.3.3.1 Implication on Household Income of Remote Platform Workers

Kabiru (2018) conducted a research on the effect of the terms of employment on the wellbeing of workers working in three cut flower regions in Kenya namely Thika, Naivasha and Nanyuki. The research used a comparative survey research design. The author collected data from a sample of 358 workers using a semi-structured questionnaire, 18 key informants' interviews and three focus group discussions. The findings indicate that a large percentage of permanent workers perceive their wellbeing to be better off in comparison with percentage under contract and casual employment. This is an indication that terms of employment affect workers' wellbeing. The stable nature of their earnings translated to a stable household income which they could use to procure the most basic needs and still save for the future.

According to Lee et al. (2014), there is a relationship between income and well-being at lower income levels. However, there is no such relationship at higher income levels. This means that

increased wages are likely to lead to a positive effect on the wellbeing of workers with lower levels of income and not those with higher levels of income. Besides, individuals who find it easy to balance their expenses and income have a significant wellbeing than those who find it difficult to balance their expenses and income.

According to Diener and Diener (2002), earning a sufficient wage has a positive effect on the wellbeing of workers. Sufficient wage, especially a wage that is above the minimum wage, translates to more household income for workers. The workers can use this income to basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing. They can also invest this in their education and become more creative, innovative and be able to do more diverse work. They can also invest it in their health and lead longer and more productive lives. Furthermore, they can save a part of it and become more secure. The governments can also tax this income and use it to generate resources -for development thus reducing the levels of poverty and inequality in the economy (UNDP, 2015).

On the other hand, a wage that is below the minimum wage is expected to have a negative effect on the wellbeing of workers. Such a wage is associated to a reduction in the purchasing power of workers and a reduction of their investment in health and education. Besides, such reductions in wages make it a challenge to save for the future. Consequently, this deteriorates the wellbeing of workers (UNDP, 2015)

Schriner and Oerther (2014) conducted an experiment in rural Kenya on the effects of crowdwork employment on poverty. The researchers recruited 7 people- in a village known as Kamuga- who had and gave them an image classification task on PulaCloud, a simplified crowdsourcing platform, and paid them \$2000. After six months, they interviewed 5 of them on how they spent their income. Their findings show that most of the workers spent their income in their education. The rest of the income was spent on basic needs, purchased pots and radios and invested in small businesses. This is an indication that crowdwork has a potential to meet the basic needs of the workers, enhance their future earnings and promote economic growth.

Berg (2016) also examined the income security of microworkers on AMT and Crowdfunder. The findings show that workers who considered crowdwork as their primary source of income were in a weak financial situation than those who crowdwork is their secondary source of income. These workers had a more difficult time meeting basic necessary expenses each month. Besides, they did not have sufficient savings to meet emergency expenses not to mention that most of them did not

remit their contributions to social security, private retirement account and health insurance coverage on a regular basis.

These crowdworkers also reported underemployment as a main concern among them. The proportion of workers who reported that they would like to do more crowdwork was 90%. Insufficient work coupled with low level of participation on the platform has a negative implication on the household income of the workers (Berg, 2016).

Berg et al. (2018) also found that many remote platform workers lived in a precarious financial situation. The household income of one out of every five workers was not able to cover basic needs. Notably, 42% of the workers who had such experiences were from Africa. The proportion of workers who lived in households that did not have sufficient savings to take care of an emergency equivalent to one month's income was 42%. An even larger proportion of the workers (44%) had debts such as car payments, legal bills, medical bills, student loan and loans from relatives.

Aleksynska et al. (2018) used a mixed method research design to examine remote platform work in Ukraine. These authors surveyed a total of 1000 respondents aged 18 and older and conducted eight in-depth individual interviews and six focus group interviews targeting 49 platform workers. According to the findings, a majority of the workers (68%) reported that their income from all sources was enough to cover their basic needs such as clothes, housing, food and transportation. The rest reported that their income from all sources was not enough to cover their basic needs.

Aleksynska et al. (2018) further found that the workers did not have a guarantee of their future income beyond every task they completed because they were in a non-standard employment relationship. The "assurance" depended entirely on their individual market bargaining power in terms of reputation, skills, experience, and the relationship that they develop with clients.

The insufficient work on the platform and weak structural power among the workers heightened this situation further making new workers and workers relying on the same client to experience high forms of job insecurity.

Wood et al. (2019) evaluated the job quality in the remote platform economy using a face-to-face semi-structured interviews with 107 workers on two leading platforms. These workers were from Sub-Saharan Africa (23 in Nigeria, 19 in South Africa and 29 in Kenya) and Southeast Asia (19

in Vietnam, 12 in the Philippines and five in Malaysia). This research used a purposive sampling to ensure that there was a rough gender balance, various fields of work were represented and the workers had been active on the platform for a period of two months. These authors found that the respondents were earning an income that was sufficient to elude material hardship in their countries. Their average weekly earnings were \$165: \$150 for workers in Sub-Saharan Africa and \$181 for workers in Southeast Asia.

2.3.3.2 Implication on Health of Remote Platform Workers

Angrave and Charlwood (2015) used longitudinal data to determine the relationship between working time, under-employment, over-employment and subjective wellbeing of workers in the United Kingdom. The researchers used the person-environment fit theory (P-E fit) to hypothesize that it is the fit between actual and desired working hours which affects the subjective wellbeing of workers. The results suggest that long working hours of work do not directly affect subjective wellbeing of workers. However, the wellbeing of the workers declined as a result of a mismatch between actual and desired hours. The results further suggested that underemployment and over-employment is related to lower subjective wellbeing, particularly for men working between 35 and 41 hours in a typical week and women working less than 35 hours in a typical week.

Brian and Nandi (2015) assert that working hours that affect the wellbeing of workers. Rather, it is the mismatch between the hours workers prefer to work and the actual hours that they work that reduce wellbeing of workers. As such long working hours might not be detrimental to the wellbeing of workers provided that they prefer working for those hours. Workers have different preferences.

The differences in these preferences depend on the workers' work identity, that is, the importance of a given occupation to their self-image of workers. Therefore, workers with a strong work identity working for long hours are likely to report higher job satisfaction and less anxiety compared to workers with weak work identity working for the same number of hours. Nevertheless, irrespective of their work identity, workers putting in long hours are more likely to experience depression and anxiety than those putting in standard hours (Brian and Nandi, 2015).

According to Dorrian, Skinner and Pirandello (2010), a higher work load resulting from a high quantity of work is also associated to higher psychological distress (exhaustion, burnout and stress) owing to the energy and effort required to manage such tasks. It is also associated to work-family

conflicts. The feelings of fatigue, depression, anxiety and irritability arising from the high workload interfere with the ability of the workers to perform well in non-work domains. Workers working in such conditions are not likely to honour other commitments such as family routines, social events and childcare.

Berg et al. (2018) further noted that content moderation on social media exposes workers to violent content. Robert (2016) adds that the content is rife with imagery and language that is racist, misogynist, violent or homophobic. This content can have a long-term psychological implication on these workers often leading to symptoms akin to those of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) such as nightmares, anxiety, hallucinations and insomnia. However, Heeks (2017) points that this work does not fall within the orbit of remote platform economy since the social media firms or their proxies hire the workers directly without the involvement of platforms.

Forde et al. (2017) examined the experiences of remote platform workers in Europe. The research was based on a survey of 1,200 platform workers and interviews with 50 expert stakeholders in eight European countries. The findings showed that working on the online labour platforms is associated to a general feeling of worry. On the other hand, it is not related to high levels of emotional disturbance or stress.

According to Wood et al. (2019), the number of working hours on the online labour platforms do not reveal in entirety the experiences of workers on the platform. The working schedule of the workers is irregular and in most cases they have to work for long hours including working at night with minimal rest. This could be a source of exhaustion. Furthermore, the irregular work schedules also interferes with the work-life balance for workers and work-work balance for workers with alternative sources of income. The weak structural bargaining power among the workers relative to the bargaining power of the clients limits their influence over their working time.

These authors also point that the platform based algorithmic control entails autonomy in the form of discretion over place of work. However, as workers work from home without interpersonal contact they risk being social misfits. This has a potential implication on their mental health, mood and productivity (Wood et al., 2019).

Graham et al. (2017) also found that the uncertain nature of work on the platform is associated to anxiety among the workers. Since the workers had no employment relationship with the platform, they lack a formal assurance that they will have more work once they finish a given task. The

“assurance” that they have emanates from their experience, reputation and good relations with their clients who could also stop giving them work at any time. This made them anxious about their future income.

2.3.3.3 Implication on Skill Acquisition and Development of Remote Platform Workers

Eraut (2007) also found that learning occurs every day in the workplaces. This learning occurs when workers work together and is guided by a more knowledgeable, colleagues and clients in the workplace. It further occurs incidental knowledge sharing opportunities. This learning pattern casts a shadow on skill development and learning in online freelancing. Since these workers have an autonomy over their place of work, there are high chances that working at home inhibits this kind of social learning.

According to Beerepoot and Hendriks (2013), remote platform work is associated to disintermediation. It has a potential to bring workers closer to clients and as such enable them to perform higher value-added services in the value chain and upgrade their knowledge and skills. However, Graham et al. (2017) found that remote platform work has the potential to keep workers away from the core business processes that their labour is embedded and thus hindering flow of knowledge from the client to the work.

Consequently, this limits the abilities of the workers to upgrade their skills so as to take up new tasks in the same value chain (Pietrobelli & Rabellotti, 2011). For instance, most workers reported that they did not know much about the identity of their client, their business and the purpose of the task. Furthermore, these authors found that most of the workers did low-skill tasks that were inconsistent with their skill set, expertise and professional experience. This disparities led to deskilling among the workers.

Margaryan (2016) explored how remote platform workers acquired and developed their skills and knowledge while working on the online labour platforms. He used a mixed-method research design to obtain data from a sample of is 113 crowdworkers: 20 online freelancers from Upwork and 93 microworkers from CrowdFlower. The focus was on informal learning that crowdworkers initiated and controlled such as engaging in stimulating tasks; sharing knowledge and work together with others, and studying professional courses either online or offline. The findings indicated that both online freelancing and microwork are learning-intensive. The crowdworkers reported that they often learn new skills while working on Upwork and CrowdfLOWER.

Wood et al. (2019) reiterates that the confluence of digital technologies and the balance of bargaining power between workers and clients yield organization forms that enable the workers to transcend the limitations of the labour markets in their country and connect with several clients from different industries, sectors, and countries and perform a variety of tasks in their areas of specialization. Besides, this enabled them to perform tasks that they are unfamiliar with and take on tasks of increasing complexity. Consequently, the workers are able learn, acquire new skills, develop existing skills and gain an experience that they would have otherwise not gained in the offline economy.

2.4 Summary of the Literature Review

Although there is considerable literature on the characteristics of remote platform workers around the globe, there is a dearth of literature on the characteristics of online freelance workers in Kenya. Besides, most literature on the characteristics of remote platform workers do not give a particular focus on Kenya. Those that focus on Kenya do not focus on online freelance workers. Rather, they focus on microworkers. Additionally, there is no particular focus on the youths despite numerous literature indicating that youths dominate remote platform work.

There is also a dearth of literature on the working conditions of online freelance workers in Kenya. Most of the literature on the working conditions of remote platform workers in Kenya focuses on microworkers and not online freelance workers. Notably, microwork platforms such as AMT is geographically concentrated with 80% of its workers coming from USA and 16% of its workers coming from India (Hitlin, 2016). Those that focus on online freelance workers in Kenya use a small sample size and do not give a particular focus on the youths despite numerous literature indicating that youths dominate remote platform work.

Moreover, most of the literature is not organized in terms of the broad components of working conditions such earnings, working time, work-life balance, social dialogue, occupational health and safety (ILO, 2008). Rather, these literature is organized around terms such risks and costs of doing platform work, advantages and disadvantages of doing remote platform work among other similar terms. The purpose of most of these literature is to evaluate the potential of remote platform work to solve youth unemployment and reduce poverty levels in most countries especially those in Africa.

Most important, there is limited literature on the implications of online freelance work on the wellbeing of workers around the globe both in terms of number studies carried out and the breadth of countries and platforms investigated (Wood et al., 2019). Besides, the existing literature fails to explain the job quality outcomes. Similarly, the existing literature makes little attempt to determine whether remote platform work meet decent work standards.

Furthermore, these literature do not provide theoretical conceptualization of the drivers of the working conditions in remote platform work. There is also a limited theoretical conceptualization on the implications of remote platform work-in general- on the wellbeing of the workers not to mention the implications of the working conditions on the wellbeing of the workers.

Wood et al. (2019) evaluated the job quality in the remote platform economy using a face-to-face semi-structured interviews with 107 workers on two leading platforms. These workers were from Sub-Saharan Africa (23 in Nigeria, 19 in South Africa and 29 in Kenya) and Southeast Asia (19 in Vietnam, 12 in the Philippines and five in Malaysia). Although it tries to address the above limitations, it is based on a small sample size since only 24 respondents were from Kenya.

Therefore, this research seeks to fill the gap in knowledge on the quality of online freelance work in Kenya with a particular focus on Nairobi County. Besides, it focuses on youths who not only dominate remote platform work but are also the main beneficiaries of investments the government of Kenya is making in remote platform work, also commonly referred to as online work in Kenya. In order to bridge this gap, this research examines the characteristics of the youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County. It also examines their working conditions and the implications these working conditions have on their wellbeing. Regarding wellbeing, this research gives a particular focus on their household income, health, and skills acquisition and development.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This research postulates that the confluence of information-communication technologies and the worker power - balance of bargaining power between the clients and workers- yields organisational forms which shape the working conditions (job quality outcomes) of online freelance workers (Rubery and Grimshaw, 2001; Wood et al., 2019). In this case, working conditions refers to the earnings, working time, work that is available to the workers and the work process on the online labour platforms. These working conditions in turn affect the wellbeing (household income, health and skills acquisition and development) of the online freelance workers

Information-communication technologies in this context refers to the online labour platforms and their non-proximate monitoring mechanisms, platform-based ranking and rating systems. According to Standing (2016), the growth of the platform economy can be situated within the setting of open employment relationship since it is characterized with casualization, fragmentation and precarisation of work in developed countries. As such, the worker power refers to the worker's individual marketplace bargaining power in terms of reputation, skills, labour demand and other non-wage sources of income –and not collective sources of power (Kalleberg, 2011: 31). In this case, reputation refers to the symbolic power that workers get owing to the algorithm control and the good relationships that these workers build overtime with their clients.

Therefore, workers with stronger individual marketplace bargaining power in terms of reputation, skills, and high labour demand tend to earn more compared to those with lower individual marketplace bargaining power. These workers are able to negotiate better pay with clients on the platforms than their counterparts with lower individual marketplace bargaining power. Besides, their strong reputational profile and high ranking on the platform is likely to attract more work to them. This increases their potential to earn more on the platform than workers with lower individual marketplace bargaining power (Wood et al., 2019).

Additionally, workers with weak individual marketplace bargaining power relative to the clients on the platforms have limited influence over their working time. As such, clients determines worker's working time and task deadlines. According to Wood et al. (2019), workers in the global south generally have a weaker individual marketplace bargaining power relative to their clients. As such, they post tasks on the platform and communicate with the workers at the time which is convenient to them. Besides, the task has to be completed in time so as to meet the deadline of the client even if it means working the whole night. This organisational form leads to unstructured work patterns, characterized by unpredictable and irregular working hours (Wood et al., 2019).

It is further important to note that the organizational forms arising from the confluence of the digital technologies and balance of bargaining power is often characterized with oversupply of labour relative to demand and the high levels of competition among the workers. This makes it difficult to get work on the platforms as every task that a client posts will attract numerous bids as soon as it appears. Nonetheless, in this work arrangement workers with strong individual marketplace bargaining power (those that have a good reputation with clients and are ranked higher

on the platform) relative to other workers still manage to ensure a regular flow of work to themselves. On the other hand, workers with weak reputational profile put in a lot of unpaid working hours including working unsocial working hours (evenings, nights and weekends).

Notably, these organizational forms also determine the work process on the online labour platforms. The clients are likely not to reveal their identity to the workers, inform them about the purpose of the tasks and reject their work without giving a proper justification because of their strong structural bargaining power relative to the workers. Even though platforms are just mediators between the worker and the clients, they are most likely to side with the clients and not workers when settling disputes because the clients have a stronger structural bargaining power. Likewise, platforms are likely to terminate or suspended a worker's account with a proper justification.

In general, workers with the above individual marketplace bargaining power are likely to experience better working conditions (job quality outcomes) such as earnings above the minimum wage, flexible working hours, regular flow of work and transparent work process. Earnings above the minimum wage means that workers can have adequate incomes for emergencies, invest in their education, skills and health thus increasing their potential future earnings. Flexible working hours facilitate work life balance, work-work balance for those with alternative sources of income. Furthermore, regular flow of work ensures job security and transparent work process eliminates cases of work stress leading to optimal task performance (Heeks, 2017).

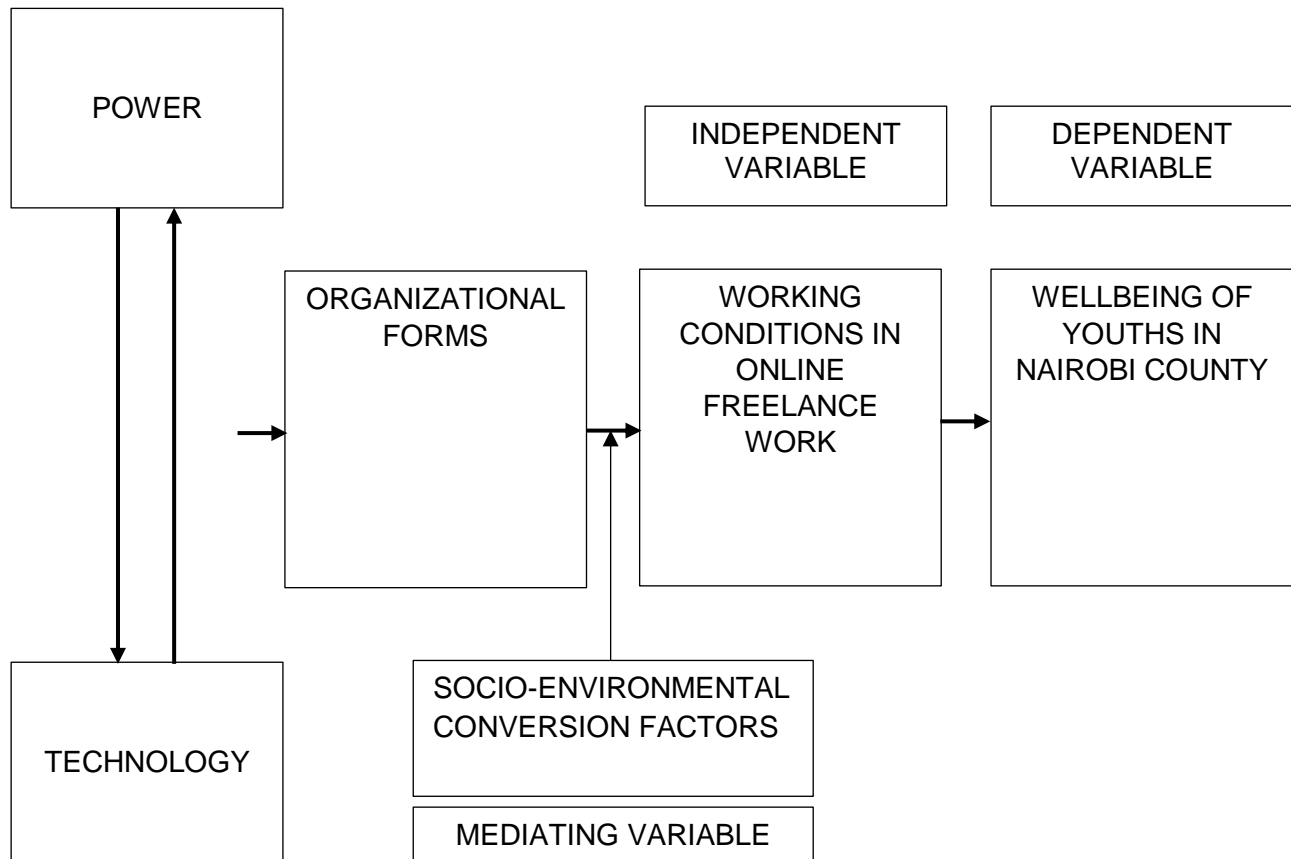
Monteith and Giesbert (2017) asserts further that the ability of work to yield certain capabilities and affect well-being positively is subject to a number of social and environmental conversion factors such as educational systems, health and gender norms and relations. Based on this assertion, this research holds that social and environmental conversion factors moderates the association between the organizational forms and the working conditions (job quality outcomes) of online freelance workers. This means that workers with differing social and environmental conversion factors experience divergent job quality outcomes.

In general, it is imperative to note that the most profound organizational form that arises from the confluence of the digital technologies, in the form of online labour platforms- and the worker power is 'algorithmic management' of workers through platform-based reputation and rating systems. This is a form of management that positions clients- and not the platforms- as "managers"

in the labour market. In turn, workers have to follow their orders and please them in order to increase their current and future earning potential. As such, the behaviours of workers on the platform are structured through ‘soft’ control (Wood et al., 2019).

2.6 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework, Author’s conceptualization



This research examines the implication of the working conditions in online freelance work on the wellbeing of youths in Nairobi County. Therefore, the independent variable is the working conditions in online freelance work. These working conditions include their earnings, working time, availability of work and work process. The dependent variable is the wellbeing of youths in Nairobi County. The indicators of wellbeing include household income, health and the skills these youths have acquired and developed. According to Monteith and Giesbert (2017), the ability of work to yield certain capabilities and affect well-being positively is subject to a number of social and environmental conversion factors such as educational systems, health and gender norms and

relations. Therefore factors moderates the interaction between the organizational forms and the working conditions in online freelance work.

Figure 1 shows that the confluence of information-communication technologies and the worker power - balance of bargaining power between the clients and workers- yields organisational forms which shape the working conditions of online freelance workers (Rubery and Grimshaw, 2001). These working conditions in turn affect the wellbeing of the online freelance workers. The social and environmental conversion factors such as educational systems, health and gender norms and relations mediate the relationship between the organizational forms and the working conditions in online freelance work.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes how this research is undertaken. It details how the data required to answer the research questions are collected, analysed and presented. It is divided into six subsections, namely site description, research design, population and sampling, data sources and collection, data analysis and presentation, and ethical consideration.

3.1 Site Description

Nairobi County is one of the 47 counties in Kenya. It is coterminous within Nairobi, which is the capital city of Kenya. It also borders Machakos County on the East, Kajiado County on the South and Kiambu County on the North and West. In terms of geographical size, it happens to be the smallest county with a total area of 696.1 Km² (County Government of Nairobi, 2018).

Figure 2 Map of Nairobi County (Google Maps, 2019)



In spite of the geographical size, Nairobi is also the largest contributor to the gross domestic product in Kenya, accounting for 21.7 per cent of the same in 2019 (GoK, 2019b). It is also the most populous county in Kenya with a total population of 4,397,073 in 2019 (GoK, 2019a). According to the County Government of Nairobi (2018), the county was projected to have a youth population of 2,146, 163 in 2018, which is approximately 48.80 of the total population.

According to GoK (2009), Nairobi had a labour force of 2,148,605 in 2009. The labour force was projected to be 3,553,625 in 2019. The proportion of the labour force in 2009, classified as employed was 1,832,751 and those seeking employment was 315,844. The proportion of the labour force regarded as youths in the same year was 1,210,213. This statistics is an indication that youths account for more than half of the labour force and are the most productive cohort in the county (County Government of Nairobi, 2018).

Furthermore, Nairobi accounts for the largest proportion of wage employment in the country. According to the County Government of Nairobi (2018), Nairobi's formal sector employed a total number of 453,000 people in various industries such as manufacturing, trade restaurants and hotels. The other industries that contribute to wage employment in Nairobi are construction, real estate, finance, transport, communications, and business services.

Nonetheless, a large segment of the labour force in Nairobi County is employed in the informal sector. Those employed in the informal sector were about 1,548,100 in 2009, which was about 3.5 times those employed in the formal sector. Similarly, most of the youths are employed in the informal sector. The ease of entry and exit this sector has made it a potential avenue for youth employment (County Government of Nairobi, 2018).

There is also a substantial number of youths who are unemployed in Nairobi County. After graduating from village polytechnics, technical training institutes and university, most of them move to Nairobi-the capital city- in search of employment. However, most of them end up unemployed due to the low absorption rate in the formal sector (County Government of Nairobi, 2018).

Nairobi also has a vibrant information communication and technology sector in the country. It hosts numerous innovation hubs, incubators and accelerators that have catalysed a digital revolution in the country (GoK, 2019d). It also has the widest optic fibre coverage compared to other counties and most of its inhabitants are educated and technologically savvy (County Government of Nairobi, 2018). According to Aleksynska et al. (2018), remote platform work is largely an urban phenomenon with most of the remote platform workers residing in urban or semi-urban areas. Cumulatively, these factors make Nairobi County a potential destination for online outsourcing and thus the most suitable to conduct this research.

3.2 Research Design

This research uses quantitative and qualitative research methods, also known as mixed methods. The quantitative method involves the use of a semi-structured questionnaire (appendix 1) administered to a sample of youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County. The qualitative method involves the use of interview guides (appendix 2) administered to key informants, who are opinion leaders and policy makers on information and communication technology for development, business process outsourcing, online outsourcing, digital work and youth employment in Kenya. The purpose of mixed methods is for completeness of the research. The use of the qualitative method in addition to the quantitative method provides a rich and contextual perspective that can otherwise not be achieved through quantitative method alone (Bryman, 2012).

3.3 Population and Sampling

The initial method used to recruit the online freelance workers for the interviews did not take off. It involved obtaining a list of youth beneficiaries of Ajira Digital Program. The list was supplied on a condition that the data would be used only to achieve the objectives of this research. A total of 4356 beneficiaries of the program aged between 18 and 35 and living in Nairobi County were included in the sampling frame.

A systematic sampling method was further used to draw a sample of 84 workers from this sampling frame. Subsequently, ten of them were contacted for a pre-test of the questionnaire between March 1, 2019 and March 15, 2019. From the interviews, it was apparent that most of the respondents had just started working on the platforms and did not have much experience on the same leave alone obtaining any work. Besides, some of them had not registered on the online labour platform. Instead, they were working exclusively for workers who acted as an intermediary between the platform and them.

Consequently, a different approach had to be adopted to obtain a representative sample. The initial step in this new approach entailed getting a representative list of online freelance workers in Nairobi County. An extensive crawl of the online labour platforms and online freelance forums was conducted on April 1, 2019 to determine the population of online freelance workers from Nairobi County. Table 2 shows that the total number of online freelance workers that were registered on the online labour platforms and online freelance forums in Kenya on April 1, 2019 was 273, 352.

Having obtained the estimated population of online freelance workers in Kenya, the second step entailed getting the population of online freelance workers in Nairobi County. It is important to note that most online labour platforms did not permit a filter of the location of the workers beyond their country of origin. From the platform that allowed the same - such as Fiverr and Upwork - it was apparent that an average of five out of every ten workers from Kenya indicated that they lived in Nairobi. Therefore, it was estimated that the population of online freelance workers from Nairobi County was 136, 676.

Table 2 Population of Online freelance Workers in Kenya

No	Name	Platform	Number of Workers
1	Upwork	Online labour platform	5,000
2	Freelancer	Online labour platform	2,111
2	Guru	Online labour platform	27,517
4	PPH	Online labour platform	1, 303
5	Freelancers Kenya	Online forum	3,437
6	Article Writers' Community	Online forum	24,753
7	Content and Article Writers in Kenya	Online forum	4, 118
8	Article Writers Kenya	Online forum	4076
9	Awesome Transcribers in Kenya	Online forum	4,510
10	Awesome Transcribers and Writers in Kenya	Online forum	9,264
11	Academic Research Writers	Online forum	21,719
12	Academia research writer (original)	Online forum	115,523
13	Academia Research Writers Reformed	Online forum	50, 021
		Total	273, 352

The third step involved determining the sample size from the above population. This research used Yamane's formula to calculate the sampling size. According to this formula, for a 95% confidence level and $p = 0.5$, size of the sample n is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

where, N is the population size and e is the level of precision (Sarmah, Hazarika & Choudhury, 2013). According to Sarmah, Hazarika and Choudhury (2013), the level of precision, also known as the sampling error, is the margin of error that is permissible between the estimated value and the population value. In this case, N is 136, 676 and the level of precision is $\pm 8\%$ owing to the cases of double registration of the workers across the platforms and forums. Therefore, the sample size of online freelance workers drawn from the above population was 156.

The fourth step entailed sending invitations for an interview to all the workers on the above online labour platforms and members on the above online freelance forums. The invitation stipulated that the survey was voluntary, it would take approximately 45 minutes and the responses would be confidential and only used for academic purposes. It was also made clear that the survey targeted online freelance workers aged between 18 and 35, who have been living in Nairobi County for the past twelve months preceding the interview. Another condition highlighted in the invitation was that the workers had to avail themselves in person for the survey at a location of their convenience within the central business district in Nairobi.

A total of 609 online freelance workers aged between 18 and 35 and living in Nairobi County for the past twelve months accepted the invitation and expressed interest in participating in the survey. The acceptances were listed in the order of their receipt and a systematic sampling method used to draw a sample of 156 workers for inclusion in the sample. The interviews conducted between April 8, 2019 and September 30, 2019. The semi-structured questionnaire was administered to 133 online freelance workers. A total of 9 online freelance workers were either unreachable on the date scheduled for their survey. The tool was also not administered to the remaining 14 because they needed compensation as a precondition to participating in the survey.

Having used a somewhat similar approach, Aleksynska et al. (2018) pointed out that the time bound nature of this approach might leave out workers who made their profiles invisible during the time of the survey for various reasons such as taking a break or having too much work. Hannak

et al. (2017) also pointed out that there are platforms that have put in place a spam identification system that blocks one from posting numerous direct messages to the workers and extensive crawling on their websites. This challenge also emerged in the course of this work and alternative methods were used to circumvent the same.

Regarding the key informant interview, this research used an expert sampling technique to come up with a sample of the key informants. An expert sampling is a purposive sampling method where respondents are admitted into the sample in a non-random manner based on their expertise on the subject being studied (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Table 3 shows the list of the key informants admitted in the sample and their role in this research. These key informants are opinion leaders on information and communication technology for development, business process outsourcing, online outsourcing digital work and youth employment in Kenya.

Table 3 Key Informants

	Professional	Importance
1	An officer in charge of Ajira Digital at the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology (MoICT)	The potential of online freelance work in creating decent employment for the youth in Nairobi County
2	An officer at the department of education, youth, gender, sports, culture, and social services in the county government of Nairobi	The general implication of these working conditions on the wellbeing of youths in Nairobi County and
3	An officer at National Employment Authority	The potential of online freelance work in creating decent employment for the youth in Nairobi County
4	An officer at school of computing and informatics at University of Nairobi (UoN)	The practical measures that the government can adopt to regulate the subsector so as to improve these working conditions
5	An officer at Kuhustle, a digital labour platform based in Nairobi	Whether online freelance work offers the best use of the skills of the youths
6	An officer at Rockefeller Foundation in Nairobi	The general implication of these working conditions on the wellbeing of youths in Nairobi County
7	An expert on digital economy based in Nairobi	The general implication of these working conditions on the wellbeing of youths in Nairobi County

The key informants were contacted through emails to schedule a meeting. When necessary telephone calls were used to make follow-ups. Out of the seven key informants, just five of them intimated that they would be available for the interviews. The officer at Kuhustle and Rockefeller Foundation were not available for the interview. The interviews took place between November 19, 2018 and March 31, 2019.

3.4 Data Sources and Collection

This research used primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data was obtained from semi-structured questionnaires administered to 133 online freelance workers aged between 18 and 35 in Nairobi County. The responses from these workers were marked in the questionnaire and reviewed at the end of each day. The primary data was further obtained from key informant interview guides administered to five key informants in Nairobi. Their responses were jotted on a notebook and reviewed at the end of each day. The secondary data was obtained from existing literature on remote platform work.

A pre-test of the data collection instrument and other field logistics was done before the actual data collection. The pre-test targeted five online freelance workers and one key informant. The purpose of the pre-test is to check on the flow of the questions, their meaning and the language used in the tool. It also gives a glimpse of the time it would take to administer each tool (Bryman, 2012).

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

The quantitative data was keyed in SPSS 20.0 to facilitate univariate and bivariate analysis. The univariate analysis was be done for nominal, ratio and ordinal data collected from the field. The correlation between the various independent and dependent variables was also be determined. The analysed data was presented in tables and charts. The qualitative data collected from the field were transcribed, coded and analysed using Nvivo to obtain common themes.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

This research was conducted in an ethical manner. The data collected from the workers was used exclusively for the purposes of this research and was not released to the public. In cases where the workers were quoted, their names and platforms were not revealed to avoid violating their contextual expectations about their data. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that crawling the online labour platforms was unavoidable.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the results of the interviews from 133 youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County conducted between April 1, 2019 and September 30, 2019. It further presents the findings of five key informant interviews conducted between November 19, 2018 and March 31, 2019. It also interprets the findings and describes their significance in light of the existing literature on the objectives of this research. The chapter is organised based on the three objectives of this research.

4.1 Characteristics of Youths doing Online Freelance Work in Nairobi County

Online freelance workers are spread across every constituency in Nairobi County. Nonetheless, most of them (16%) are concentrated in Roysambu, a constituency containing five wards namely, Githurai, Kahawa West, Kahawa, Roysambu and Zimmerman. The next constituency is Westlands with a concentration of 9%. Kasarani and Embakasi East came third each with a concentration of 8%. Dagoretti North and Kibra have a concentration of 7% each. Langata has a concentration of 6%. Embakasi West, Starehe, Dagoretti South, Makadara, Mathare have a concentration of 5% each. Embakasi Central and Kamukunji have a concentration of 4% each. Ruaraka and Embakasi South both have a concentration of 3% each. Embakasi North has the lowest concentration of 2%.

The wide distribution of online freelance workers across Nairobi can be attributed to the wide infrastructure available in the county to facilitate online freelance work. It has the highest access to internet and electricity per household compared to the other counties (County Government of Nairobi, 2018). Aleksynska et al. (2018) also found that platform workers in Ukraine were more concentrated in urban areas.

4.1.1 Sex and Age Characteristics of the Workers

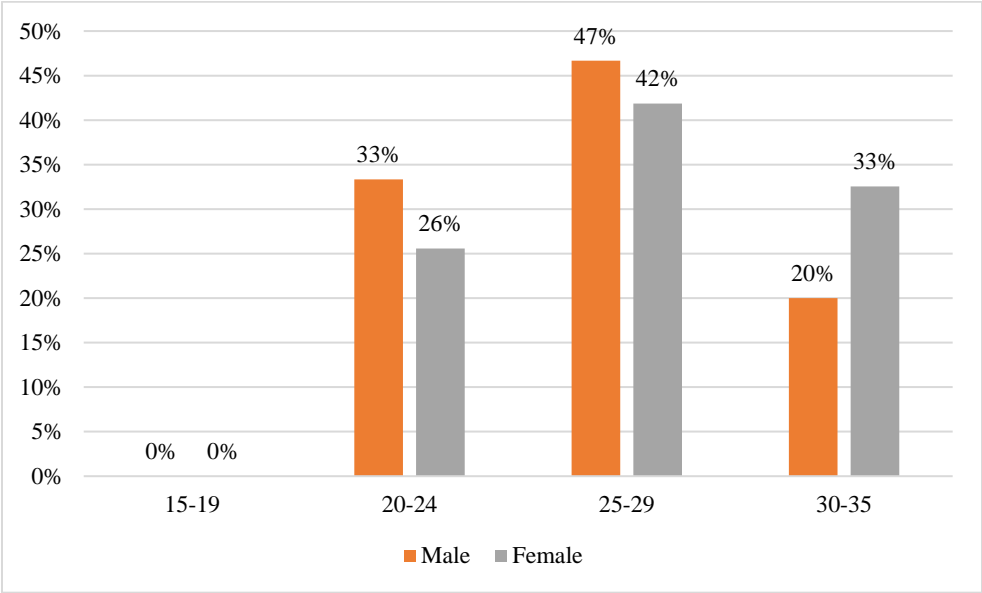
There was quite an uneven **gender balance** among the platform workers. The proportion of male and female respondents was 68% and 32% respectively. Therefore, out every ten respondents on the platform, three of them were female. World Bank (2016, p. 108) also found that 44% of the workers on Upwork were women and 56% of them are men. Furthermore, Aleksynska et al. (2018) also found that male platform workers (52%) were more than female platform workers (48%) in Ukraine. Berg et al. (2018) also reported that out of every three workers on AMT, CrowdFlower, Clickworker, Microworkers and Prolific, one of them was a woman the rest were men. These

authors further reiterated that there was no gender balance in developing countries with only 20% of the workers being women. The uneven gender balance among the youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County can be attributed to the low transition among female students from basic education to higher education (County Government of Nairobi, 2018).

Most of the respondents also reported 25-29 as their **age bracket** (45%). The second most cited age bracket was 20-24 (31%). The proportion of respondents who reported 30-35 as their age bracket was 24%. None of the respondents said that they were aged between 15 and 19 years.

The high proportion of workers in the 25-29 age bracket (45%) is an indication that online freelance work is somewhat the default solution to unemployment for most graduates in Nairobi County. Berg et al. (2018) also reported that crowdworkers in developing countries had an average age of 28 years. That most women in the 30-35 age bracket are married and have dependent children reinforces the idea that online freelance work has the potential to enlarge labour market options for women with care responsibilities (Aleksynska et al., 2018).

Figure 3 Distribution Workers by Gender and Age



Further disaggregation of the **gender across the age brackets** also shows uneven gender balance across the age brackets. There are more men than women in the 20-24 and 25-29 age brackets. However, there are women than men in the 30-35 age category. Interestingly, 72% of the women in the 30-35 age category are married and have dependent children.

The respondents were further asked to indicate their **highest level of education**. An overwhelming majority of them are highly educated. The proportion of the respondents that had a bachelor's degree and above was 78%: 4% had attained a master's degree, and 74% had attained a bachelor's degree. The remaining 22% of the respondents had a diploma (17%) and a secondary certificate (5%). None of the respondents indicated that they had a primary certificate or PhD as their highest level of education.

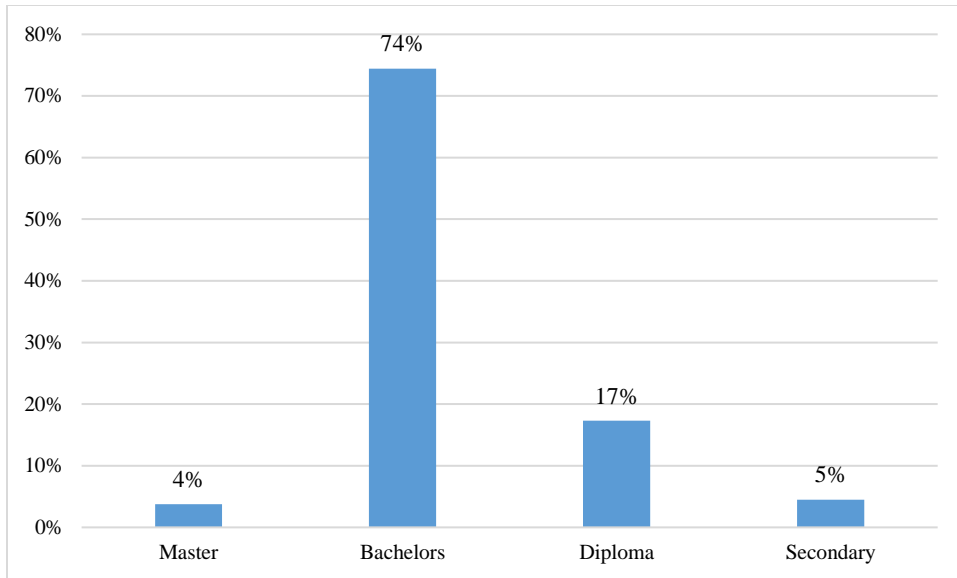
To access work on the online labour platforms, workers need to know how to search for work on the platforms, communicate with the clients and perform the tasks on their profile. As such workers need to be educated, that is, having a good command of English- which is the main foreign language used on the platforms- and have at least a secondary certificate and above. This explains the high levels of education on the platform.

Aleksynska et al. (2018) also reported a high level of education among online freelance workers in Ukraine. A majority of them (73%) had completed higher education: 16% had basic higher education; 55% has completed higher education, and 2% had PhDs. Several other literature had similar findings (Berg et al., 2018; Forde et al., 2017; Onkokame et al., 2018; Margaryan, 2016). Notably, online freelance work is not attractive to PhD holders –an even holders of a master degree (4%)-perhaps because of the opportunity cost of doing online freelance work is higher for them.

Similarly, the respondents were also asked to mention the **name of the courses** they pursued. These courses were further classified into several categories namely: arts and other social sciences; economics, finance and accounting; engineering; information, communication and technology; medicine and natural sciences; and others (holders of secondary school certificate).

According to the aggregation, most of the respondents pursued information, communication and technology courses (33%); arts and other social sciences followed with 26%; then economics, finance and accounting came third (20%). The proportion of respondents in the remaining categories was as follows: engineering (11%); medicine and natural sciences (8%) others (3%). A total of 13 respondents did not indicate their courses and were excluded from this computation. Therefore, most of the respondents (72%) pursued Science, Technology, and Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) courses.

Figure 4 Distribution of Workers by Level of Education



4.1.2 Marital Status and Household Characteristics of the Workers

A majority of the respondents reported that they were single (69%). The proportion of those who reported that they were married were 29%. The rest said that they were separated (2%). No respondent indicated that they are widowed or divorced.

On the contrary, most of the online freelance workers in Ukraine were married (49%) (Aleksynska et al., 2018). One per cent were widowed, 10% were divorced, and 28% were single. Other literature reported an almost equal distribution between single and married workers in developed countries (Berg et al., 2018; Forde et al., 2017; Berg, 2016).

Furthermore, most of the respondents (36%) lived alone. The proportion of those living in a household of 2 people and a household of 3 people were both 18%. The proportion of respondents living in a household of 5 people or more were 17%. The rest (11%) were living in a household of 4 people

Similarly, slightly more than half of the workers (52%) do not have children in their household. The remaining 48% of the respondents have children living in their home: 21% have one child, 18% have two children, and 9% have three or more children.

4.1.3 Health Status of the Workers

An overwhelming majority of the workers also reported that they did not have any health related complaints. More than half of them (62%) report that their health is very good, 33% reported that their health is good and 5% reported that their health is fair. None of the workers said that they have poor or very poor health. This impressive health status can be attributed to the age of these workers.

Likewise, Berg et al. (2018) reported that 93 % of the crowdworkers reported that their health was good. Aleksynska et al. (2018) also found that 81% of the respondents had good health. Another 16% reported that their health was fair. The remaining 3% indicated that their health was either poor or very poor.

4.1.4 Distribution of Workers across Platforms

The respondents were also asked to name the platform(s) they had worked on in the past six months. From the responses, it is evident that these respondents work literarily in every online labour platform that is global in nature. Besides, a majority of them have registered on more than one platform. For instance, some respondents had registered in seven online labour platform. The inability of the workers to transfer their reputational profiles from one platform to the next motivates them to register in more than one platform (Heeks, 2017). This trend can be attributed to insufficient work on the platform arising from global oversupply of labour relative to demand and intense competition for work on the platforms (Wood et al., 2019; Aleksynska et al., 2018; Berg et al., 2018).

The distribution of the respondents across the platforms that were considered global in nature were as follows: Fiverr (45%), Upwork (34%), Freelancer (32%), PPH (27%) and Guru (10%). The proportion of the respondents on Kuhustle- a local online labour platform- were 10%. The respondents also reported that they work on other platforms such as Homework Market (4%), GoTranscript (3%), AMT (2%), CrowdSpring (1%) and Truelancer (1%). The other platforms that the respondents mentioned include Edusson, Freelascent, QA World, Redditt, Studybay, Study Pool, Tichmii, UvoCorp, Writers Agency and Writerbay.

Interestingly, these workers also obtained work through various means. A majority of them obtain work exclusively from the platform (44%). Another 23% of them reported that they obtain work

from both the platform and third party(s) who have an account on the platform (intermediary workers). The proportion of the respondents who obtain work exclusively from intermediary workers were 18%. Those who have an account with a platform and work directly for remote clients, off the platform were 7%. The rest of the respondents (8%) indicated that they work directly off remote clients, off the platform.

The existence of freelance intermediation, also known as intermediary workers or ‘account owners’ among workers in Nairobi County confirm the findings that within online outsourcing, there are workers who play an intermediary role. These workers use their reputational profile to take work from the platform and subcontract the same to other workers at a lesser fee either online or offline (Graham et al., 2017). Furthermore, the existence of workers who work directly for clients confirms the assertion that there are workers who build a client base and then take them off-platform to work for them directly (Malik, Nicholson & Heeks, 2017).

4.1.5 Occupation Classes of the Workers

The respondents further indicated the fields that they had been working in over the entire period of their work. According to Kässä & Lehdonvirta (2016), the work that the platform workers do can be classified into various categories namely clerical and data entry, creative and multimedia, sales and marketing support, software development and technology, professional services; and writing and translation.

Based on the above categorization, most of the respondents (65%) reported that they work in the writing and translation category undertaking tasks such as academic writing, technical writing, article writing, content writing, copywriting, proofreading, copyediting, blog writing and translation. Slightly less than a quarter of them (23%) reported that they work in the clerical and data entry category undertaking tasks such as transcription, data entry, admin support, web research, online market research and virtual assistant. Another 12% reported that they work in the creative and multimedia category doing graphic design, architectural design, solid works design, video production, voice-over audio production and audio editing.

The proportion of respondents who reported that they work in the software development and technology category doing web design and development, software development, mobile application development, user experience and user interface design, and databases development was 10%. The proportion of respondents who reported that they work in sales and marketing

support category doing tasks such as social media marketing; search engine optimization; digital marketing and lead generation was 7%. Furthermore, 4% reported that they do professional services such as cybersecurity, stock market analysis, and geographic information system. In conclusion, most of the workers did tasks in various fields belonging to overlapping categories.

Kässi & Lehdonvirta (2016) found that online freelance workers from Kenya are active in three categories, namely writing and translation, software development and technology, and clerical and data entry in that order. Since software development and technology work ranks fourth in the above findings, it means that most of the online freelance workers from Kenya are doing low-competence freelance work that require basic level of digital skills. On the other hand, online freelance workers in India and Pakistan are doing high-competence freelance work in the software development and technology category that require a combination of non-technical skill and technical skills.

According to the key informants, there is a disconnect between the educational policies in the country and the industrial policies that leveraged the skills of these youths. The government has made a substantial public investments in education, particularly in STEM courses so as to promote innovation and make Kenya a leading destination for online outsourcing. However, most of online freelance workers, particularly the youth, did work that ranged from low to middle skills such as writing and translation; and data entry and clerical work- a number of which are simple and repetitive, and some that are ethically questionable. If this is to continue, the government's investment is at risk of being under-utilized or wasted altogether.

4.1.6 Experience of the Workers

The turnover among the workers is also high. Most of the workers (74%) tend to quit online freelance work after doing it for a period of two years. The proportion of those that have worked online for less than two years is 74%: 5% of the workers have worked on the platform for less than one month, 29% have done online freelance work less than 6 months; 11% have worked for between 7 and 12 months, and 30% have worked for between one and two years. Similarly, only 12% of workers can be considered experienced after having performed online freelance work for five years or more.

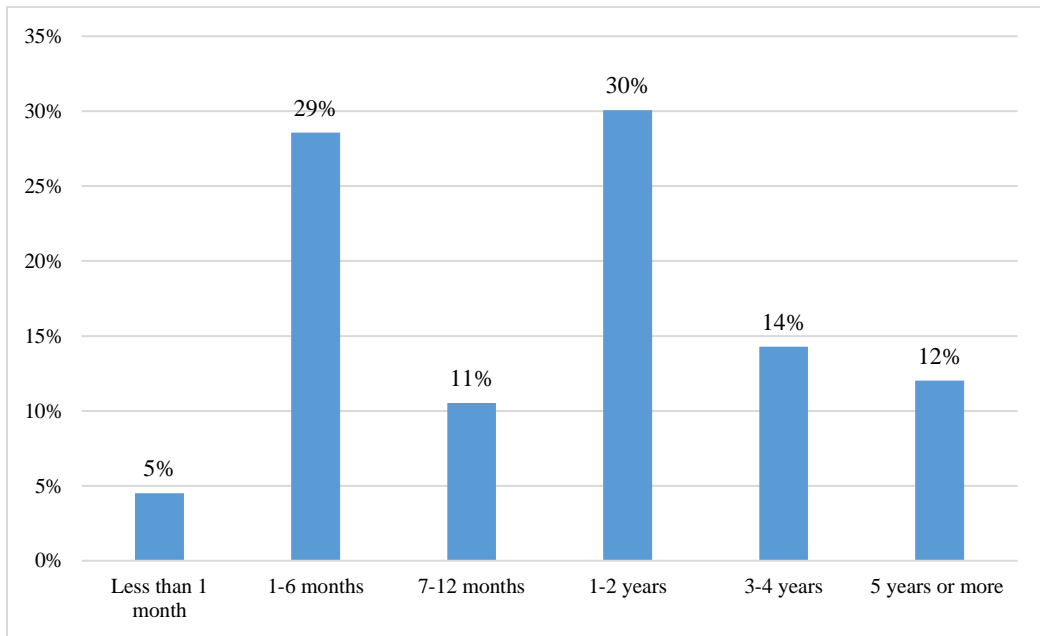
Aleksynska et al. (2018) also found that more than three-quarters of the remote platform workers in Ukraine (83%) had worked on platforms for less than three years: The proportion of respondents who had worked for more than three years was 17%. Similarly, Berg et al. (2018) also found a

high turnover among crowdworkers on AMT, Crowdfunder, Clickworker, Prolific and Microworkers. The proportion of the respondents who had done crowdwork for more than a year were 56%.

This relatively short tenure -high turnover- among youths doing online freelance work in Nairobi County- can be attributed to absorption into the formal and informal sectors after looking for a stable employment for a while. The workers who are doing online freelance work to generate income while going to school could be dropping out of online freelance work immediately after they finish school.

Furthermore, online freelance work is relatively new to most of the workers. Most of them (45%) have worked on the platform for less than a year. Moreover, the respondents had done an average of 16 tasks in the past one month. Notably, more than three quarters (82%) of the respondents had performed 16 or fewer tasks. The proportion of the workers who had done 17 tasks and more in the past month was 18%. This statistic reiterates the finding that online freelance work is relatively new to most of these workers¹.

Figure 5 Distribution of Online Freelance Workers by Experience



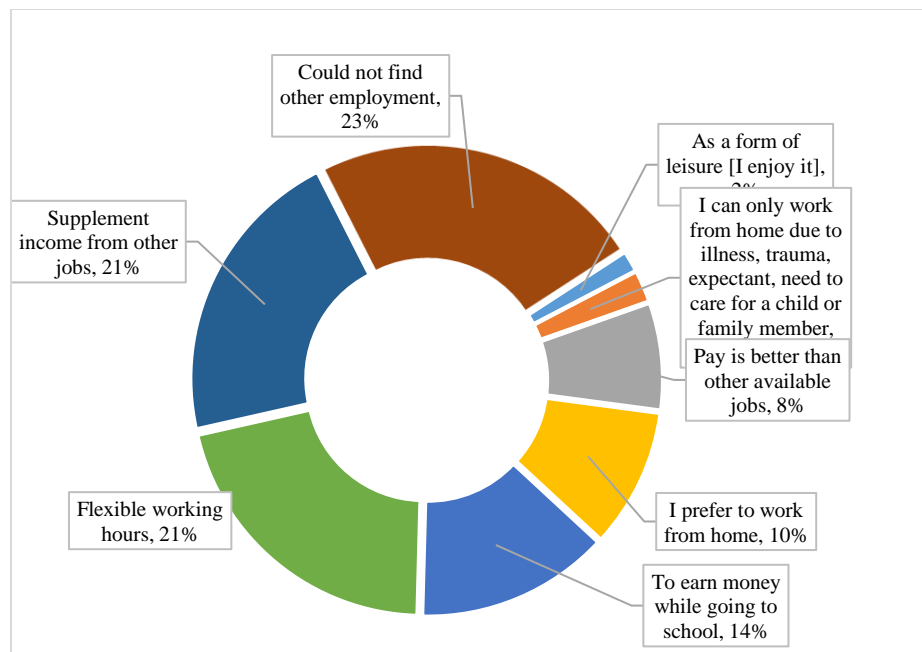
¹ The workers were asked how many tasks they had done since inception in the pre-test. However, most of them could not recall the same. Hence, the duration was changed to one month.

4.1.7 Reasons for Choosing Online Freelance Work

The respondents were further asked about their most **important reason for undertaking online freelance work**. Where they gave more than one reason, they were asked to specify the most important reason. Most of the respondents (23.3%) indicated that their main reason for undertaking online freelance work is that they could not find other employment.

On the contrary, the desire for additional income was the main reason for working online among the workers in Ukraine, India and USA (Berg et al., 2018; Aleksynska et al., 2018; Kuek et al., 2015). This difference in finding can be attributed to the varying attitudes towards online freelance work across regions.

Figure 6 Distribution of Workers by Motivation to Join Online Freelance Work

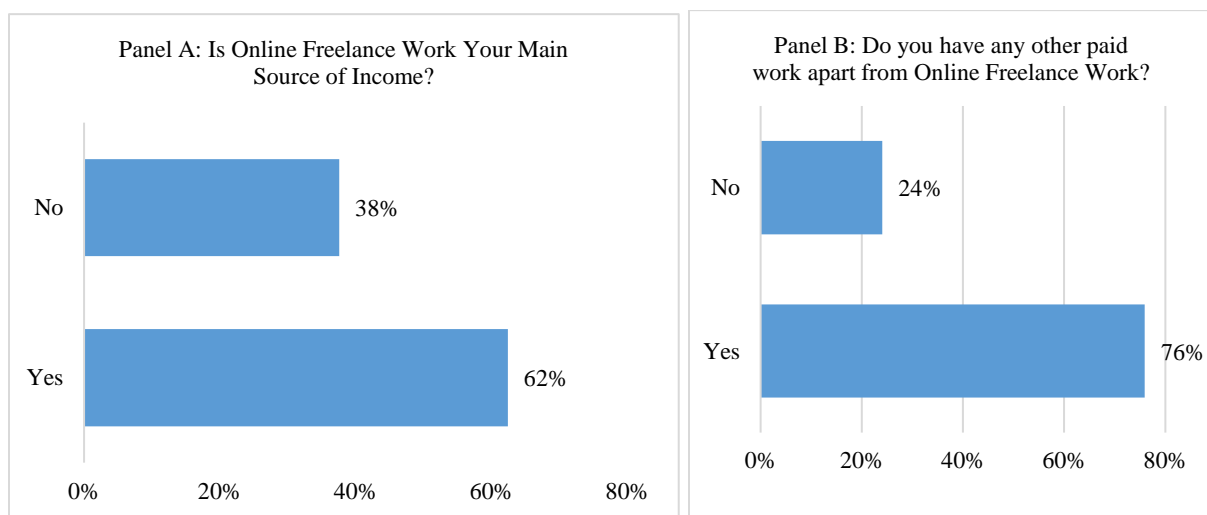


The second most important reason for performing online freelance work is flexible working hours (21.1%) and the desire for additional income (21.1%). The fourth most important reason for performing online freelance work is the possibility to earn money while going to school (13.5%). The other reasons that the workers cited include preference to work from home (9.8%), and the possibility of making more money through online freelance work than in the offline economy (7.5%). The rest of the workers cited that they can only work from home because they were either ill, expectant, needed to care for a child or family member or had undergone trauma (2.3%). The rest worked on the platform because they enjoyed working on the platform (1.5%).

4.1.8 Sources of Income among the Workers

These respondents were further asked whether **online freelance work was their main source**. A majority of the workers (65%) reported that online freelance work was their main source of income. The rest (35%) said that online freelance work was not their main source of income. Besides, the respondents were asked if they had any other paid work apart from freelance work. The proportion of the respondents who reported that they do business were 30%. Slightly more than a quarter (16%) receive support from their parents, 14% were salaried employees, 10% were casual employees and others (6%) received additional income from farming and consulting. The proportion of workers who indicated that they did not have any other paid work apart from online freelance work were 24%.

Figure 7 Distribution by Source of Income



The high economic dependence among the respondents on online freelance work (62% of the workers reported that online freelance work is their main source of income) is inconsistent with findings in other countries, especially those that are developed. Berg et al. (2018) reported that about 32% identified crowdwork as their main source of income. Aleksynska et al. (2018) also reported that just 26% of Ukrainians online freelance workers consider online freelance work as their main source of income. Brawley and Pury (2016) reported that crowdwork as their main source of income for 39% American platform workers and 41% of Indian Platform workers on AMT.

4.2 Working Conditions of Youths doing Online Freelance Work in Nairobi County

4.2.1 Earnings

The respondents were further asked their average earnings in a typical week. Although this is a sensitive question, all the 133 workers gave an estimate of their earnings in a typical week. The average earning of the respondents in a typical week is Kes 9, 213. This translates to Kes 36, 853 in a typical month (an equivalent of 360 USD per month on August 31, 2019²). This amount is exclusive of any resulting taxes and the transaction costs that the worker incurs to transfer the money to Kenya.

According to these findings, on average, a worker earns Kes 358 per hour (\$3.49 per hour) when just paid work is considered. If both the paid and unpaid hours are considered, then the average earnings drop to Kes 225 per hour (\$ 2.20 per hour). The drop in earnings, translating to about Kes 105 per hour (\$1.02 per hour), is attributed to unpaid hours, which include hours workers spend actively looking for work, waiting for work to appear, and communicating with clients and other workers.

According to GoK (2019), the average monthly basic minimum wage for workers in Nairobi County is Ksh 21,311. Although a comparison of the figures on the face value reveals that these workers earn more than the average minimum monthly basic wage in Nairobi County, a detailed comparison reveals otherwise. It is important to note that the gross salaries of workers in the offline economy includes deferred compensation in the form of social security remittances for retirement. It further includes payments for the days that they take an annual leave and sick leave among other allowances. These workers are also paid in the event of an overtime and are often entitled to medical insurance (Aleksynska et al., 2018: 25).

On the other hand, the income of online freelance workers does not include any of the above benefits. In fact, the workers still have to pay a commission to the platform (for those who obtain work exclusively from the platform), transaction cost to transfer the money to Kenya, pay exorbitant penalties at times, not to mention that the government is intending to levy a tax of 5% on the income of online freelance workers (GoK, 2019d).

² 1 USD = Kes 102.485 on August 31, 2019

Furthermore, this earning is higher than the earnings of online freelance workers in Ukraine, who had an average earning of \$ 260 USD per month in December 2017 (Aleksynska et al., 2018: 25). It is also in the same range with the finding among 38 online freelance workers (one from Philippine, one from USA, six from Nigeria and 30 from Kenya) that shows that workers from developing countries earn between \$250 and \$750 (Kuek et al., 2015). Berg (2016) also found that the pay rate for crowdworkers in developing countries is often above the pay rate for a job in the same category in the offline economy.

However, it is quite low when compared to the average earnings of all workers in platforms such as AMT, Crowdfunder, Clickworker, Prolific and Microworkers which showed that the workers made an average of US\$4.43 per hour when just paid work is considered and US\$3.29 per hour when both paid and unpaid hours are considered (Berg et al., 2018 p.50). It is also lower than the income of workers from Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia working on two leading platforms and earning an average \$165 per week: \$150 for workers in Sub-Saharan Africa and \$181 for workers in Southeast Asia (Wood et al., 2019).

From a theoretical perspective, the confluence between the digital technologies in the form of online labour platforms and the worker power yields an organizational form characterized by global oversupply of labour relative to the demand. This organizational form weakens the bargaining position of the workers leading to lower earnings. Furthermore, the competitive work organisation-individualized and competitive designs of online labour platforms- where workers are permitted to see the bids of their colleagues is another source of the downward pressure on payment rates (Wood et al., 2019, Berg, 2016, D’Cruz and Noronha, 2016).

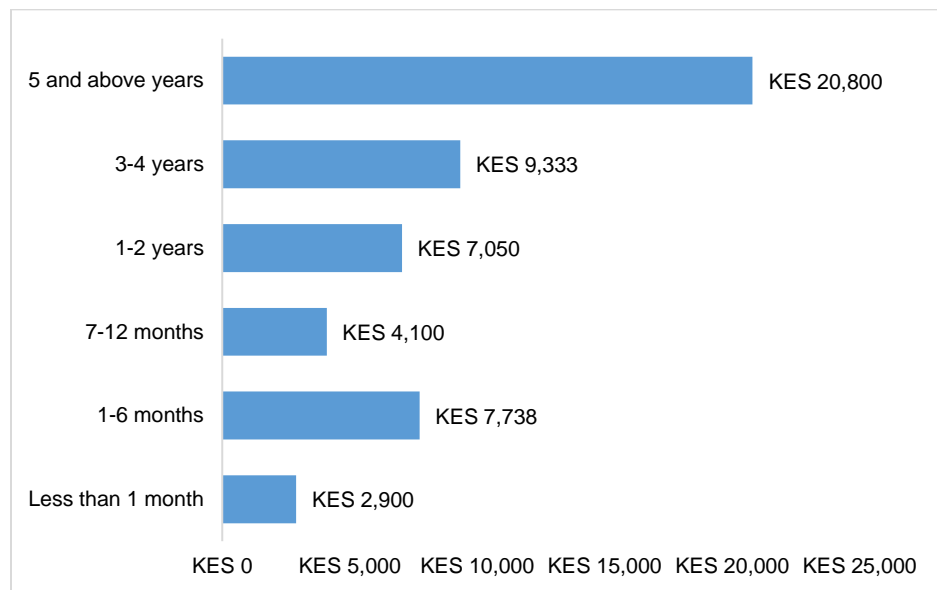
The high ratio of unpaid work to paid work is also another reason for the meagre earnings. When both paid work and non-paid work are considered, the earnings of the workers drop to Kes 225 per hour (\$ 2.27 per hour) from Kes 358 per hour (\$3.54 per hour). Berg (2016) and D’Cruz and Noronha (2016) also found that workers do a significant amount of unpaid work on the online labour platforms and the same had implications on their earnings.

There is also a slight gender gap in pay among the workers. The average earning for male workers is Kes 233 per hour, while the average earning for female workers is Kes 209 per hour. Hence, the average male earnings are 1.1 times higher than the average female earnings. Berg et al. (2018) also found a gender pay gap, though higher: the average earnings for male workers were 2.2 times

higher than average earnings for female workers. Aleksynska et al. (2018) also reported a gender pay gap among platform workers in Ukraine, though higher: the average earnings for men were 2.2 times higher than average earnings for women. Notably, this pay gap is consistent with the gender pay gap in the offline economy (GoK, 2019).

This gap can be attributed to the high working hours among men (8.4 hours in a typical day) compared to women (7.8 hours in a typical day). It can further be attributed to occupational gender segregation (Aleksynska et al., 2018). More men were working in fields that were more rewarding than women. For instance, the number of men who reported that they do software development were more than the women. This finding reiterates the mediating effect of social and environmental conversion factors such as gender norms and relations on job quality outcomes (Monteith and Giesbert, 2017).

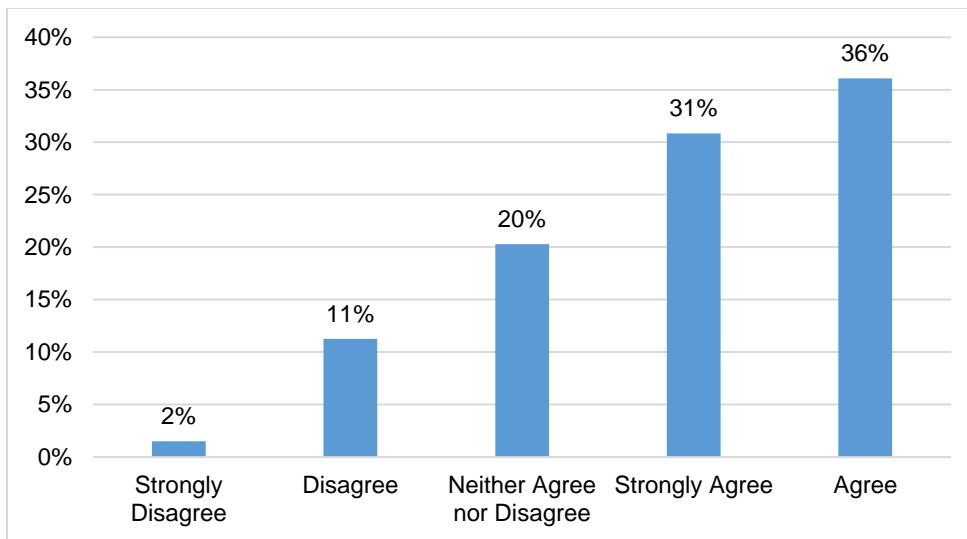
Figure 8 Distribution of Earnings of the Online Freelance Workers by Experience



According to the findings, there is a strong positive correlation between the earnings and whether online freelance work is the main source of the worker (see correlation matrix). Aleksynska et al., (2018) also found that the respondents who consider online freelance work as their main source of income had higher earnings than those that did not consider online freelance work as their main source of income. This reiterates the fact that workers with individual ‘marketplace bargaining power’ in the form of other non-wage sources of income enjoy better job quality outcomes.

Furthermore, there is a strong positive correlation between the experience of the respondents and their earnings. Theoretically, the workers with better individual marketplace bargaining power in terms of reputation, skills and high labour demand tend to earn more compared to those with lower individual marketplace bargaining power. As such, work tends to flow to experienced workers because of their strong reputation and high ranking by platform algorithms. In this case, reputation refers to the symbolic power that workers get owing to the algorithm control and the good relationships that these workers build overtime with their clients. These workers also tend to spend less time doing unpaid work thus increasing their potential to earn more on the online labour platform (Wood et al., 2019).

Figure 9 Pay vs. Work Input



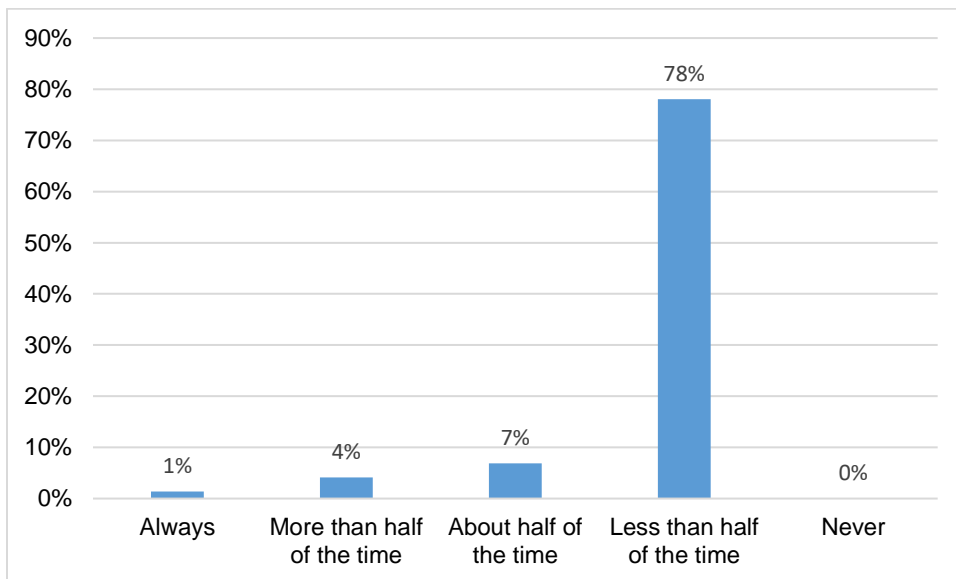
The respondents were also asked to indicate the mode(s) of payments that they used in most cases to transfer their payments from the platforms. Most of them (58%) reported that they often use Paypal MPESA. MPESA follows with 38%. A quarter (25%) of the respondents further indicated that they use Paypal Equity. The proportion of respondents that reported they use Skrill-MPESA was 5% while those who use Payoneer was 3%. Just 2% said that they receive their payment in cash, and 1% reported that they receive their pay through other modes such as western union and MoneyGram.

According to the respondents, the factors that determined their choice of a mode of payment include convenience (can withdraw anytime), accessibility, transaction charges, safety, speed,

reliability and simplicity. As such, most of the respondents regarded Paypal MPESA as the most convenient, affordable, fast, secure mode of payment for online freelance work.

Most of the respondents (67%) also reported that the pay is commensurate to the effort, cost and skills that go towards the execution of tasks. The proportion of those who said that their pay is equivalent to the effort, cost and skills that go towards the execution is 67 %: 31% indicated that they strongly agree were 31% and 36% indicated that they agree. On the other hand, the proportion of the respondents who reported otherwise was 13 %: 11% indicated that they disagree and 2% indicated that they strongly disagreed.

Figure 10 Frequency of Cases of Delayed, Reduced and Non-payment on the Platforms



The respondents were also asked to indicate when they get paid for online freelance work completed. Most of them said that they get paid immediately after completing a task (49%). About 21% indicated that they get paid after two weeks. The respondents who indicated that they get paid after a week were 19%, those who get paid after a month are 11%. Another 1% cited that it depends on their agreement with the customers. Moreover, some respondents indicated that there are platforms that allow them to withdraw payments only after it reaches a certain minimum amount.

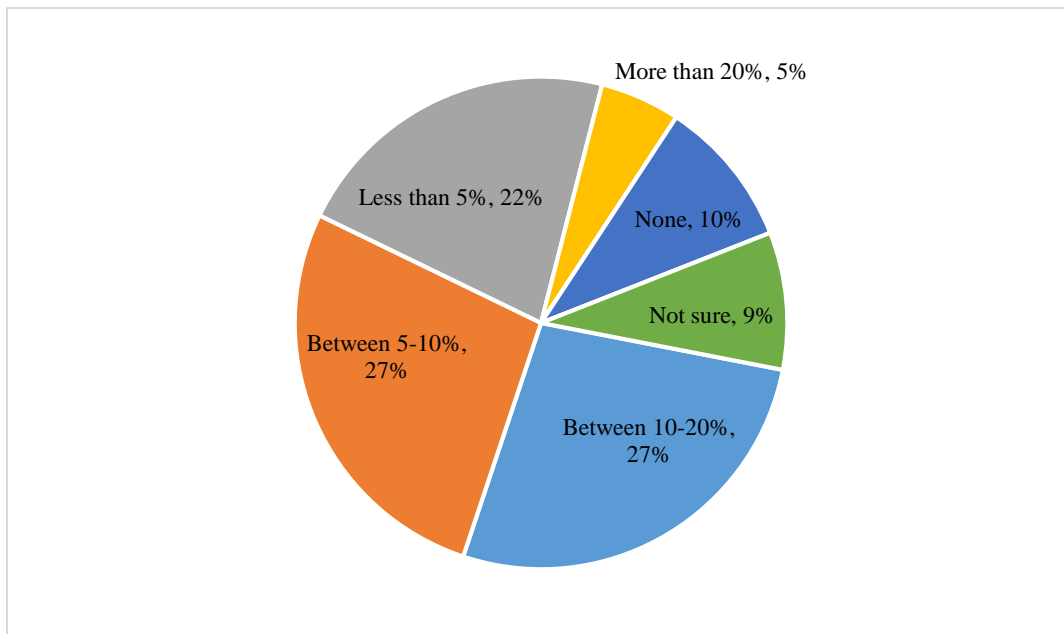
“Some platforms like Studypool do not allow you to withdraw your earnings until they accumulate to 50 dollars,” respondent 20 in the survey

“As regards what I could change about my earnings, I wish I was able to access my funds as soon as the cash is deposited in my account,” respondent 32 in the survey

The proportion of online freelance workers who indicated that they had experienced cases of delayed, reduced or non-payment were 55%. As such, more than five workers out of every ten workers had experienced incidents of delayed, reduced or non-payment. The remaining three quarters indicated that they had never experienced cases of delayed, reduced or non-payment. Furthermore, most of the respondents (78%) who had experienced cases of delayed, reduced or non-payment reported that such cases were irregular. The proportion of respondents who reported that such cases were regular were 3%: 2% indicated that they had experienced the same half of the time and 1% stated that they had always experienced the same.

Berg (2016) found that crowdworkers registered on AMT have to wait for clients to approve their work before payments are made to them. The duration that the client should take to approve the work is also not defined. There were also cases when clients rejected work and failed to pay. When this happens, it is the crowdworkers that suffer the most since there is no compensation for the time and resources expended on the work (Onkokame et al., 2018). While their recourse entails reaching out to the platforms to intervene, there are cases when the platforms fail to do so.

Figure 11 Platform Commission



Moreover, a majority of the respondent (90%) stated that they pay a commission to the online labour platforms and intermediary workers (“account owners”)-who used their reputational profile to take work from the platform and subcontract to other workers at a lesser fee. A tenth of the

respondents (10%) stated that they do not pay commission to the platforms. These respondents worked either exclusively for a third party who has an account with a platform or directly with remote clients, off the platform.

Out of the 90%, the proportion of those who reported that they were not sure of the commission that the platform charged them was 9%. About 22% of the respondents pay a commission of less than 5% to the platform. Another 52% pay a commission between 5% and 20%. The remaining 5% indicated that they pay to the platform a commission more than 20%.

Notably, most of the respondents reported that platforms and intermediary workers charge high commission and would like them to reduce it to between 5% and 10%. Others expressed a concern that Kuhustle, required them to pay a commission in order to bid for work on the platform.

“Account owners should understand the importance of their writers and pay them a better fraction of what the client pays because they do most of the work,” respondent 55 in the survey

“I am dissatisfied with the service fees charged, 20% is a big chunk to take out especially on small jobs. I would like the platforms to allow direct pay via Paypal other than their own platforms. They could charge a one off fee for using the platform,” respondent 30 in the survey

“I am very dissatisfied by the amount they take in commission from both me and the client. And that they also get a cut when I am withdrawing is very annoying. But the payment protection is very good,” respondent 95 in the survey

“The pay I get is quite equivalent to the amount of time and effort that I put in and that is satisfactory to me. However, sometimes the commission charged by the platform is very high. I wish I could change the time it takes to withdraw my earnings,” respondent 38 in the survey

“I do not understand why platforms like Kuhustle make you pay first before submitting a quote,” respondent 31 in the survey

The respondents also complained about others charges that the platforms levied on their earnings in the form of penalties. For instance, the respondents stated that some platforms charged them fines for late submission, low quality work (plagiarism). In general, respondents were in obscurity about how much to expect from the platform owing to the unpredictable nature of fines.

“However much that it has been indicated that there is some percentage taken out of the amount, then on transfer we have other fees. Why not have all those fees be put in the percentage so that the user can know how much they would get at the end of the day,” respondent 54 in the survey

There were also mixed reactions from the respondents whether the pay was enough for them. Some indicated that they were satisfied with the pay. Others reported that the earnings are were low and suggested that the platforms should increase the same.

In general, the earning from the platform is very good and satisfactory, the only problem is being forced to work under someone who in return enjoys more cash than me,” respondent 2 in the survey

“I am satisfied with the platform but the pay should be raised for each work completed,” respondent 11 in the survey

According to the decent work standards on earnings, remote platform workers should be paid at least a minimum wage that takes into account unpaid time. The findings above shows that the workers earn more than the minimum wage in Nairobi County on the face value. However, a detailed comparison reveals otherwise. The earnings on the platform does not take into consideration numerous benefits that those receiving the minimum wage receive in the offline economy.

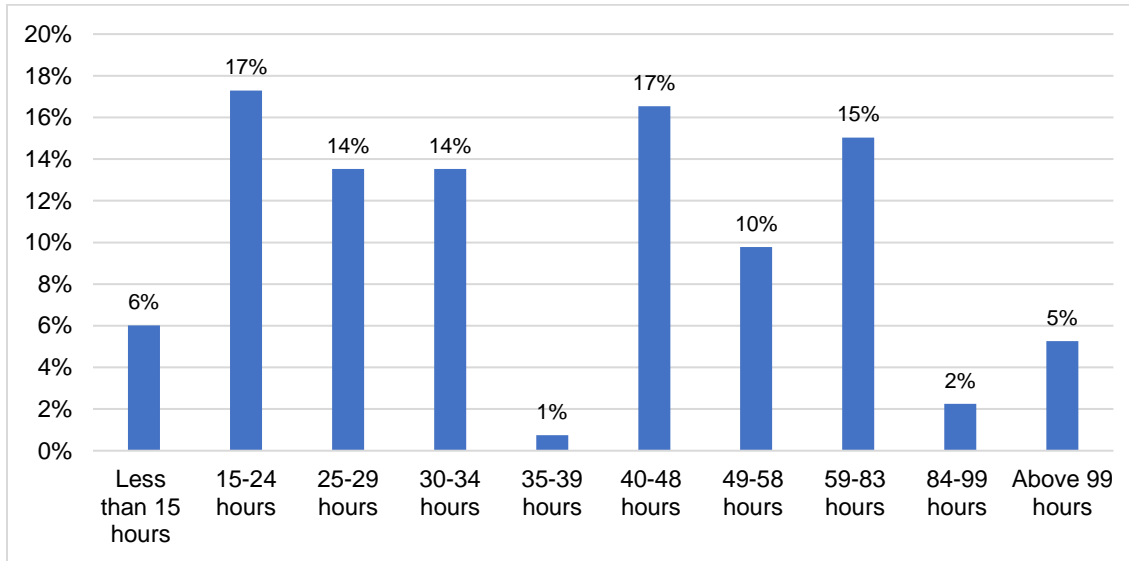
4.2.2 Working Time

The respondents were asked to indicate the number of hours they spend performing online freelance work in a typical week. On average, they spend an average of 40.92 hours in a typical week doing both paid and unpaid online freelance work. Out of these hours, 27.93 hours are spent doing paid work and 12.99 hours are spent doing unpaid activities in a typical week. This means that for every one hour a worker spends on platform work, approximately 19 minutes goes into unpaid work.

The Hours of Work Convention (No. 30) for commerce and offices reduced the normal working hours from a limit of 48 to 40 in 1930. However, its implementation across the globe varies (Nolte & Ghosheh, 2010). For instance, Kenya has put in place legislation for weekly standards which exceed the 48-hour limit (GoK, 2012). Therefore, the above working hours are slightly above the

convention’s limit, but lower compared to the average working hours of workers in the offline economy (GoK, 2018:208). Furthermore, they do not exhibit overwork, defined as a work week of 50 hours or more (Nolte & Ghosheh, 2010).

Figure 12 Total Time Spent on Online Freelance Work (Paid and Unpaid) in a Typical Week



Moreover, a majority of the respondents (68 %) work for less than the recommended 48 hours in a typical week (Nolte & Ghosheh, 2010). The rest (32%) work for more than 48 hours in a typical week. Most of the workers spend between 15 and 24 hours or 40 and 48 hours on online freelance work.

A disaggregation of the working hours by gender shows that the male respondents (41.9 hours) work for longer hours than the female respondents (38.8 hours), perhaps due to care work and other household responsibilities.. Similarly, they also spend more time on paid work (29.1 hours) than the female respondents (25.5 hours). Regrettably, the female respondents spend more time (13.4 hours) on unpaid work than the male respondents (12.8 hours). This difference in working hours partly explains the high income among men than women.

Further disaggregation of the working hours by the level of experience of the workers shows that the time spent doing paid online freelance work tends to increase with the experience of the workers, peaking between 3 and 4 years and then begins to fall. It is further imperative to note that the time spent doing unpaid online freelance work falls towards the first year, peaks towards the end of the second year on the platform, and then falls towards the end of the fourth year and peaks

again in the fifth year. Nonetheless, the ratio of hours spent on unpaid activities for every one hour of paid work falls continually with more experience.

Figure 13 Intensity of Work by Gender

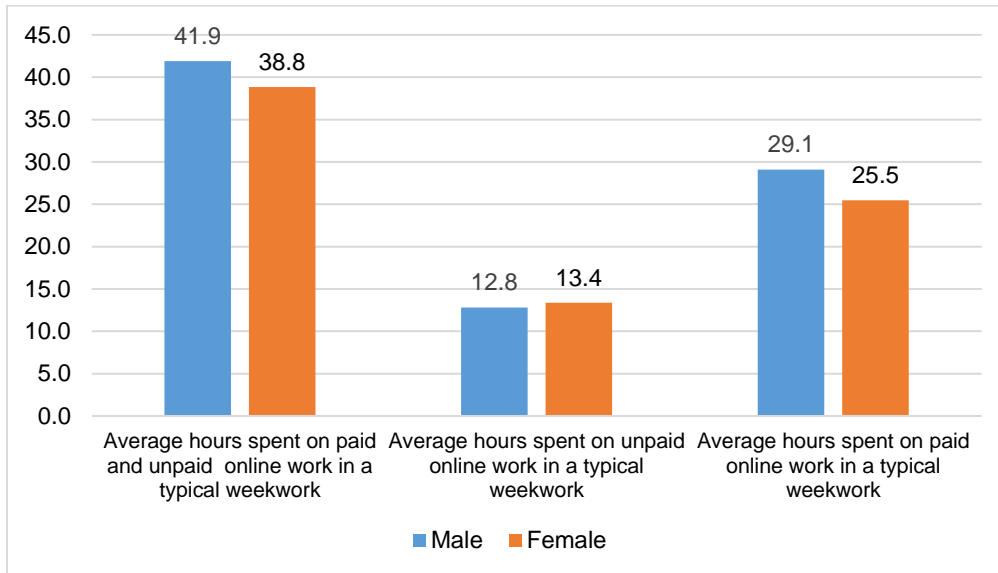
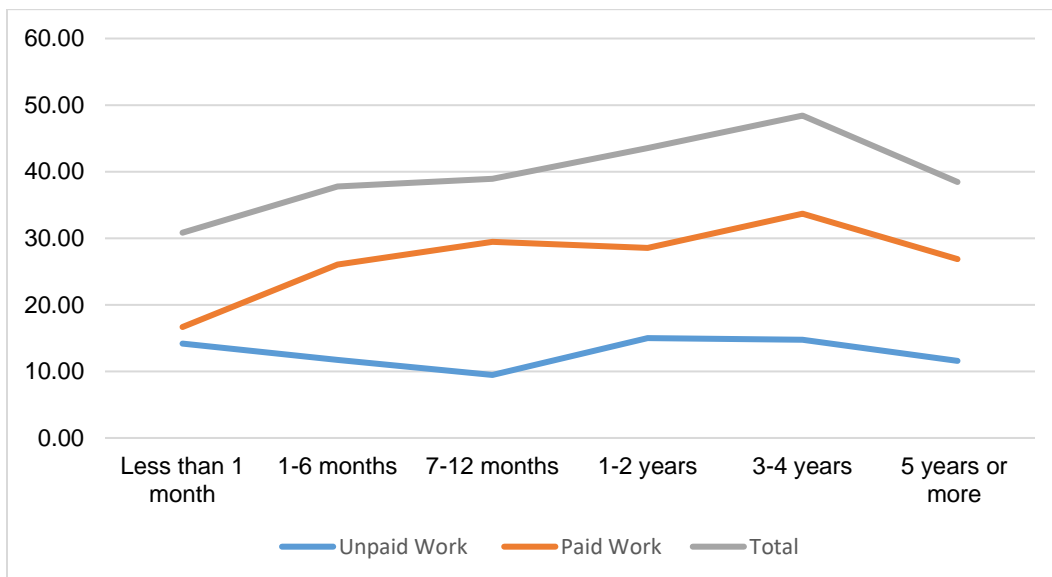


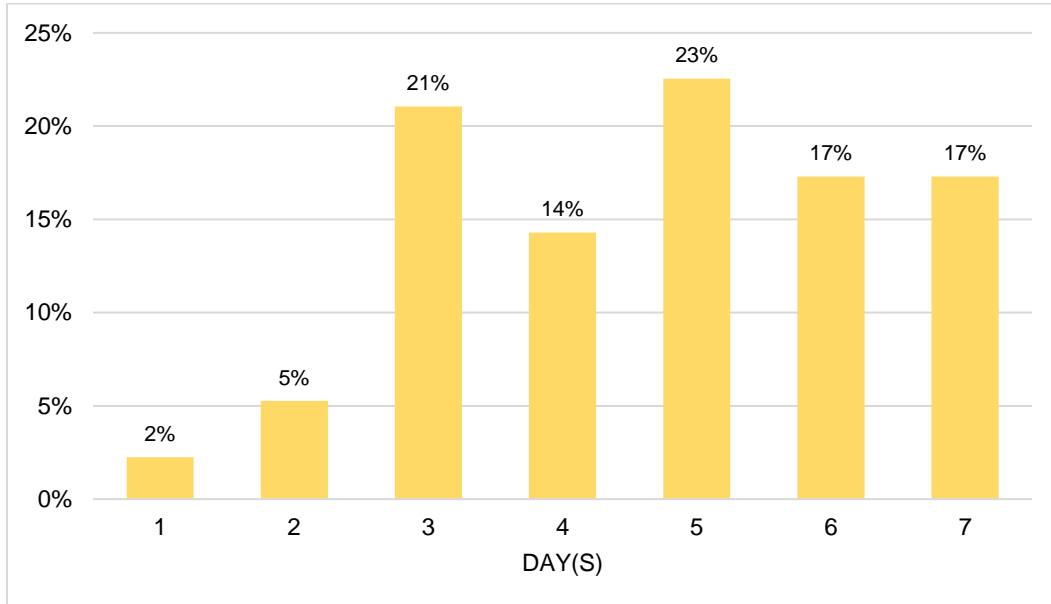
Figure 14 Intensity of Work, by experience



Aleksynska et al. (2018) also reported a similar findings among online freelance workers in Ukraine. According to the theory of algorithmic control, experienced workers have stronger individual marketplace bargaining power in terms of reputation and skill relative to other workers.

This makes more work to flow to them compared to the other workers and this explains the long working hours among experienced workers.

Figure 15 Distribution of days spent on online freelance work (paid and unpaid) in a typical week



The respondents were also asked the number of days they worked in a typical week. A majority of them (83%) work for six or fewer days in a typical week. The rest of the respondents (17%) worked for seven days in a week. Furthermore, a majority of the respondents (23%) reported that they work for five days in a week. According to GoK (2015), a worker is entitled to at least one rest day in every seven days. This is an indication that work on the online labour platform generally confirms to the above regulation even though the workers on these platforms are partly employees and partly independent contractors (Heeks, 2017).

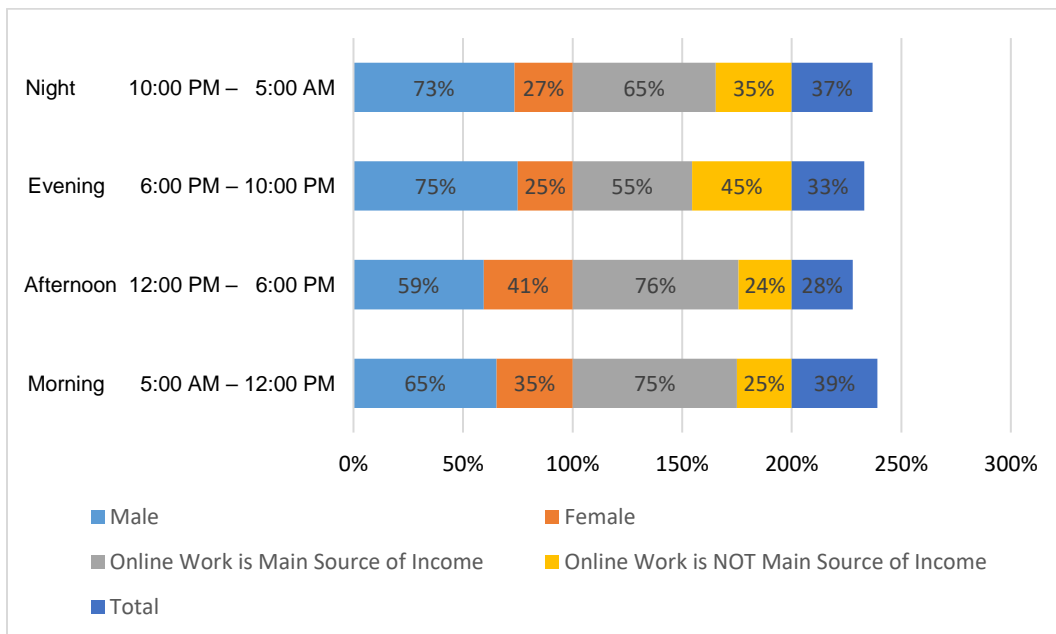
According to Aleksynska et al. (2018), the workers can be divided into three categories based on the number of days they work on the platform. These categories include: a) excessive employment (34%) which involves working for 6-7 days a week; b) employment that is regular (23%), which involves working 5 days a week; c) employment that is casual (35%), which is intensive (3-4 days a week) for 30% of workers and moderate (1-2 days a week) for 7% of the respondents.

The respondents were asked to indicate the time(s) of the day they often do paid online freelance work. Notably, paid work is shifted towards morning. In general, 39% of the respondents indicated that they usually do paid work in the morning (5.00 AM -12.00 PM) and 37% reported that they

typically do the same at night (10.00 PM to 5.00 AM). Those who said that they usually do the same in the evening (6.00 PM to 10.00 PM) were 33% and those who did the same in the afternoon (12.00 PM to 6.00 PM) were 28%.

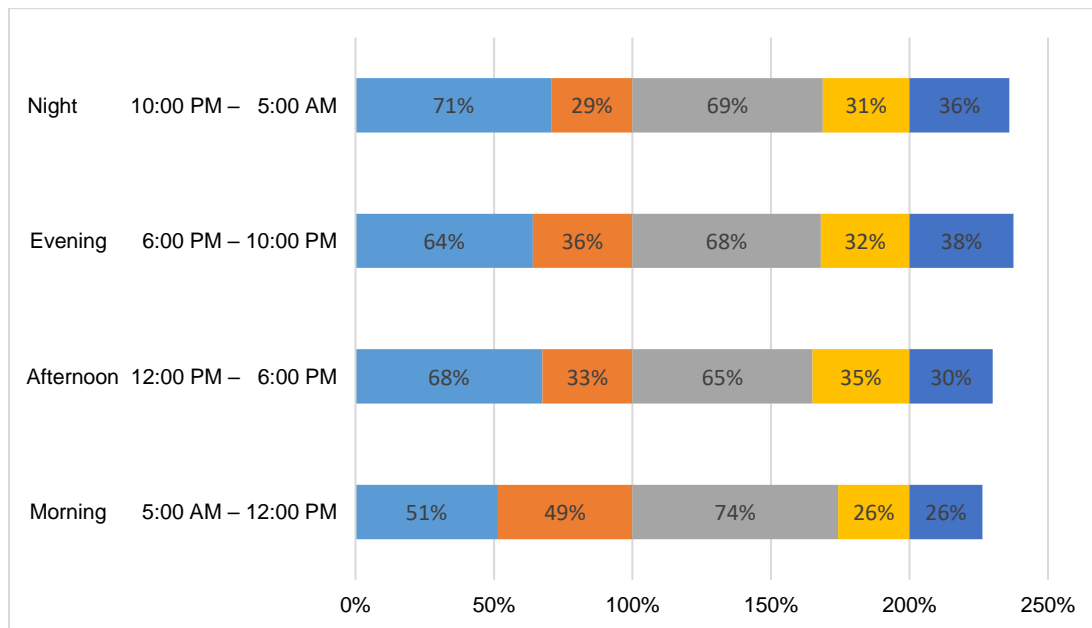
Most of the female respondents (41%) indicated that they usually do paid online freelance work in the afternoon. Those who reported that they do the same in the morning, night and evening were 35%, 27%, and 27% respectively. On the other hand, most male respondents (75%) indicated that they usually do paid online freelance work in the evening. Those who reported that they do the same in the night, morning and afternoon were 73%, 65%, and 59% respectively.

Figure 16 Paid Work



Besides, a high proportion of respondents -who considered online freelance work as their main source of income- reported that they did paid work in the afternoon (73%) and morning (69%). They further stated that they worked least in the evening (55%) and night (65%). On the other hand, most of those respondents -who do not consider online freelance work as their main source of income- do paid work in the evening (45%) and night (35%). They further reported that they work least in the afternoon (27%) and morning (31%).

Figure 17 Unpaid Work



On the other hand, unpaid online freelance work is shifted towards the evening. In general, 38% of the respondents indicated that they usually do unpaid online freelance work in the evening (6.00 PM to 10.00 PM) and 36% of them did the same at night (10.00 PM to 5.00 AM). Those who indicated that they usually do the same in the afternoon (12.00 PM to 6.00 PM) were 30% and those who did the same in the morning (5.00 AM -12.00 PM) were 26%.

Most female respondents (49%) indicated that they usually do unpaid online freelance work in the morning. Those who reported that they do the same in the evening, afternoon and night were 36%, 33%, and 29% respectively. On the other hand, most male respondents (71%) indicated that they usually do unpaid online freelance work in the night. Those who reported that they do the same in the afternoon, evening and morning were 68%, 64%, and 51% respectively.

A high proportion of respondents -who considered online freelance work as their main source of income- do unpaid work in the morning (71%) and night (67%). These respondents reported that they worked least in the evening (66%) and afternoon (63%). On the other hand, most of those respondents -who do not consider online freelance work as their main source of income- do unpaid work in the afternoon (38%) and evening (34%) These respondents reported that they work least in the night (33%) and morning (29%).

Holiday with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970 (No. 132), article 3(3) permits a holiday of not less than three working weeks for every one year of service (Nolte & Ghosheh, 2010). Although a majority of the workers (87%) reported that they could take an off (an hour, a day or more) from their work because of the flexible nature of online freelance work, it is unclear whether they can take three weeks off at ago. The remaining 13% could not take an off at any time. Aleksynska et al. (2018) also asked platform workers in Ukraine whether they could afford to go for a holiday or take a weekend off at any time- but found different results. The proportion of the respondents who stated that they could afford holidays at any time were just 29%.

The algorithmic management techniques arising from the platform-based ranking and rating systems tend to offer the workers with “high flexibility”. According to the qualitative responses the workers gave on their working time, flexibility is a key benefit of online freelance work. This finding is similar to those in other literature (Berg, 2016; D’Cruz and Noronha, 2016).

“The flexibility of online work is everything. You work literally a few hours in a day and get free time to do other things,” respondent 8 in the survey.

“People per Hour for instance allows one to set the days they are available as well as days they would like to take off. I am very much satisfied with this as it enables a flexible environment as the buyers get into contracts fully aware of your availability,” respondent 45 in the survey.

“My working time is flexible. If I have recurring work, then I can work at any time I want so long as I complete the tasks. This is the best thing about online freelance work. I do not miss any of my son's school activities due to work or set working hours or because I did not get permission from a boss,” respondent 49 in the survey.

“The best thing about online jobs is that they are flexible and you can arrange your time to accommodate them. They have also enabled me to minimize the time I waste during my ‘free time’. I can now put that time into good use,” respondent 57 in the survey.

“Working online is more flexible since I can stop any time of the day to handle other personal issues and cover for the time lost before work deadline reaches. As opposed to office work where one need to try and request a leave,” respondent 92 in the survey.

However, it is essential to note that the realization of this flexibility depends upon a lot of demands (Lehdonvirta, 2018). The weak structural bargaining power of the clients vis-a-vis workers meant that the clients and not the workers were the ones who determined the working times on the platforms (Wood et al., 2018). They decided the deadlines, communicated to the workers at their convenience and posted tasks during their regular working hours.

Consequently, the workers also reported that the working hours on the platforms are often long and irregular. The workers also had to work at night: look for work in the evening and night and do it in the night and morning because most of the clients were located in different time zones, (Australia, USA and Europe). It is also important to note that these workers do not know when work would appear online. As a result, most of them indicated that they were available online more or less round the clock doing a substantial amount of unpaid work (Schörpf, Flecker & Schönauer, 2017; Wood, Graham and Lehdonvirta, 2017).

“I am okay with that working time. However, sometimes I'm forced to work in the night hours which are quite inconveniencing. Furthermore, some of the days I work for about 10 hours which sounds irksome,” respondent 72 in the survey.

“Sometimes it is tedious to work up to late in the night because you have to stay awake to search for orders to work. Nonetheless, the best thing about online work is that you are convenient. I could prefer to work during the day and get time to rest at night,” respondent 74 in the survey

“My working times are flexible and I plan my own calendar, however it would be good if I could get a steady stream of work that way I do not spend much time looking for clients and I could plan my days better and be more productive,” respondent 83 in the survey.

“Since this work involves bidding have to arise late night to get jobs,” respondent 94 in the survey.

“Satisfied with flexibility of the job but dissatisfied with long working hours,” respondent 94 in the survey.

The working hours also depend on the magnitude of work. Therefore, the availability of work tends to erode this flexibility. Huws (2018), in his review of digital labour exchanges and their implications on their occupational safety and health, reported that the minimal work opportunities

make online freelance workers to accept tasks for which they may not be qualified. Wood et al. (2019) further reported that minimal work opportunities make online freelance workers to be under pressure to accept work at unsocial hours. It also makes them to agree to work on tasks under tight deadlines.

“I am not satisfied on the hour I have to spend online just to get a single work for the day,” respondent 11 in the survey.

“You schedule your time according to your projects and timelines,” respondent 85 in the survey

“I am most satisfied with the flexibility of my work, most dissatisfied with how less frequent work is available and I would like to earn more,” respondent 94 in the survey.

Platform-based algorithmic control also entails autonomy in the form of discretion over place of work. As such, workers could work from the comfort of their homes; combine online freelance work with domestic work, care work, study and alternative paid work; and avoid transport costs. Nonetheless, working from home could lead to social isolation (Wood et al., 2019; Fielder, 2016). According to Wood and Burchell (2018), it affects the mental health of the workers. According to Pinker (2014), minimal or no interaction among platform workers is likely to have a negative implication on the mood and productivity of the workers.

“Working online as a freelance writer has its merits and demerits, as with working anywhere else. However, working online has more flexible hours and does not restrict you to a specific location to get your work done. This is the most significant advantage for me. The fact that it also provides an opportunity to earn an income despite the lack of traditional employment is heaven-sent,” respondent 59 in the survey.

The decent work standards advocates for compliance Hours of Work Convention (No. 30) for commerce and offices, and national working time directives (Heeks, 2017). Based on the above and findings and discussions, the working hours are slightly above the convention’s limit but below the recommended working hours in Kenya. Besides, the work is flexible and permits work-life balance and work-work balance, particularly for workers with alternative sources of income. The workers can also take an off (an hour, a day or more) from their work because of the flexible nature of work. It also grants the workers a discretion over the place of work.

Although the working hours meet the decent work standards and do not border overwork, it is important to note that they obscure a lot of decent work deficits. The working schedules are often long, irregular and unpredictable. The workers have to work during unsocial hours because of time zone differentials and strong client bargaining power. The workers also spend lots of time on unpaid activities such as looking for tasks, bidding for the same and effort that goes to rejected work.

4.2.3 Availability of Work

Underemployment, also known as insufficient work or instability of work, is another concern among the respondents. Most of them (65%) reported that they do not get enough work regularly on the platform. Besides, their main reason for not doing more online freelance work was that there is no enough regular work on the online labour platforms (58%).

“One of the biggest freelancer concerns is maintaining a continuous flow of work. When you go freelance, it’s completely up to you to find projects and book clients,” respondent number 61 in the quantitative survey.

Underemployment is not restricted to these workers alone. It is a common problem among remote platform workers across the globe (Berg, 2016). Wood et al. (2019) also found that most of the workers (54%) on two major remote gig work platforms did not have enough work. Just 20% of the workers indicated that they had enough work. Berg et al. (2018) also reported that 88% of crowdworkers on Prolific, Clickworker, Crowdworkers and AMT would like to do more work than they were doing. Furthermore, 90 % of those on Crowdwork and AMT reported that they would like to do more work than they were doing (Berg, 2016).

Insufficient work was more pronounced among male respondents than female respondents. According to the findings, 66% of those who indicated that they do not get enough work regularly on the platform were male. The rest 34% were female.

Interestingly, there are glaring differences in the working hours for those who said that they get enough work and those who said otherwise. Those who stated that they get enough work (are not willing to do more online freelance work) work for an average of about 8.5 hours in a typical week. On the other hand, those who stated otherwise (are willing to do more online freelance work) work for 8.03 hours in a typical week.

The respondents were also asked whether they had been discriminated from performing some tasks, in particular, well-paying ones. A majority of them (55%) reported that they had not been excluded from such jobs. The proportion of respondents who indicated that they have experienced cases of discrimination on online labour platforms were 45%.

According to the qualitative responses, most workers attributed the insufficient work on the platform to discrimination. There are workers who reported that they have been discriminated from performing some tasks because of their nationality. There are also workers, especially those in writing and translation category, who indicated that they have been discriminated upon because English is not their native language. Additionally, there is a worker who reported being discriminated upon because of being in a different time zone.

“Some clients post jobs that I feel I can handle perfectly but restrict the job to a certain country's residents only,” respondent number 92 in the quantitative survey.

“I was discriminated because I do not come from a member country, they only accept proposals from specific countries,” respondent number 83 in the quantitative survey.

“Some clients prefer to hire exclusively from native English speaking countries. I do not come from such a country, an unfortunate disadvantage I have to live with,” respondent number 59 in the quantitative survey.

“Some clients do not like working with certain people from Africa,” respondent number 30 in the quantitative survey.

“Clients tend to believe Indians are good at software development and through that, I have been excluded from several jobs,” respondent number 4 in the quantitative survey.

“The client was from the US and he shortlisted to people, yet he needed once freelancer. I was among the two. But he didn't consider me because of the difference in time zone as the job was a permanent position which required shifts and a steady schedule,” respondent number 16 in the quantitative survey.

“I have been turned down from writing articles for not being a native English speaker since I come from Africa it is assumed that we are no good at the Queen's language, this is apparent when dealing with Americans and Britons,” respondent number 45 in the quantitative survey.

“The fact that I am not a native English speaker works against me. Despite being fluent in the language that does not seem to matter, “respondent number 71 in the quantitative survey.

Although remote platform work is known to remove many cues that are the basis for discrimination in physical work including age, accent, dressing, disability and more (De Stefano, 2016), these findings shows that there are pockets of discrimination by clients. Beerepoot & Lambregts (2015) and Mill (2011) also reported discrimination of a similar nature on the platform. Other workers also said that they were discriminated upon based on their time zones. Hannak et al. (2017) also found a significant positive relationship between perceived gender and race biases with social feedback among 13,500 workers on TaskRabbit and Fiverr.

On the contrary, Graham et al. (2017a) argue that the clients do not discriminate upon the workers in the global south because of the colour of their skin. Instead, they are ignorant about their capabilities to perform tasks. Graham et al. (2017b) reiterate in their report that there was no evidence of clients devaluing workers from the global south in cases when such workers were highly skilled and had good reputations.

Moreover, there are respondents who attributed the underemployment to issues related to weak reputational profile. As such, they pointed out that they could not get enough work because they had inadequate skills, expertise, experience, and ratings. The following responses espouses these issues further:

“I am relatively new to freelancing. Clients normally prefer experienced freelancers. New tutors on Studypool cannot bid for certain jobs,” respondent number 20 in the quantitative survey.

“There is a lack of trust from clients to offer work to freelancers who don't have any ratings,” respondent number 9 in the quantitative survey.

“Sometimes clients will prefer a highly rated freelancer to new freelancers,” respondent number 67 in the quantitative survey.

“I bid for work I can perform. But a majority of the jobs requires specialized skills some of which I do not have,” respondent number 78 in the quantitative survey.

“I choose what I can do and if I can't do it, it obviously goes to a more qualified person,”
respondent number 81 in the quantitative survey.

The workers also attributed the insufficient work to intense competition on the platform. According to Graham et al. (2017), the organizational forms arising from remote gig work is characterized with a global oversupply of labour relative to demand and high levels of competition between workers with minimal labour protections thus making it difficult to get work. Wood et al. (2019) point out that this global oversupply of labour partly arises from the growing global connectivity that enables providers from anywhere in the world to connect with requesters through online labour platforms. The unavailability of local labour market alternatives in developing countries to absorb the highly educated yet unemployed workforce also contributes to the oversupply of labour in the platform economy.

“I am not getting regular work due to high competition in the online job market,”
respondent number 52 in the quantitative survey

In response to insufficient work on the platform, these youths are forced to be online for long hours doing unpaid work (waiting for work to appear on the platforms and bidding for it). Unfortunately, these efforts do not necessarily guarantee successful bids. Besides, they do not guarantee that jobs matching the experience of the respondents will arise on a platform (Heeks, 2017).

The most significant implication of insufficient work is job insecurity. Since the workers are in a non-standard employment relationship, they lack formal assurance from the platform that once they completed a task, they will have another one. The “assurance” depends entirely on their own market bargaining power in terms of reputation, skills, experience, and the relationship that they develop with clients. Therefore, new workers and workers relying on the same client are most likely to experience high forms of job insecurity than other workers because of their weak structural power (Aleksynska et al., 2018; Wood et al., 2019).

The competitive working environment also makes the workers to feel that other workers could easily replace them, especially those that are willing to work for less pay (Wood et al., 2019). The open bidding nature in some platforms always leads to an intense price competition making most workers feel that those who bid lower could easily replace them (Heeks, 2017:37). Besides, the fact that the online labour platforms regard the workers as ‘on-demand’-independent contractors –

that is, workers who can be fired without notice as soon as a contract lapses - makes matters even worse.

In conclusion, the decent work standards on stability of work proposes that remote platform work should permit a combination of stability and flexibility. Besides, it proposes that work should be devoid of discrimination. That is, it should have an equal opportunity to work and treated in an equal manner (Heeks, 2017). From the above discussion, it is evident that there are glaring cases of work instability in online freelance work even though it permits flexibility. Besides, the workers reported that they were discriminated from some jobs, especially those that are highly paying, because of their nationality.

4.2.4 Work Process

According to Heeks (2017), work process encompasses the highest number of concerns among workers. These concerns include lack of information on the identity of the client, task description and the purpose of the task; poor communication from the platform and the client; and opacity of procedures including work rejection, account suspension or termination and progression to higher grades on the platform.

4.2.4.1 Clarity of Client Identity, Task Description and Purpose

A majority of the respondents (58%) indicated that clients on the platforms often provide clear task descriptions, clarify their expectations to them, and reveal the purpose of the tasks, including their identity. The proportion of respondents who reported that this happens more than half of the time and always was 32% and 26% respectively. The proportion of respondents who said that this happens less than half of the time were 13%. Only 5% of the respondents indicated that clients do not provide clear task descriptions, clarify their expectations to them, and reveal the purpose of the tasks, including their identity. As such, there were minimal cases when clients did not provide clear task descriptions, clarify their expectations to them, and reveal the purpose of the tasks, including their identity.

Conversely, Bergvall-Kareborn and Howcroft (2014) found that there is information asymmetry between the workers on AMT and the client. The workers do not have information on the identity of the client and the purpose of the task. This difference in finding is expected since the nature of work on AMT leans more towards microwork and not freelancing. Microworkers handle a subset

of the whole work and might not be in a position to know the purpose of the task, the identity of the client, and what is expected of them.

Table 4 Information asymmetry between Clients, Workers and Platforms

	Clarity of client identity, task description and purpose	Pay after alteration of task description
Never	4.5%	43.6%
Less than half of the time	12.8%	41.4%
About half of the time	24.8%	6.8%
More than half of the time	32.3%	6.0%
Always	25.6%	2.3%

It is important to note that the confluence of information-communication technologies and the power relations, particularly individual marketplace bargaining power in terms of reputation and skills, also shapes the work process on the platform. The often weak structural power among the workers, particularly in developing countries, limits their influence on the work process. As such, the clients reveal their own identity and purpose of the task at their discretion. Besides, they may also alter task description at any time without compensating workers for the work already done.

Therefore, the respondents were asked whether in cases where clients altered the task description they were compensated for work already done. The total proportion of those who reported that clients have never changed task descriptions without paying them was 44 per cent; those who said that clients altered task descriptions without compensating them less than half of the time were 41%. The proportion of respondents who indicated that they were not paid more than half of the time was 6%, and those who stated that they were always not paid in such instances were 2%. This finding is an indication that this is not a major concern among youth doing online freelance work in Nairobi County.

4.2.4.2 Clarity of Platform Procedures

As mentioned earlier, there are concerns among workers in literature regarding clarity of platform procedures on work rejection, account suspension or termination and progression to higher grades on the platform (Heeks, 2017). Regarding **work rejection** on the platforms, the proportion of respondents who reported they have experienced cases of work rejection were 47%. On the other hand, those who indicated otherwise were 53%. This finding is an indication that work rejection is a concern among the respondents, although not among the majority of them.

Although the clients provided reasons for rejection in most cases, some respondents pointed out that there were clients who did not give any reason for rejecting their work. The main reason for the rejection of the work among the respondents whose work had been rejected, and received reasons for the same, was substandard work. That is, work that does not meet the required standards. This could be due to a failure on the part of workers. The workers, especially those that are new in writing and translation category, pointed out that their work was rejected because of typographical and grammatical issues (grammatical errors and formatting style), use of a different tone from what is expected and not following the instruction of the client. It could also be a failure on the part of the client, especially when the client provides unclear instruction.

“I didn't meet the project acceptance criteria he wanted, though this was due to a poor description of the project,” respondent number 60 in the quantitative survey.

“Failure to follow instructions, though he had given the wrong instructions,” respondent number 81 in the quantitative survey.

The second main reason for work rejection among these respondents is unclear task description. These issues range from failure of the worker to follow the client's instruction, unclear instruction from the clients, miscommunication between the worker and the client, and inadequate instruction from the clients. In general, workers may miss instructions because of tight deadlines. On the other hand, clients may also provide unclear task description because of language barriers. The other reasons for work rejection include late submission and technical issues such as inaudible tasks especially for workers doing translation.

“The work was rejected because I never followed Instructions or I interpreted it incorrectly,” respondent number 66 in the quantitative survey.

“The client was not very good at explaining as English was not his main language,” respondent number 30 in the quantitative survey.

Notably, a majority of these respondents (52%) reported that the reasons the clients gave for rejection of work were not justified. In fact, there was a general perception that some clients were dishonest. That is, the clients would receive work from workers but because they do not want to pay for the same, they would come up with any reason and reject the work altogether.

In general, whether a client rejects work altogether or asks the worker to redo the work again, there is work that has been done that needs to be paid. When asked if they received payment for the work that they had already done, a majority indicated that 69% of them indicated that they did not get paid

“I wish they could make sure every client who's looking for a freelancer has money in the company's escrow no matter what before they allow them to create a contract with any freelancer. This will reduce instances where clients go without paying a freelancer,” respondent number 28 in the quantitative survey.

“I would only wish that we could have shared costs in times such as when the clients cancel your order and you had already started the work. Platforms do not consider cancelled orders and will only reduce your order completion rate not considering the fact that the client might also be the cause of the order cancellation”, respondent number 15 in the quantitative survey.

According to Berg (2016), there are numerous cases when clients reject work from workers and refuse to pay for the same. This assertion is based on findings from ILO survey of workers in AMT and Crowdfunder. Berg (2016) points out that 94 per cent of crowd workers surveyed experienced cases of work rejection or non-payment. Although 47% of these workers admitted that they had made mistakes, some of these mistakes were due to unclear instructions from clients.

These tendencies can be attributed to the strong client market bargaining power vis-a-vis the workers. As such, these clients feel they have no obligation whatsoever to provide sufficient justification to the workers leave alone making payment for the effort and time the worker has put into the job even in cases where they provided unclear instructions to the clients in the first place. Although most platforms permit clients to ask for revisions, there is an additional effort and time that clients do not take into consideration when compensating the workers.

In worse scenarios, clients would change the task descriptions while the worker has started the work and fail to provide compensation for the work the worker has already done. In response to these issues, most platforms often require clients to compensate the workers in cases where they change the task descriptions.

Apart from clarity of procedures on work rejection, a great proportion of the respondents (89%) indicated that there is clarity on **account upgrade on the platform**. However, it seems unclear how easy it is to move from one category to the next.

“Platforms should support writers to grow and become better,” respondent number 11 in the quantitative survey.

Apart from clarity on account upgrades, another important element is **justification for suspension or termination from the platform**. The proportion of the respondents who indicated that their accounts had been suspended or terminated were 34%. From the qualitative responses, it seems account suspension and termination happens when the respondents violate the platform's terms and conditions. Martin et al. (2016) also reported the existence of opaque procedures regarding account suspension, termination and upgrade. The unreasonable justifications make negative perceptions to run ahead of realities on the platforms. For instance, some workers pointed out that account suspension and termination were part of the platform's plan to reduce their numbers on the platform. Other workers also pointed out, in most cases, that the platforms side with clients when resolving disputes.

“My account was suspended due to a delayed reply with their account management team. However, was dissatisfied with the decision. I would recommend the account manager to seek to understand the reasons behind failure to meet certain demands,” respondent number 74 in the quantitative survey.

“Sometimes, my account got suspended just because the client refused to work with, which is not right. I was willing to work, put more effort on the project, but in the end, I got terminated. This is not right and if I had the power I could change these rules, such it is the time one delays the project a lot that then you get suspended or terminated,” respondent number 60 in the quantitative survey.

“They said I was using false identity and closed my account. Tried to ask what the problem they said my ID verification failed,” respondent number 44 in the quantitative survey.

“I am not satisfied with how quickly the platform suspended my account when I was not able to get a job in 1 month. I am happy that once I reached out to them they immediately enabled my account,” respondent number 30 in the quantitative survey.

There are respondents who claimed that account suspension and termination was to reduce the number of workers on the platform:

“Nowadays accounts are being suspended without good explanation why, I guess due to the high number of freelancer,” respondent number 92 in the quantitative survey.

“Upwork team has issues with suspending freelancers,” respondent number 75 in the quantitative survey.

There are also cases where the platform renders the account of the worker private for a period of time so that the client cannot hire them.

“The platform has never suspended my account but has been rendered private so clients cannot see my profile unless it's a client I have worked with previously. I would appreciate if I have worked with a platform for more than a year my profile remains public and can be seen by any client seeking services,” respondent number 90 in the quantitative survey.

4.2.4.3 Platform Communication

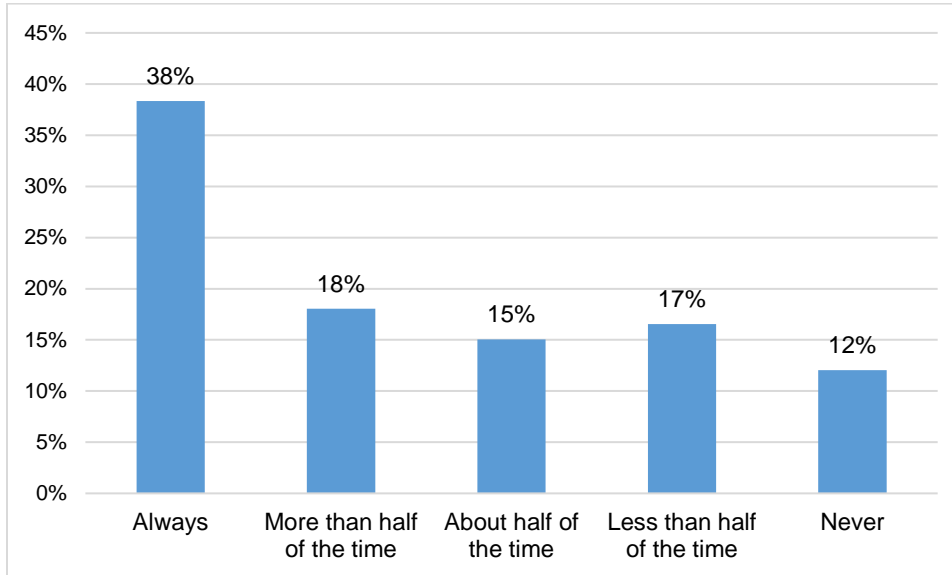
The platforms also often answer questions from the respondents (including requests to mediate on a dispute between workers and clients). The proportion of respondents who indicated that the platform always responds to their questions is 38%. Those who receive responses from the platform for more than half of the time is 18%. On the other hand, those who received answers to their questions from the platform less than half of the time were 17%. The proportion of respondents who indicated that they have never received responses to their questions is 12%.

Although there is positive feedback from the platforms, most of them tend to take time when it comes to mediating disputes between workers and clients. According to Berg (2016), workers on AMT and Crowdfunder also reported that the platforms were unresponsive to their request for mediating disputes with the clients. This could be justified because it takes time to resolve a dispute. However, more often than not, the outcome of the platforms tend to favour the clients and not the workers. This biased outcomes of mediation processes can be attributed to the strong market bargaining power among the clients.

“Work platforms are generally supportive, however, they tend to take time especially when it comes to dispute resolutions,” respondent number 83 in the quantitative survey.

Apart from platforms, some clients also take time to respond to questions from the customers. There are also workers who reported cases of client being rude to them

Figure 18 Platform Communication



“Clients fail to respond to queries often. Besides, the support team always consider the client's claims more than the writer's justifications. I would like a platform with equality and mutual responsibility as well as accountability,” respondent number 36 in the quantitative survey.

“Am satisfied with the tonnes of work that are on the platform but I am most disappointed by the fact some clients are excessively rude while carrying out their tasks,” respondent number 33 in the quantitative survey.

4.2.4.4 Ratings on the Platform

A majority of the respondents (92%) reported that clients could rate or evaluate their work on the platforms. Most of the respondents who reported otherwise (8%) worked under other intermediary workers (often known as account owners) and did not have direct access to the clients. Nonetheless, the respondents valued their ratings so much because it is the main indicator of their qualification to the client.

“I am most satisfied with the ability of clients to review my work and vice versa,” respondent number 32 in the quantitative survey.

It also emerged from the respondents that not all the negative ratings were about the quality of work. There are cases where clients would give a negative rating because of a delayed response. This occurs often because most of the workers are in the global south and might not be able to respond in time.

“The time difference can lead to a poor rating. Clients can approach you at weird hours of the night, only to get messages and a negative rating on my response time,” respondent number 91 in the quantitative survey.

When asked what the respondents could change about the work process on the platforms, some of them indicated that they would make it possible to contest the ratings. According to Aleksynska et al. (2018), the ability to contest, refuse and even remove a bad rating is always a preserve of top-rated workers.

Furthermore, just 82% of the respondents reported that they could review, rate and give feedback about clients on the platform. The remaining respondents could not do so either because they work under other workers and so do not have direct access to the client, the platform does not allow them to give feedback or they are not aware that they can give feedback about clients on the platform. This finding is an indication that platforms seem to place a lot of emphasis on the rating of the workers than those of clients.

4.2.4.5 Conclusion

According to the decent work standard on work process, there should be general details about client identity and task purpose on online labour platform. From the findings, a majority of the workers (58%) reported that clients on the platforms often provide clear task descriptions, clarify their expectations to them, and reveal the purpose of the tasks, including their identity. This is an indication that the work process that the youths experience on the platform conforms to the decent work standards to a greater extent though there are deficits.

Regarding platform procedures, the decent work standard on work process proposes that there should be clear rules for work rejection and re-work, worker deactivation, worker ratings, and worker ‘levelling-up’. It also advocates for a neutral third-party dispute resolution mechanism and human review of worker complaints. It further advances that there should be clear information about payment including schedule and conditions and non-payment. From the findings, it is clear that work process that the youths experience on the platform conforms to the decent work standards

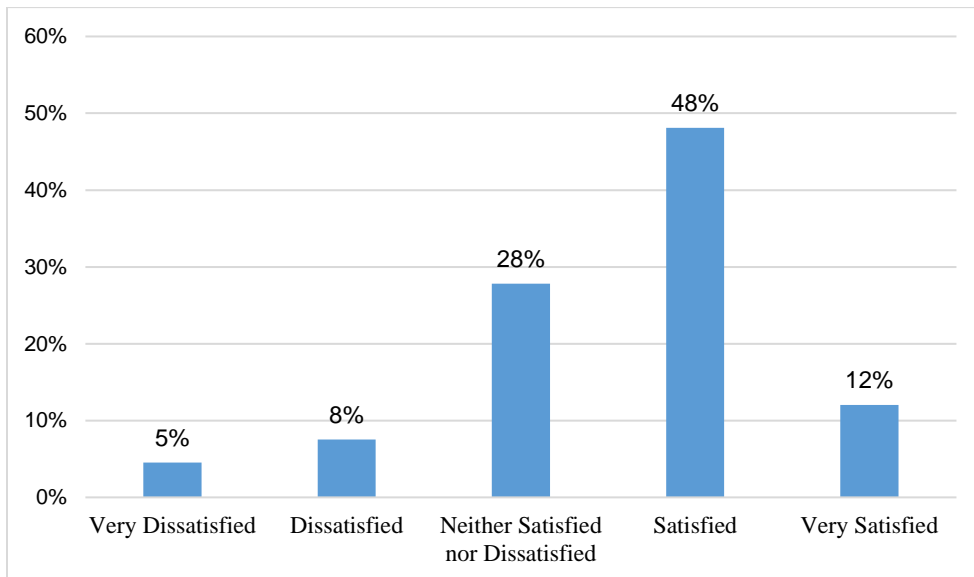
to a greater extent. Nonetheless, there are pockets of decent work deficits since there are cases where there is no reason provided for work rejection. Where reasons are provided, a substantial portion of it is unjustified. The conditions for non-payments are also not clear when it comes to work rejection. Ideally, workers should be paid for work already done.

Regarding platform communication, decent work standards on work process point that there should be prompt and respectful communications between workers, clients and platform. Besides, there should be a rating system for both clients and workers. The findings reveal the same though the platforms and clients in some instances delay in giving responses to the workers. The platforms also seem to place a lot of emphasis on the rating of the workers than those of clients.

4.3 Job Satisfaction among Youths doing Online Freelance Work in Nairobi County

The respondents were also asked about their overall satisfaction with work on the online labour platforms. According to Rose (2003), the purpose of such a single-measure job satisfaction question is to gauge the feeling of workers about the intrinsic characteristics of their job (the work performed by workers, work related stress and work autonomy) and not extrinsic characteristics such as prospects for promotion, contractual status, or earnings.

Figure 19 Degree of Satisfaction with Work on Online Platforms



A majority of the respondents (60%) reported that they were satisfied with online freelance work: these include 48% who indicated that they were satisfied and 12% who indicated that they were very satisfied. On the other hand, 13% of them indicated that they were dissatisfied with online

freelance work: these include 8% who indicated that they were dissatisfied and 5% who indicated that they were very dissatisfied.

The respondents were further asked what they were most satisfied with in online freelance work and the most of cited reason was the flexibility associated to online freelance work. This entails the opportunity to work comfortably from anywhere- including working from home-at any time and flexible work schedule.

The second most cited reason is earnings. Most of the respondents indicated that the earnings are good and are at times higher than what they would be paid in the offline economy. Others also stated that they were satisfied with online freelance work because the workload is commensurate to the earnings; the terms of payment were good; it provided them with an opportunity to supplement their income. There are also respondents who indicated that online freelance work presents an open cheque to the workers, that is, the more the workers work, the more they earn.

“The earnings are quite well compared to the level I am and the workload I receive,” respondent number 71 in the quantitative survey.

The third reason mentioned by a majority of the workers is freedom to choose tasks, as well as the large amount of work available to freelancers. The other reasons include issues to do with work process, their skills matching with the jobs posted and the opportunities to learn on the job.

“One stands a great opportunity to learn from others, a buyer could make a request relevant to your field but add a few requests that require further research outside your comfort zone. A great learning opportunity,” respondent number 45 in the quantitative survey.

Apart from what they were most satisfied with, the respondents were also asked what they were most dissatisfied with regarding online freelance work. Insufficient work- irregular and unpredictable flow of work-happened to be the most cited issue. The respondents pointed out that platforms have become saturated with workers making it hard to obtain work. Others pointed out that it was even harder for entry-level freelancers to obtain work on the online labour platforms. There are also respondents-especially those in the writing and translation field- who attributed the underemployment to the seasonality of work, those dissatisfied reported that there was insufficient work on the platforms, and intense competition among the workers.

“I am most dissatisfied with the availability of work. The market has become more saturated compared to when I first started out,” respondent number 13 in the quantitative survey.

“It takes too long for new freelancers to find work despite their expertise,” respondent number 20 in the quantitative survey.

“It is common when in low season, in which the availability of work is very poor,” respondent number 38 in the quantitative survey.

The second most cited reason is earnings. The respondents mentioned about five issues regarding earnings on the platforms: payment not being commensurate to the workload; delays in payment- the respondents would like to obtain their payment as soon as the client approves their work; huge commissions from their fees taken by platforms and intermediary workers ; low earnings and a general perspective that workers in Africa are underpaid. There are also those who reported cases of dishonesty, fraud among clients and refusal to pay for the completed work by clients and intermediary workers.

“The earnings sometimes can be too low considering the effort put and time consumed while working,” respondent number 51 in the quantitative survey.

Sometimes the workload can be huge with little pay and if you reject your rating is affected- respondent number 87 in the quantitative survey.

“The lower rates and the assumption that non-native English speakers cannot create good content as native English speakers,” respondent number 59 in the quantitative survey.

The respondents were also dissatisfied with broad work process issues ranging from unclear task briefs from the clients; tedious bidding processes; regular work rejection, language barrier, long dispute resolution processes, account suspension and termination; inability to assess the tasks because of inaccuracies in the work plans that clients provided, too much time spent working indoors leading to social isolation and limited communication with other workers.

“You could get to a point whereby the client does not give clear requirements thus making your tasks harder to accomplish,” respondent number 5 in the quantitative survey.

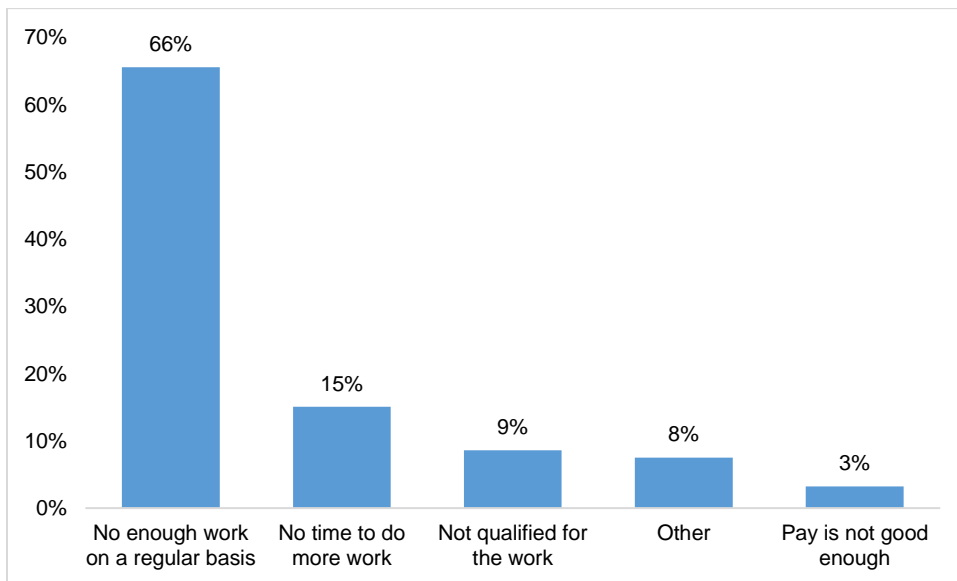
“The process of looking for clients is just tiring,” respondent number 83 in the quantitative survey.

Maybe the fact that it's hard to get second chances to do something right if you make mistakes respondent number 76 in the quantitative survey.

Being an online platform one will always be vulnerable, you could work tirelessly, deliver on time and maintain quality but get rejected only for your work to be adopted and get short changed respondent number 45 in the quantitative survey.

The way some clients communicate is unprofessional respondent number 17 in the quantitative survey.

Figure 20 Reasons for Not Doing More Online Freelance Work



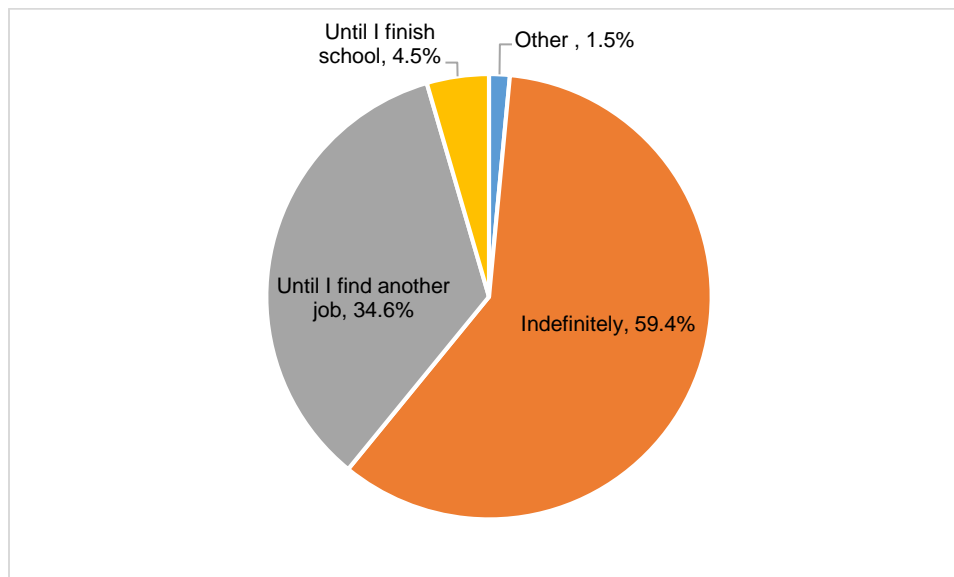
Other reasons that the respondents gave include long working hours, working at odd hours of the night, inconsistent working hours, lack of career growth and internet connection issues or slow internet speeds and the involving nature of advertising on the platforms.

“Inconsistent working hours. Sometimes you can be forced to alter your sleeping arrangements to perform required tasks first,” respondent number 74 in the quantitative survey.

“Sometimes I write technical articles which are very tricky and take long time to complete,” respondent number 72 in the quantitative survey.

In spite of the working conditions on the online labour platforms, a majority of the respondents (59.4%) indicated that they intend to work on the platform indefinitely. The proportion of respondents who indicated that they intended to work on the platform until they find another job was 34.6%. Another 4.5% of the respondents indicated that they intend to work online until they finish school. The remaining 1.5% intend to rest to work online until they travel abroad among other reasons.

Figure 21 Prospects for the Development of the Online Freelance Work



The respondents were further asked whether they were looking for paid work apart from online freelance work in the offline economy. The proportion of those who were looking for paid work apart from online freelance work in the offline economy was 57%, with the majority of them (64%) being those who online freelance work is their main source of income. The rest (43%) are not looking for paid work other than online freelance work in the offline economy (59% of them are being those who online freelance work is their main source of income).

This is an indication that a majority of workers who consider online freelance work as their main source of income are looking for paid work to supplement their income from online freelance work. The workers who do not consider online freelance work as their main source of income are also performing online freelance work to supplement their income from other sources. As such,

the flexible nature of online freelance work make it possible to double it up with other sources of income. No wonder, most of the workers are intending to work online indefinitely but are also looking for other paid work.

This can also be attributed to the working conditions on online labour platforms. The often irregular flow of work –insufficient work- due to intense competition for work on the platforms are pushing these workers to look for alternative sources of income to survive. As such most of them are looking for work with stable income and social protection in the formal sector to cushion them from the shocks in earnings.

Coincidentally, 58% of the respondents further reported that they would quit online freelance work altogether if they get an employment with better terms (permanent contract, steady income and social security benefits). The rest (42%) of the respondents would not quit online freelance work in case such an opportunity arises. Since a majority of the workers joined online freelance work because they could not find an alternative employment, the above findings show that online freelance work is somewhat regarded as a stop gap measure for slightly more than half of youth doing online freelance work in Nairobi County. The findings further reveal that stability of income and social protection is very important to the workers. The workers are willing to abandon online freelance work altogether should such employment opportunities arise.

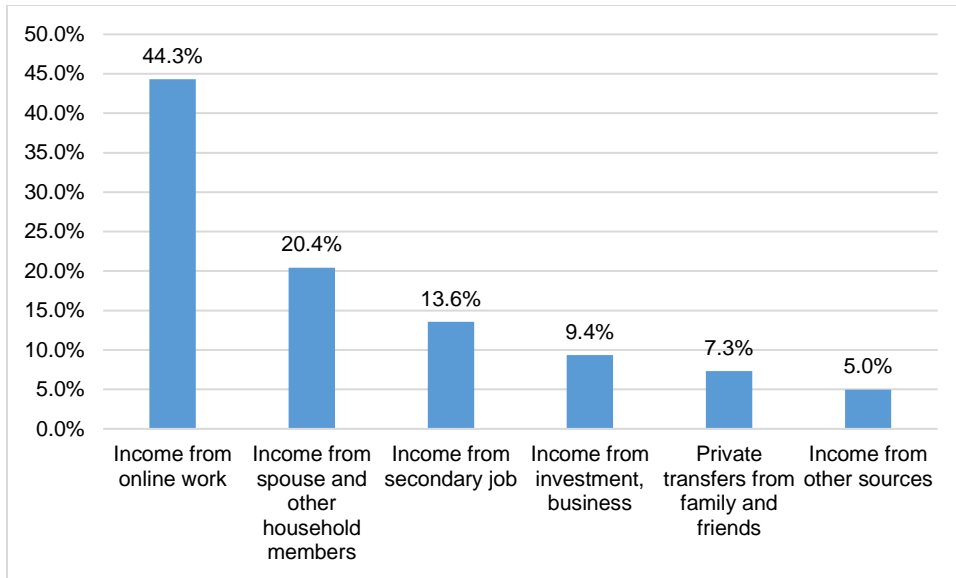
4.4 Implication of the Working Conditions on the Wellbeing of Youths doing Online

Freelance Work in Nairobi County

4.4.1 Implication on the Household Income of Youths doing Online Freelance Work in Nairobi County

In general, the findings show a high economic dependence on the platform. Income from online freelance work constitutes a high proportion (44.3%) of the total household income for all the respondents. Income from their spouse or other household members makes up 20.4% of their total household income; income from secondary job makes up 13.6% of their total household income. Income from investments and business, private transfers from family and friends and income from other sources make up 9.4%, 7.3 % and 5% of their total household income respectively.

Figure 22 Distribution of Income by Sources



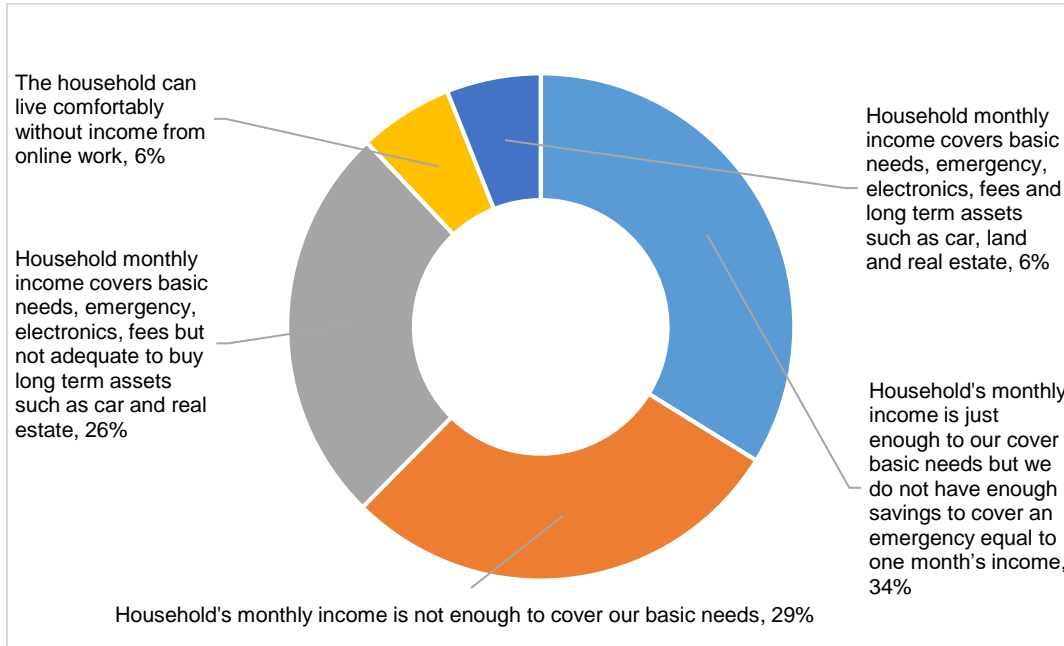
Income from online freelance work also make up a substantial proportion of the total household income (56%) for workers who consider online freelance work as their main sources of income. Income from their spouse or other household members makes up 19% of their total household income; income from secondary job and private transfers from family and friends each make up 8% of their total household income. Income from investment, business constitutes about 6% of their total household income while income from other sources constitute about 4% of their total household income.

On the other hand, income from primary job makes up the largest portion of the income (26%) of the respondents who do not consider online freelance work as their main source of income. Income from their spouse or other household members comes second making up 23% of the total household income. Income from online freelance work comes third making up 19% of the total household income. Income from investment, business constitutes about 17% of their total household income; income from private transfers from family and friends make up 8% of the total household income and income from other sources constitute about 7% of their total household income. This is an indication that economic dependence on online freelance work is higher among workers who consider online freelance work as their main source of income than those who do not consider online freelance work as their main source of incomes.

Similarly, Wood et al. (2019) found that remote platform work was a vital source of income for a majority of the workers (73%) from six underexplored national contexts working on two large online labour platforms. Online freelance work was also the main source for workers on AMT and

Crowdfunder (Berg, 2016); workers on AMT, CrowdFlower, Microworkers, Clickworker and Prolific (Berg et al., 2018) and platform workers in Ukraine (Aleksynska et al., 2018).

Figure 23 Financial Precariousness among Workers



Moreover, most of the platform workers live in a precarious financial condition. The proportion of respondents who had difficulties in meeting their basic necessary expenses each month were 29%. Another 34% of the respondents reported that they have insufficient savings to meet emergency expenses (reported that their household's monthly income could cover their basic needs but they did not have enough savings to cover an emergency equivalent to income for one month).

The proportion of the respondents who reported that their household monthly income could cover basic needs, emergency, electronics, fees but was not adequate to buy long term assets such as car and real estate was 26%. Furthermore, 6% reported that household monthly income could cover basic needs, emergency, electronics, fees and long term assets such as car, land and real estate. Just 6% of the respondents reported that they could live comfortably without income from online freelance work.

The respondents who consider online freelance work as their main source of income had more difficult time meeting basic necessary expenses each month than those who do not consider online freelance work as their main source of income. This is more than expected because unlike workers who consider online freelance work as their main source of income, workers- who do not consider

online freelance work as their main source of income-are likely to benefit from an additional more reliable source of income with social protection coverage.

Berg et al. (2018) also found that many crowdworkers lived in a precarious financial situation. One out of every five workers lived in a household whose income was not enough to cover their basic needs. Notably, this share was high among crowdworkers from Africa (42%). The proportion of workers who lived in households that did not have sufficient savings to take care of an emergency equal to one month's income was 42%. An even larger proportion of the workers (44%) had debts such as car payments, legal bills, medical bills, student loan and loans from relatives.

Berg (2016) also found that platform worker who considered crowdwork as their main source of income have weaker financial situation compared to those who did not consider crowdwork as their main source of income. These workers have a more difficult time meeting basic necessary expenses each month (24.8 per cent and insufficient savings to meet emergency expenses. Besides, a majority of them do not make regular contributions to social security, private retirement account and health insurance coverage.

On the other hand, Wood et al. (2019) also found these workers earned an income sufficient to evade material hardship. A majority of remote platform workers in Ukraine (68%) also reported that their monthly income from all sources was adequate to cover their basic needs. About a third of the workers (32%) said that their monthly income from all sources was not sufficient to cover their basic needs.

The key informants also reiterated that the youths could utilize the income they obtained from online freelance to enhance their future income. They can invest this income in their education and become more creative, innovative and able to do more diverse work. They can also invest it in their health and lead longer and more productive lives. Still, they can use the money to start a business and supplement their income, though there are key informants who questioned the value online freelance work added to the country. According to them, online freelance work does have a substantial multiplier effect in the economy. That is, it does not lead to the creation of intermediary process or products that would create new or additional jobs in county.

In general, the most key informants asserted that online freelance work had the potential to generate decent incomes for the youths and the marginalized groups in Nairobi County. It can create gainful employment opportunities for the youth in a labour market that has been somewhat

stagnant. It can also enlarge labour market options for marginalized groups of youths -women with care responsibilities and those that are abled differently.

In conclusion, the confluence between the digital technologies in the form of online labour platforms and the worker power yields an organizational forms characterized by a global oversupply of labour relative to the demand. This leads to intense competition for work. The work organization on the platforms where workers are permitted to see bids by their colleagues heightens this competition leading to downward pressure on the pay rate on the platform and the earnings of the workers. This translates to inadequate household income for the workers.

The workers with relatively weak bargaining power relative to clients further earned lower incomes. They were not able to meet their basic needs and do not have sufficient savings to meet emergency expenses.

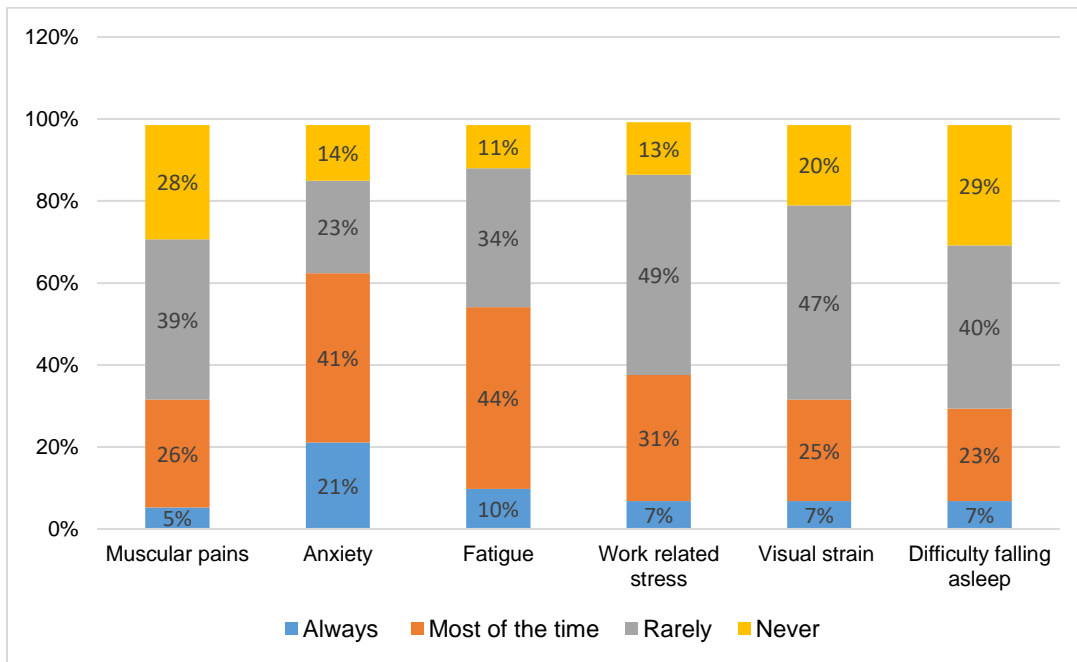
On the other hand, workers with better individual marketplace bargaining power in terms of reputation, skills and high labour demand tend to earn more compared to those with lower individual marketplace bargaining power. This translates to higher household incomes. As such, these workers can meet their basic needs, have sufficient savings and can procure long term assets such as car and real estate. The workers with better individual marketplace bargaining power in form of alternative sources of income can live comfortably without income from online freelance work.

4.4.2 Implication on the Health of Youths doing Online Freelance Work in Nairobi County

The respondents were also asked if they had ever failed to work due to any health challenges caused or made worse by working conditions in online freelance work. Most of them (56%) indicated that they had never failed to work. Another 41% indicated that they had failed to work less than half of the time. The proportion of respondents who indicated that they have failed to work more than half of the time was due to health challenges caused or made worse by working conditions in online freelance work was 3%. None of the respondents indicated that they always fail to work due to any health challenges caused or made worse by working conditions in online freelance work.

Additionally, most of the respondents (67%) did not associate the working conditions to muscular pains in shoulders, neck, upper limbs and lower limbs: 28% of them reported that they have never had muscular pains because of the working conditions in the past three months; and 39% of them reported that they have experienced such pains less than half of the time in the past three months. On the other hand, a third of the respondents (33%) associate the working conditions to muscular pains in shoulders, neck, upper limbs and lower limbs: 26% reported that they experienced such pains more than half of the time and 5% reported that they have always experienced the same in the past three months.

Figure 24 Implication of the Working Conditions on Health



Slightly more than six out of every ten respondents (62%) associated the working conditions to anxiety: 21% reported that they have been anxious because of the working conditions in the past three months; 41% reported that they have been anxious more than half of the time because of the working conditions in the past three months. On the other hand, 37% of the respondent did not associate the working conditions with anxiety: 23% reported that they have been anxious less than half of the time because of the working conditions in the past three months. The rest (14%) reported that they have never been because of the working conditions in the past three months.

Graham et al. (2017) also found that the uncertain nature of work on the platform is associated to anxiety among the workers. Since the workers had no employment relationship with the platform,

they lacked formal assurance that they will have more tasks once a task is completed. The “assurance” that they had emanated from their reputation, experience and good relations with their clients who could also stop giving them work at any time. This made them anxious about their future income.

Forde et al. (2017) also found that working on the online labour platforms is associated to a general feeling of worry and not high levels of stress or emotional disturbance. The irregular work schedules also interfere with the work-life balance for workers. It further interferes with work-work balance for workers with alternative sources of income.

Moreover, most of the respondents associated the working conditions to fatigue (55%): one out of every ten respondents (10%) stated that they have experienced fatigue because of the working conditions in the past three months; 44% of the respondent stated that they have experienced fatigue more than half of the time because of the working conditions in the past three months. The remaining 45% did not associate the working conditions to fatigue: 34% of them stated that they have experienced fatigue less than half of the time and 11% indicated that they have never felt fatigued because of the working conditions in the past three months.

According to Wood et al. (2018), the number of working hours do not reveal decent work deficits in remote platform work. The workers have to work for long hours, in many instances working during unsocial working hours (evenings, nights and weekends), to obtain a decent income. These long working hours leads to fatigue among the workers. It is also counterproductive from an economic perspective since it undermines the productivity of digital labour and might even lead to heart attack, cerebral haemorrhage, and stroke, among other diseases (UNDP, 2018).

Besides, most of the respondents (62%) did not associate the working conditions to work stress: 13% of them reported that they have never had work stress because of the working conditions in the past there months; and 49% of them reported that they have experienced work stress less than half of the time in the past three months. On the other hand, 38% of them associated the working conditions to work stress: 31% reported that they experienced work stress more than half of the time and 7% reported that they have always experienced the same in the past three months.

Most of the respondents (67%) also did not associate the working conditions to visual strain: 20% of them reported that they have never had visual strain because of the working conditions in the past there months; and 47% of them reported that they have experienced visual strain less than half

of the time in the past three months. On the other hand, 32% of them associated the working conditions to visual strain: 25% reported that they experienced visual strain more than half of the time and 7% reported that they have always experienced the same in the past three months.

According to Heeks (2017), the opacity of platform procedures, especially those dealing with account termination, suspension from the platform and promotion to higher grades are a potential source of stress among the workers. Graham et al. (2017) assert that these procedures can make workers to be uncertain about their future income. Perhaps, this explains the high levels of anxiety among platform workers.

Furthermore, most of the respondents (69%) also did not associate the working conditions to difficulty in sleep: 29% of them reported that they have never had difficulty in sleep because of the working conditions in the past three months; and 40% of them reported that they have experienced difficulty in sleep less than half of the time in the past three months. On the other hand, 30% of them associated the working conditions to difficulty in sleep: 23% reported that they experienced difficulty in sleep more than half of the time and 7% reported that they have always experienced the same in the past three months.

Platform-based algorithmic control also entails autonomy in the form of discretion over place of work. As such, workers could work from the comfort of their homes; combine online freelance work with domestic work, care work, study and alternative paid work; and avoid transport costs. Nonetheless, working from home could lead to social isolation (Wood et al., 2019; Fielder, 2016). According to Wood and Burchell (2018), it affects the mental health of the workers. According to Pinker (2014), minimal or no interaction among platform workers is likely to have a negative implication on the mood and productivity of the workers.

The key informant also pointed out the general population still does not see online freelance work as any other form of work. There is still a lot of prejudice about the same in Kenya among the older generation who worry about its prospects and stability. These insecurities may affect the workers psychologically.

4.4.3 Implication on Skill Acquisition and Development among Youths doing Online Freelance Work in Nairobi County

The confluence of digital technologies and the balance of bargaining power between workers and clients yield organization forms that are characterized by an oversupply of labour relative to demand and intense competition (Wood et al., 2019; Rubery and Grimshaw, 2001). To enjoy better working conditions in this environment, workers have to have stronger individual marketplace bargaining power in terms of reputation and skills relative to other workers on the platform (Wood et al., 2019; Kalleberg, 2011). This gives the workers an impetus to acquire new skills and develop existing skills as a means of survival on the online labour platforms. These workers may choose to learn individually, from others, platforms and institutions (Margaryan, 2016).

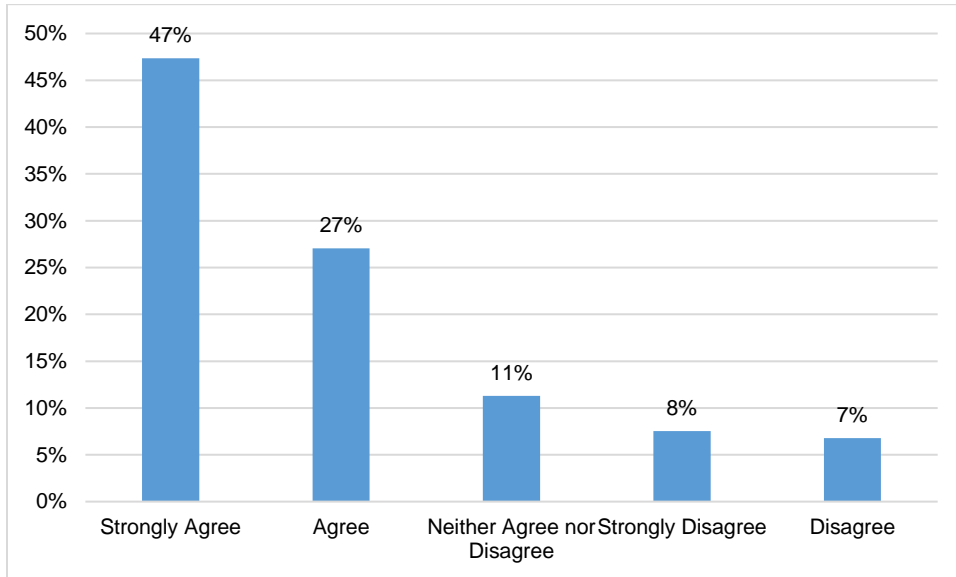
According to the findings, a majority of the workers reported that they had undergone training to improve their skills while working on the platforms. The respondents were also asked to indicate the training(s) that they had undergone to improve their skills since they started working online. Most of them (49%) indicated that they had received on the job training, either through their friends, co-workers or supervisors. Forty five per cent of the workers reported that they had received sponsored themselves for training either through online courses or taken personal initiative to improve their skills through explainer videos on YouTube among other digital sources. Furthermore, 28% of the workers reported that they had received training from the platform. Just 16% of the workers reported that they received training through Ajira digital program, an initiative by the government to train online freelance workers especially those intending to work on online labour platform. In general, all the respondents indicated had received one kind of training or the other to improve their skills since they started performing online freelance work.

Margaryan (2016) also found that workers on Crowdfunder and Upwork are proactively seeking and finding opportunities to develop their skills and learn individually –through online courses and studying professional literature -and with others while working on the platforms. Aleksynska et al. (2018) too found that workers increasingly relied on themselves to acquire and develop the skills needed to work on the platforms, get work on the platforms and improve on their reputation to increase their current and future earning potentials.

When asked to choose a statement that best describes their skill set, 35% of them reported that they had skills to cope with more demanding duties. Another 34% of them indicated that they

needed further training to cope well with their duties. Furthermore, 29% of them indicated that they had perfect skills-match for performing online freelance work. The proportion of workers who reported that their skills were more advanced than necessary for doing the tasks on the platform was 2%. This means that slightly more than a third of the workers are doing tasks that is beneath their skill set.

Figure 25 Skills Acquisition and Development



Apart from giving workers the impetus to acquire new skills and develop existing skills, these organization forms facilitate learning among the workers working on the online labour platform. The respondents were also asked whether they were able to learn, acquire any new skill (s) or developed their existing skills while working on the platforms. A majority (74%) indicated that they had learnt, acquired or developed existing skills in their work. The respondents that reported that they had not learnt, acquire or develop existing skills in their work were 15%. These skills include the ability to meet tight deadlines, computer skills, communication skills, ability to work under minimal supervision, among others.

The organizational forms on the platforms enable the workers to connect with numerous clients from diverse countries, sectors and industries and perform a variety of tasks in their areas of specialization. Besides, this enabled them to perform tasks that they are unfamiliar with and take on tasks of increasing complexity. Consequently, the workers can learn, acquire new skills,

develop existing skills and gain an experience that they would have otherwise not obtained in the offline economy (Wood et al., 2019).

According to Dicken (2015), transparent work process gives workers the opportunities to learn more about the needs of the clients and develop the corresponding skills and capabilities. On the other hand, opaque work process hinders the flow of knowledge from the core to the periphery. In turn, this perpetuates skill and capability disparities between the client and the worker (Pietrobelli & Rabellotti, 2011).

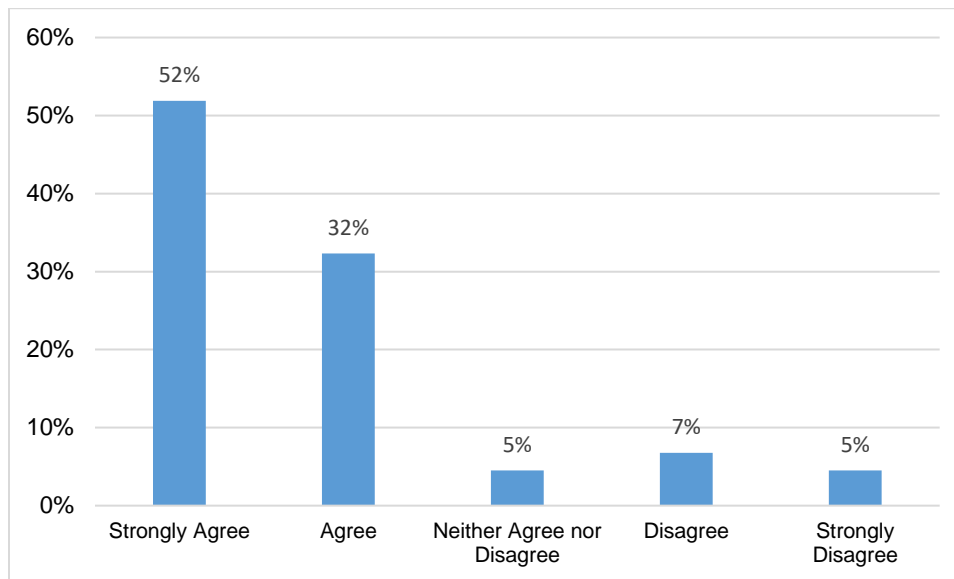
Graham et al. (2017) also reiterate that the information asymmetries inhibits the workers' ability to upgrade their skills to take up new functions and positions in the entire value chain. In this case, the workers are forced to restrict themselves to performing low-skill tasks such as data entry which is inconsistent, in many cases, with their existing skillset, professional experiences and expertise. It also makes the task more challenging for the worker.

Margaryan (2016) also found that both online freelance work and microwork are learning-intensive, and workers on both of these platforms are learning-oriented and self-regulated. The workers learnt as they engaged in challenging tasks. Similarly, Forde et al. (2017) found that the repetitive, routine nature of tasks especially in microwork was counterbalanced to some extent by opportunities to use existing knowledge and skills and learn new skills.

Similarly, a majority of the respondents (84%) indicated that online freelance work offered good prospects for their career advancement. Those proportion of respondents who reported that online freelance work did not offer a good prospect for their career advancement were 12%. This is an indication that the workers can use the skills they have acquired and developed while working to get employment in the offline economy. It also means that they can use these skills to enable them build a portfolio and as such upgrade to higher levels on the platform.

However, Forde et al. (2017) reported low levels of satisfaction among platform workers on career prospects. Aloisi (2015) reiterates that the inability to transfer reputation profile (portfolio of ratings, feedback and tasks) from one profile to the next limits the ability of the workers to build their career. Besides, potential employers in the offline economy might not be convinced that the workers can perform despite their reputational profile on the platforms.

Figure 26 Prospect for Career Advancement



The key informants also doubted whether online freelance work offered good prospects for the career advancement among the youths. According to them, it is unclear how the skills and experiences the youths obtain on the labour platforms could get them a job in the offline economy. There are also those who observed that it would be difficult for a number of workers to find tasks related to their areas of training on the online labour platforms.

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the main findings, conclusions and recommendation of this research. The summary is organized according to the objective of this research. The conclusion focus of the main research question and objective of the research. The recommendation too are not restricted to the government but to all the stakeholders in the platform economy.

5.1 Summary of Main Findings

5.1.1 Characteristics of Youths doing Online Freelance Work in Nairobi County

According to the findings, most of the youths in Nairobi County working on online labour platforms are male within the age bracket of 25-29 and in good health. These workers are single, do not have children and are living alone in their household. A majority of them are highly educated- have completed their bachelor's degree in information, communication and technology, economics, finance, accounting, arts and other social sciences. Most of them are concentrated in Roysambu constituency, which has five wards namely Githurai, Kahawa West, Kahawa, Roysambu and Zimmerman.

These workers have registered in more than one platform and are distributed across every global and local online labour platform. Furthermore, a majority of them indicated that they obtain work exclusively from the platform (44%). Nonetheless, there are intermediary workers also known as “account owners” who pick work from the platforms and outsource the same to other workers.

Most of these workers perform tasks in the domain of writing and translation namely academic writing, technical writing, copywriting, article writing, content writing, proofreading, copyediting, blog writing and translation. They also work in other categories such as clerical and data entry; creative and multimedia; software development and technology; sales and marketing support; and professional services. In most cases, the workers perform task in overlapping categories.

Furthermore, online freelance work is relatively new to most of these workers since most of them (74%) have worked on the platform for less than two years. The turnover among these youths is also quite high. The proportion of workers having an experience spanning more than three years is 26%. Just 12% can be considered experienced after having performed online freelance work for five years or more.

Unemployment was the main reason that motivated them to start doing platform work. The other reasons include flexible working hours, desire for additional income, possibility to earn money while going to school, preference to work from home and the possibility of earning money than in the offline economy through online freelance work. The rest of the workers cited that they can only work from home either because they are expectant or they have an illness, trauma, need to care for a family member or a child. Yet there are those who stated that their main reason working on the platforms is because they enjoy doing it.

Additionally, online freelance work was the main source of income for a majority of the youths in Nairobi County (62%). Business was the main alternative source of income. The proportion of workers who indicated that they did not have any other paid work apart from freelance work was 24%.

5.1.2 Working Conditions of Youths doing Online Freelance Work in Nairobi County

According to the findings, the workers earn an average of Kes 36, 853 in a typical month, which is above the minimum basic wage of Kes 21,311 in Nairobi County (GoK, 2019). However, this earning is exclusive of commission paid to the platform (for workers who obtain work exclusively from the platform), transaction cost incurred when transferring the money to Kenya and the proposed tax of 5% that the government is intending to levy on earnings from remote platform work. It does not also include social security contributions for retirement, payments annual leave, sick leave and overtime, medical insurance, among other allowances that workers in the offline economy enjoy. Therefore, it can be argued that the earnings of these youths only meet the decent work standard on earnings on the face value while blurring the fact that these workers could be earning lower income in relative terms.

Furthermore, the findings show that the workers spend an average of 40.92 hours in a typical week doing both paid and unpaid online freelance work with most of them putting in either 15-24 hours (17%) or 40-48 hours (17%) in a typical week. Besides, a majority of them (83%) work for six or less days in a typical week.

Although this number of working hours is slightly above the number of working hours recommended in the decent digital working standards (40 hours) and less than 50 hours (the threshold for overwork) it obscures decent work deficits relating to working time on the platforms. The algorithmic management techniques arising from the platform-based ranking and rating

systems tends to offers the workers high flexibility. However, it is imperative to note that workers have to meet lots of demands in order to realize this this flexibility (Lehdonvirta, 2018).

The weak structural bargaining power of the workers relative to that power of the clients means that the clients and not the workers are the ones who determined the working times on the platforms (Wood et al., 2018). This leads to unstructured work patterns, characterized by unpredictable and irregular working hours. Similarly, paid work is shifted to the morning and night. On the other hand, unpaid work is shifted to the evening and night. This means that workers have to work during unsocial working hours. Besides, in most cases, workers are forced to be available online more or less round the clock doing a substantial amount of unpaid work because they do not know when work would appear online. The insufficient work on the platform also leaves the workers no choice but to accept work during unsocial hours.

Notably, the findings also revealed high levels of underemployment among the workers. As such, the decent digital work standards on stability of employment was not met since most of the workers reported that they did not get enough work regularly. The workers attributed the insufficiency of work on the platforms to discrimination based on their nationality; intense competition on the platform and issues related to their reputational profile such as experience on the platform, ratings, skills and expertise among others. Besides, insufficient work was the main reason for dissatisfaction with online freelance work.

The organizational forms arising from the confluence of the technologies and the worker power yield organization forms that are characterized by high global oversupply of labour relative to the demand and high levels of competition between workers make it difficult to get work on the online labour platform and is a potential source of job insecurity (Wood et al., 2019, Graham et al., 2017). Furthermore, insufficient work coupled with low level of participation among the workers were found to be great determinants of low earning levels on the platforms (Berg, 2016). It also partly explained long working hours on the platform. In response to insufficient work on the platform, these youths are forced to be online for long hours doing unpaid work (waiting for work to appear on the platforms and bidding for it).

Lastly, the findings also showed that there was information asymmetry between the workers and the clients though not substantial. Moreover, there was a general consensus among the respondents that in cases where clients altered the task description, they were compensated for work already

done. Most of the workers also indicated that the platform answered their questions. However, the workers reported that platforms often favoured clients during dispute resolution.

It also showed that there were transparent procedure relating to progression to higher grades on the platform. There were also transparent procedures regarding account suspension and termination. Most of the workers also stated that there was a rating system for them and the clients.

The workers also reported that there were transparent procedures regarding work rejection. Most of the clients also provided reasons for the work rejection. However, a majority of the workers (52%) reported that the reasons were not justified. Furthermore, a majority of the workers (69%) said that they did not get paid for the work rejected.

In general, the work process experienced by these workers meets the decent digital work standards on work process also a number of decent digital work deficits remain. There is need for a neutral third-party to help in resolving disputes between workers, clients and platforms on issues such as account suspension, termination and work rejection. Besides, humans and not algorithm should handle the worker's complaints.

5.1.3 Implication of the Working Conditions on the Wellbeing of Youths doing Online Freelance Work in Nairobi County

According to the findings, a majority of the workers live in a precarious financial condition: 29% of them found it difficult to meet their basic needs; 34% of those who could meet their basic needs did not have sufficient savings to meet emergency expenses. Regrettably, the respondents who considered online freelance work as their main source of income had a more difficult time meeting their basic necessary expenses each month than those who considered online freelance work as an alternative source of income.

The situation was even worse among workers with relatively weak bargaining power relative to the clients. They got insufficient work and thus earned lower incomes and were not able to meeting their basic needs and did not have sufficient savings to meet emergency expenses. On the other hand, workers who had relatively strong bargaining power received more work and tended to earn more. This translates to higher household incomes and higher disposable income. As such these workers are able to meet their basic needs, have sufficient savings and can procure buy long term assets such as car and real estate.

Furthermore, the weak structural bargaining power of the workers relative to the clients meant that the clients and not the workers were the ones who determined the working times on the platforms (Wood et al., 2018). This led to unstructured work patterns characterized by unpredictable and irregular working hours including working during unsocial hours.

Insufficient work on the platform also made the online freelance workers to be under pressure to accept tasks under tight deadlines. Also, the opacity of platform procedures especially those dealing with account suspension, termination and upgrade are a potential source of stress among the workers as they made the workers to be uncertain about their future income.

In turn, these working conditions made workers anxious and exhausted. The irregular work schedules also interfered with their work life balance. It further interfered with work-work balance for workers with alternative sources of income. The autonomy in form of discretion over place of work was also a potential source of social isolation and could affect the mood and mental health of the workers (Wood and Burchell, 2018; Pinker, 2014). Nonetheless, a minority of them reported cases of musculoskeletal problems, work stress, visual strain and difficulty in sleep. Similarly, a minority of them reported that they had failed to work due to any the health challenges caused or made worse by the working conditions in online freelance work.

According to the findings, there are two main learning strategies on the platform: learning that takes place automatically as the worker work on the platform (work initiated); and the learning that emanates from the workers' deliberate efforts to learn (self-initiated). The former takes place as the organizational forms on the platforms enable the workers to connect with numerous clients from different industries, sectors, and countries and perform a variety of tasks in their areas of specialization. This enables them to perform tasks that they are unfamiliar with and take on tasks of increasing complexity. Consequently, the workers are able to learn more about the needs of the clients, acquire corresponding skills and capabilities, develop existing skills and increase their work experience in a manner that would have not been possible in the offline economy (Pietrobelli & Rabbellotti, 2011). A majority (74%) of the workers stated that they had learnt in this manner, that is, acquired new skills and developed existing skills while working on the platforms. These skills include ability to meet tight deadlines, ability to work under minimal supervision, communication skills and technical skills among others.

The later learning takes place as the workers proactively seek and find opportunities to develop their skills and learn individually –through online courses and studying professional literature - and with others while working on the platforms. The workers do this so as to have stronger individual marketplace bargaining power relative to other workers on the platform (Wood et al., 2019; Kalleberg, 2011). Most of the workers indicated that they learnt through on the job training, either through their friends, co-workers or supervisors (49%). There were also self -sponsored training either through online courses (45%); training from the platform (28%); and training through Ajira digital program (16%).

Furthermore, a majority of the respondents (84%) indicated that online freelance work offered good prospects for their career advancement. This is an indication that the workers can use the skills they have acquired and developed while working online to get employment in the offline economy. It also means that they can use these skills to enable them to build a portfolio and as such upgrade to higher levels on the platform.

5.2 Conclusions

This research has shown the implications of working conditions in online freelance work on the wellbeing of youths working on online labour platforms from Nairobi County. According to the findings, a majority of the workers live in a precarious financial condition. The situation is particularly worse among the workers who consider online freelance work as their main source of income. Most of them, have a more difficult time meeting basic necessary expenses each month.

Furthermore, the findings showed that the working conditions have no substantial effect on the health of the workers. Just 3% of the workers indicated that they had failed to work due to health challenges caused or made worse by the working conditions in online freelance work. These workers associated the working conditions to a general feeling of worry and exhaustion. The cases of musculoskeletal problems, visual strain, work stress and difficulty in sleep were moderate among the workers.

It is also evident that these working conditions facilitate skill acquisition and development. A majority of the workers reported that they had acquired and developed their skills while working on the platforms. Besides, the algorithm control in online freelance work had given the workers an impetus to acquire new skills and develop existing skills by attending self-sponsored trainings.

The workers also reported that online freelance work offered good prospects for their career advancement.

Most important, the findings showed that online freelance work is characterized with decent work deficits that need an immediate intervention. The earnings, working time, work process on the online labour platforms seem to meet the decent work standards on the face value but obscures various decent work deficits. Regarding the stability of work, the research found that the youths are underemployed with most of them not getting enough freelance work regularly.

At the centre of these working conditions, is the confluence of digital technologies and the balance of bargaining power between workers and clients. This convergence yields organization forms that are characterized by an oversupply of labour relative to demand and intense competition (Wood et al., 2019; Rubery and Grimshaw, 2001). Therefore, workers have to have stronger individual marketplace bargaining power in terms of reputation and skills relative to other workers on the platform in order to enjoy better working conditions.

5.3 Recommendations

From the research, it is evident that online freelance work is ridden with decent work deficits. These outcomes will only spread if nothing is done, impacting on the wellbeing of the numerous youths who depend on online freelance work and thus pushing them further into poverty traps. Besides, the government's investment in their education is likely to be underutilized. This calls for an immediate intervention from the various stakeholders in the platform economy namely workers (including sub-contractors and intermediary workers), clients (including outsourcing intermediaries), platforms, national governments (including judiciaries), unions in the platform economy and international governance (UN agencies, regional blocs).

Numerous literature often places the responsibilities of intervention on a specific stakeholder or a number of them while excluding others (Taylor, 2017; Graham et al., 2017, Fishwick 2017, Scholz 2017, Scholz, 2016). However, this research appreciates what each of the stakeholders can do to intervene. It holds that much more progress can be realised through collaborative efforts between the stakeholders. As such the subsequent section shall highlight the interventions that each of these stakeholders can take to help regulate the sector. The interventions shall be limited to those that can apply to platform workers especially in the global south and particularly to those that apply to the youths in Nairobi County.

5.3.1 Workers

Most of the workers reported high commission, delay in payments and frequent penalties by intermediary workers and platforms, biased dispute resolution and unreasonable justification for account suspension or termination by platforms. In response to these issues, workers should collectivise: come together, pool cost and liabilities so as to communicate with the platforms with one voice, and negotiate collectively with platforms for better terms and take legal action (Heeks, 2017; Fieseler et al., 2017). Currently, most of the workers around the globe are using online forums, groups and networks to air their issues on the platforms (Schmidt, 2017). This is also evident among most workers in Kenya, who channel their issues anonymously or openly on various online forums created by them or the platform.

Among the barriers to collectivisation is the lack of the perception to do so among workers in developing countries (Kuek et al., 2015). Generally, these workers hold positive views regarding online freelance work. The main issue of concern is insufficient and inconsistent work (Berg, 2016). These issues are consistent with the findings of this study. The workers reported that they were satisfied with online freelance work and their main reason for dissatisfaction is insufficient work on the platform. This signals limited motivation for broader changes (Schmidt 2017, Fieseler et al., 2017).

The other attitudinal issue among the workers that hinder regulation in the remote platform economy is the lack of anonymity in collective action. Workers fear that such actions might lead to negative consequences such as being suspended from the platform, losing work to the groups of workers not involved in the petition and damaging their reputational profile (D’Cruz & Noronha 2016).

Furthermore, it is quite difficult for workers across platforms to identify and contact each other in large numbers (De Stefano, 2016, Lehdonvirta 2016, D’Cruz & Noronha 2016, Graham et al., 2017, Schmidt 2017). Besides, the competitive nature of online freelance work among other factors brings about a disincentive to form unions. For instance, if online freelance workers were to come together and take collective action, they might lose jobs to workers in other countries in the global south (Heeks, 2017; Heeks, 2016).

The workers may also face a legal hurdle when seeking to collectivise emanating from their employment status. Generally, platforms regard them as self-employed and not employees. As

such, their contract is somewhat outside scope of collective bargaining and does not guarantee them social dialogue and representation, social security, health insurance, fixed working hours, fixed wages and safe work (Heeks, 2017).

Despite these barriers, it could be possible to galvanize the workers to take collective action against the platform though much needs to be done. This entails creating awareness among the workers about their working conditions; the risk that they bear and the benefits they stand to gain collectively when they collectivise (Heeks, 2017). This can initiate steps towards collective action. Apart from seeking to change the platform from within, these workers can join hands with ethically-conscious clients and form cooperatively-owned online labour platforms, a phenomenon known as platform cooperativism (Graham et al., 2017, Fishwick 2017, Scholz 2017, Scholz, 2016).

Regarding intermediary workers who fail to pay workers or delay in making payments to their workers, the workers can have a platform where these kind of workers are shame listed so that others can avoid working for them. This will force the intermediary workers to correct such decent work deficits. Moreover, the workers can organize themselves into Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs) and savings and credit co-operative societies (SACCOS) and save towards their social security and health insurance also as a way to deal with insufficient work.

5.3.2 Clients

The clients on online labour platforms include individuals, micro-enterprises with ten or fewer employees and multinationals (Agrawal et al., 2013). According to Heeks (2017,) clients focused interventions are often overlooked in literature even though most of the challenges from workers are client related. Rather, the interventions are ascribed to government, platforms and workers.

The main client related issue that have emerged in this research include: clients rejecting work without providing justified reasons; non-payment for the effort that went in the rejected work; and low pay. Other issues such as poor task description, non-revelation of task identity and purpose of the task, poor and disrespectful communication were moderate. There were minimal cases where client altered the task descriptions and did not compensate the workers for work already done. In order to address these issues, clients have to be involved.

Therefore, client should provide justified reasons when rejecting work; make part payment for work rejected; improve the clarity of information and communication about their tasks and reveal their identity and purpose of the task to the worker performing the task. The platforms should work together with clients to enforce these issues in order to realize productive work on the platform.

As regards pay, clients should at least consider paying the minimum wage in the worker's countries. Although this might mean clients bear additional cost in some cases, they will be assured of fewer disputes with workers, high quality work and less cases of litigation. Unfortunately, this might lead to less work on the platform as clients opt for cheaper ways to outsource their work (Kingsley et al., 2015; Heeks, 2017). Furthermore, clients should outsource their work on platforms that promote decent work standards. Although such platforms are currently few in number, this approach will make most platforms to start adopting the decent work standards (Schmidt 2017).

It is also important to highlight a number of barriers to client-focused interventions. Most clients opt to outsource work through the platforms because they consider it cheaper. Any attempt to pass additional cost to them may make platforms less attractive to the clients. Besides, most clients appear satisfied with work and might not be willing to go take an extra step to ensure decent work on the platform. Lastly, it may be a challenge for clients to collectivise because of their opacity, globalization, atomisation of work (Heeks, 2017).

5.3.3 Platforms

According to Heeks (2017), most of the recommendations, codes, proposals and standards in the remote platform economy often focus on the platforms. This increased focus on platforms can be attributed to the fact that it acts as the regulator in the platform economy in the absence of government regulation (Taylor, 2017). It regulates the market: sets policies on access to the platform (creation, suspension and termination of accounts), sets minimum prices, sets commissions to be charged; determines the nature of work to be transacted over the platforms, contracts to be issued and so on (Argawal et al., 2013; Aleksynska et al., 2018).

In the context of youth working on labour platforms in Nairobi County, the platforms should make its procedure on rejection of work, account suspension, termination and upgrade, ratings, commissions and penalties more transparent. Besides, it should strive to be unbiased when mediating between conflicts between workers and clients. It should also be possible to port ratings

and experiences across platforms. Additionally, it should include guidelines on setting fair pay rate for piece work tasks.

Alternatively, the platforms can adopt a “shared prosperity” model, where platforms, clients and workers can pay a small percentage of the transaction value as shares in the firm operating the platform. Furthermore, these stakeholders can adopt a social enterprise model. These models are a step towards decent work for the workers (Heeks, 2017).

The adoption of these recommendations will lead to increased protection of the worker’s basic rights, fair competition on the platform, reduced out posting of task and a decline in freelance intermediation (Aleksynska et al., 2018). Apparently, there are platforms that have started to adhere to codes of conducts related to decent work in other countries (FairCrowdWork, 2016). There are also platforms that have adopted the online impact sourcing model. This trend is an indication that platforms can cede their grounds further and adopt these recommendations.

There are a number of stakeholders that can hold platforms accountable and ensure that this is done. According to Heeks (2017), pressure from clients is likely to yield the greatest results. Governments can also pressurize platforms to adhere to the decent work standards through litigation. Workers can also pressurize platforms through collective action either via online groups or unions despite the evidence that workers might be reluctant to do so (Graham et al., 2017). External pressure from these stakeholder and further monitoring of progress in implementation will eradicate cases of “greed-washing” in the remote platform economy, where platforms sign up to standards publicly but making few if any actual changes in reality (Youngdahl, 2016).

5.3.4 Governments

Most stakeholders are mostly likely to accept interventions from the government because it tends to balance out interests (Heeks, 2017). However, a number of challenges ensues. It is quite rare to apply national labour laws to the platform economy because the transactions often take place across national borders (Graham, 2017; Heeks, 2017; Wood, Graham & Lehdonvirta, 2016). Besides, there is not much incentive to regulate the sector because remote platform work is still regarded as a potential pathway to youth unemployment.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that the government has no role in the platform economy. In the context of youth working on labour platforms in Nairobi County, the Government of Kenya should

review Ajira digital program, which aims to introduce high potential but disadvantaged youths to online work (GoK, 2018a). It is time the training seeks to position the youths in the high-skill macro-task niche. Currently, most youths in Kenya are in the low skill-micro task niche which has less earnings not to mention that it is flooded with workers from Asia and other countries in Africa.

Just introducing more youths to online freelance work without proper targeting is likely to have a downward pressure on the wages of those who are already working on the platform considering the intense competition already existing on the platform. The government has made a substantial investment in STEM courses. In order for the government to make quick gains on this investment, the training has to link the youths to jobs in this niche and not in the low skill-micro task niche namely data entry, translation and writing.

Besides, the cost of working on the platform is relatively high for the youths. In order to work on the platform, one needs a computer, power, internet, and a place to work. Considering that most of these youths are unemployed, it could be that these costs usurps a great chunk of their hard earned incomes. Besides, they still have to pay relatively high transaction fees to have the money in the country (and commissions on the platform). As a remedy, the government should provide incentives for creation of spots where workers can access these facilities for free in every ward in Nairobi County.

The government intention to tax the earnings from remote platform work has also aroused a lot of concerns among the workers. Although it is important for countries to develop a tax policy for the digital gig economy, such a policy should be developed in consultation with the workers. There might also be need to involve the local platforms and their clients.

It should also create a cost-competitive enabling environment to promote impact outsourcing in Kenya. This can be done through direct subsidies from the government on technical infrastructure such as real estate, energy and internet (Kuek et al., 2015). It should also generate demand to outsource work among local public and private organisations. According to Bulloch and Long (2012), impact outsourcing refers to a form of outsourcing within microwork that “benefits disadvantaged individuals in low employment areas”. Such an environment will reduce the operational overheads that these firms incur in real estate, power, and internet and spur their growth. Consequently, it will create formal, stable and rewarding employment to these youths.

The low demand among local public and private organisations has also been a barrier to the establishment of local online labour platforms. The government should take the lead in supporting these platforms by outsourcing work from the public organisations. This might require reviewing the existing policies on public procurement to accommodate online outsourcing. It should also encourage the private sector to outsource work via the local platforms.

In conclusion, much can be done through collaborative effort among stakeholders. Much more can be done at an international level through ILO's future of work initiative. It can consider the decent work standards proposed in literature and enforce their adoption across the globe.

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CHAPTER 7 APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix 1: Questionnaire

SURVEY ON THE IMPLICATION OF WORKING CONDITIONS IN ONLINE FREELANCE WORK ON THE WELLBEING OF YOUTHS IN NAIROBI COUNTY

DATE _____

INTRODUCTION

My name is Ben Muhindi Abas. I am pursuing Masters of Development Studies at the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi. I am writing a dissertation on the implications of working conditions in online freelance work on the wellbeing of youths in Nairobi County. This interview is voluntary and will take approximately 30 minutes. Besides, your identity will remain confidential and information gathered will only be used for academic purposes.

SECTION 1 PROFILE OF ONLINE FREELANCE WORKERS

A. DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE ONLINE FREELANCE WORKER

1	Name	
2	Constituency	
3	Age	.1 15-19 .2 20-24 .3 25-29 .4 30-35
4	Gender	.1 Male .2 Female
5	What is the highest level of education that you have attained?	.1 Primary .2 Secondary .3 Tertiary Certificate .4 Diploma .5 Bachelor's .6 Master .7 Doctorate
6	What is the name of the course you pursued?	.1
7	Marital Status	.1 Single .2 Married .3 Separated .4 Widowed .5 Divorced

8	Size of the Household	.1 Household of 1 person .2 Household of 2 people .3 Household of 3 people .4 Household of 4 people .5 Household of 5 or more people
9	Number of dependent children in the household	.1 None .2 1 .3 2 .4 3 or more
10	What is your health status?	.1 Very Poor .2 Poor .3 Fair .4 Good .5 Very Good

B. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON ONLINE FREELANCEWORK

11	Which of the following statements best describes your employment status	.1 I have an account on a platform and obtain work exclusively from the platform .2 I work exclusively for a third party who has an account on a platform .3 I have an account on a platform and obtain work both from the platform and a third party who has an account on the platform. .4 I work directly for remote clients off the platform .5 I have an account with a platform and work directly for remote clients off the platform .6 Other
12	Which online labour platform(s) have you been working on in the past six months?	.1 Fiverr .2 Upwork .3 Freelancer .4 Kuhsutle .5 Other(s)
13	What filed (s) of online freelance work have you been working in over the whole period of your online freelance work?	
14	How long have you been working online?	.1 Less than 1 month .2 1-6 months .3 7-12 months .4 1-2 years .5 3-4 years .6 5 and above years
15	How many tasks have you performed in the past 1 month?	.1

16	What is the most important reason for working online? Make important bold	.1 As a form of leisure [I enjoy it] .2 Could not find other employment .3 Flexible working hours .4 I can only work from home due to illness, trauma, expectant, need to care for a child or family member .5 I prefer to work from home .6 Pay is better than other available jobs .7 Supplement income from other jobs .8 To earn money while going to school .9 Other
17	Is online freelance work your main source of Income?	.1 Yes .2 No
18	What are your others source (s) of income?	.1 None .2 Business .3 Casual employment .4 Salaried employment .5 Parental support .6 Other

SECTION 2 WORKING CONDITIONS OF ONLINE FREELANCE WORKERS

A. EARNINGS

19	When do you usually get paid for online freelance work completed?	.1 After Completing a Task .2 After a Week .3 After Two Week .4 After a Month .5 Other
20	What is your average income in Ksh from online freelance work in a typical week?	.1
21	Have you ever experienced cases of delayed, reduced or non-payment of fees, explain?	.1 Yes Please describe what happened? How often have you experienced this issue (s)? [] Never [] Less than half of the time [] About half of the time [] More than half of the time [] Always .2 No
22	Do you pay a commission to the platform?	.1 Yes .2 No

23	What portion of your income does the platform take as commission?	.1 Not Sure .2 None .3 Less than 5% .4 Between 5-10% .5 Between 10-20% .6 More than 20% .7 Other
24	What mode of payment do you often use to transfer the fees? Why do you prefer this mode of payment? Add cash and Payoneer	.1 Paypal MPESA .2 Paypal Equity Bank .3 Skrill MPESA .4 MPESA .5 Other
25	Why do you prefer the above mode of payment?	.1
26	To what extent do you agree with the following statement: My pay commensurate to the effort, cost and skills that go towards the execution of tasks.	.1 Strongly disagree .2 Disagree .3 Neither agree nor disagree .4 Agree .5 Strongly agree
27	In general, what further comments do you have on the above issues concerning your earning on the platforms? What are you most satisfied with and most dissatisfied with? What can you change about the same if you could?	.1

B. WORKING TIME

28	How many days, on average, do you spend doing online freelance work in a typical week ?	.1
29	How many hours, on average, do you spend doing online freelance work in a typical day ?	.1
30	Out of the above hours, how many hours, on average, do you spend doing unpaid online freelance work in typical day ?	.1
31	How many hours would you prefer to work in a typical day?	.1
32	What time(s) of the day do you always do paid online freelance work?	.1 Morning 500 AM – 12:00 PM .2 Afternoon 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM .3 Evening 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM .4 Night 10:00 PM – 5:00 AM
33	What time(s) of the day do you always do unpaid online freelance work?	.1 Morning 500 AM – 12:00 PM .2 Afternoon 12:00 PM – 6:00 PM

		.3 Evening 6:00 PM – 10:00 PM .4 Night 10:00 PM – 5:00 AM
34	Can you take time off [an hour or more, a day, a weekend] at any time?	.1 Yes .2 No
35	In general, what further comments do you have on the above issues concerning your working time on the platforms? What are you most satisfied with and most dissatisfied with? What can you change about the same if you could?	.1

C. AVAILABILITY OF WORK

36	Do you get enough work regularly, explain?	.1 Yes .2 No
37	Have you ever been excluded or discriminated from performing some tasks, in particular, well-paying ones?	.1 Yes, explain .2 No
38	In general, what further comments do you have on the above issues concerning availability of work on the platforms? What are you most satisfied with and most dissatisfied with? What can you change about the same if you could?	.1

D. WORK PROCESS

39	How often do clients provide clear task descriptions, clarify their expectations to you, reveal their identity and purpose of the tasks?	.1 Never .2 Less than half of the time .3 About half of the time .4 More than half of the time .5 Always
40	How often has a client ever altered the task description and you were not compensated for the work you had already done?	.1 Never .2 Less than half of the time .3 About half of the time .4 More than half of the time .5 Always
41	Has a client ever rejected your work?	.1 Yes, Did the client provide a reason for rejection? [] Yes [] No

		<p>If Yes above what was the reason (s) for the rejection?</p> <p>Was the reason for rejection (s) justified?</p> <p>Did the client (s) pay for the work you had already done?</p>
		.2 No
42	How often does <i>platform</i> answer your questions (including requests to mediate on a dispute between workers and clients)	.1 Never .2 Less than half of the time .3 About half of the time .4 More than half of the time .5 Always
43	Can you review, rate and give feedback about clients to the platform?	.1 Yes .2 No
44	Can clients review, rate, or evaluate your work?	.1 Yes .2 No
45	Is there clarity on account upgrades? This question was not quite understood	.1 Yes .2 No
46	Has a platform ever suspended or terminated your account, explain?	.1 Yes .2 No
47	In general, what further comments do you have on the above issues concerning work process on the platforms? What are you most satisfied with and most dissatisfied with? What can you change about the same if you could?	.1

E. OVERALL SATISFACTION

48	In general, what is your level of satisfaction with online freelance work and its working conditions?	.1 Very Dissatisfied .2 Dissatisfied .3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied .4 Satisfied .5 Very Satisfied
49	In general, what are you most satisfied with about online freelance work?	.1
50	In general, what are you most dissatisfied with about online freelance work?	.1
51		.1 Not qualified for the work

	In general, why are you not currently doing more online freelance work?	.2 No enough work on a regular basis .3 Pay is not good enough .4 No time to do more work .5 Other
52	How much longer do you intend to work online in spite of the above working conditions?	.1 Until I find another job .2 Until I finish school .3 Indefinitely .4 Other
53	Currently, are you looking for paid work other than online freelance work or wish to replace online freelance work with another work or something different?	.1 Yes .2 No
54	Would you quit if you get employment with better terms (permanent contract, steady income and social security)	.1 Yes .2 No

SECTION 4 IMPLICATION ON THESE WORKING CONDITIONS ON THE WELLBEING OF YOUTHS

A. HOUSEHOLD INCOME

55	How would you describe the income level of your family?	.1 Household's monthly income is not enough to cover our basic needs .2 Household's monthly income is just enough to our cover basic needs but we do not have enough savings to cover an emergency equal to one month's income .3 Household monthly income covers basic needs, emergency, electronics, fees but not adequate to buy long term assets such as car and real estate .4 Household monthly income covers basic needs, emergency, electronics, fees and long term assets such as car, land and real estate .5 The household can live comfortably without income from online freelance work
56	What portion of your household income (in percentage) do these income sources constitute?	.1 Income from online freelance work _____ .2 Income from spouse and or other household members _____ .3 Income from secondary job _____ .4 Income from investment, business _____ .5 Private transfers from family and friends _____ .6 Other sources _____

B. SKILLS ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

57	<i>To what extent do you agree with the following statement:</i> I have been able to acquire any new skill (s) or developed my existing skills while working online?	.1 Strongly disagree .2 Disagree .3 Neither agree nor disagree .4 Agree .5 Strongly agree
58	<i>To what extent do you agree with the following statement:</i> Online freelance work offers good prospects for career advancement	.1 Strongly disagree .2 Disagree .3 Neither agree nor disagree .4 Agree .5 Strongly agree
59	Have you ever have you ever taken to improve your skills since you started online freelance work?	.1 Yes .2 No
60	Which of the following training (s) have you ever taken to improve your skills since you started online freelance work?	.1 Training provided by the platform .2 Ajira Digital Programme .3 Training sponsored by yourself .4 On-the-job training (co-workers or friends) .5 Other
61	Which of the following statements would best describe your skills in your work?	.1 I need further training to cope well with my duties .2 I have perfect match skills to perform online freelance work .3 I have the skills to cope with more demanding duties .4 My skills are more advanced than necessary for doing the tasks on the platform

C. HEALTH

In the last 3 months, how often have you had any of the following health challenges related to online freelance work?

62	Muscular Pains in Shoulders, Neck, Upper Limbs and Lower Limbs	.1 Never .2 Less than half of the time .3 About half of the time .4 More than half of the time .5 Always
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63	Anxiety	.1 Never .2 Less than half of the time
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7.2 Appendix 2 Key Informant Interview Guide

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW GUIDE

DATE: _____

INTRODUCTION

My name is Ben Muhindi Abas. I am a student at the Institute for Development Studies undertaking Masters of Development Studies. I am writing a dissertation on the implications of working conditions in online freelance workers on the wellbeing of youths in Nairobi County and I would like to get your views on the same. The interview is voluntary and will take approximately 30 minutes. The information collected will be used only for academic purposes. Besides, your identity and information gathered will remain confidential.

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Contact (Optional): _____

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What is the potential of online freelance work in creating decent employment for the youth in Nairobi County? Explain
2. What is the general implication of these working conditions on the wellbeing (household income, health, skill acquisition and development) of youths in Nairobi County?
3. Is this the best use of the skills of youths in Nairobi County?
4. What are some of the practical measures that the government can adopt to improve these working conditions youths in Nairobi County?

Thank you for your time