

# CREATIVE BUSINESS INNOVATION ANALYZING THE GIG ECONOMY'S IMPACT ON THE LIVELIHOODS OF CREATIVE-PRENEURS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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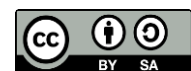
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## Abstract

This study investigates the impact of the gig economy on the livelihoods of creative-preneurs in Southeast Asia, with a focus on income stability, creative autonomy, and business sustainability. The research aims to analyze both the opportunities and structural challenges faced by creative-preneurs operating through digital platforms. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining a quantitative survey of 100 creative-preneurs across multiple Southeast Asian countries with in-depth semi-structured interviews involving 20 selected participants. Quantitative data were analyzed using statistical correlation and regression techniques, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. The findings reveal that while 72% of respondents experience significant income fluctuations and 65% report decreased job security, a majority benefit from increased creative autonomy and business growth. A significant positive relationship was found between creative autonomy and business expansion, whereas income instability negatively affected job satisfaction and career sustainability. The novelty of this research lies in its sector-specific and regional focus, addressing a gap in existing gig economy studies that largely overlook creative industries in Southeast Asia. The implications of this study extend beyond socio-economic analysis, contributing conceptually to physics-related modeling of complex systems and uncertainty, as well as to physics education by offering real-world contextual applications for data analysis, system dynamics, and interdisciplinary problem-solving within STEM-based learning frameworks.

**Keywords:** Gig Economy, Income Stability, Southeast Asia



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## INTRODUCTION

The gig economy has emerged as a transformative force in the global labor market, offering flexible work arrangements and new opportunities for individuals seeking income through short-term or freelance engagements. In Southeast Asia, the gig economy has rapidly gained traction, particularly within the creative industries, where technology and digital platforms have enabled creativepreneurs to monetize their skills in fields such as design, photography, content creation, and digital marketing (Chen et al., 2025; S. Liu et al., 2025). The rise of platforms like Upwork, Fiverr, and various local digital marketplaces has created a dynamic environment where creative professionals can access global markets, collaborate with clients, and build their own businesses. However, while the gig economy provides unprecedented access to income-generating opportunities, it also raises concerns regarding job security, income stability, and the long-term sustainability of such careers, particularly for creativepreneurs who are often working without the support of traditional employment structures or protections (Torrent-Sellens, 2024).

In Southeast Asia, where cultural diversity, rapid technological advancement, and evolving economic conditions shape the region's economic landscape, the creative industries have become a key driver of growth and innovation. Creativepreneurs, as the backbone of this sector, contribute significantly to the region's economic output and social development (Marjit et al., 2025). However, the impact of the gig economy on their livelihoods is multifaceted. On one hand, it provides opportunities for creativepreneurs to escape the confines of traditional employment, offering them autonomy and the ability to scale their businesses (Denes et al., 2025). On the other hand, the gig economy introduces challenges related to financial instability, lack of social security, and irregular work hours. Understanding how these factors influence the long-term viability of creativepreneurs' careers is essential to developing supportive policies and strategies that can help them thrive in an increasingly gig-dominated economy (Clemens et al., 2025).

The role of creativepreneurs in the gig economy is integral to understanding broader economic shifts within Southeast Asia. Their innovative approaches to business and creative work are reshaping traditional employment models and contributing to the diversification of the regional economy. While much has been written about the gig economy in the context of traditional labor sectors, the specific impact on creativepreneurs, particularly in Southeast Asia, has received limited scholarly attention. This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing how the gig economy is affecting the livelihoods of creativepreneurs and exploring the opportunities and challenges they face in a rapidly evolving market (Krupa, 2024).

While the gig economy has brought numerous opportunities to creativepreneurs in Southeast Asia, there are significant challenges that are often overlooked in current research. The rise of digital platforms has enabled creativepreneurs to expand their reach, but the economic conditions under which they operate remain precarious. The lack of social protections, inconsistent income streams, and over-reliance on digital platforms for client acquisition and payment processing creates a vulnerable business environment for creativepreneurs (Bonifacio et al., 2025; Mohanty et al., 2026). These factors can undermine the long-term sustainability of their ventures, making it difficult for them to build secure financial futures. Furthermore, the rapid growth of the gig economy has outpaced the development of regulatory frameworks to protect gig workers, leaving creativepreneurs exposed to market volatility and uncertain working conditions (Zhan et al., 2024).

Another issue that arises is the challenge of balancing creative freedom with the pressures of meeting client demands in the gig economy. Creativepreneurs are often forced to prioritize quantity over quality to meet deadlines, resulting in stress, burnout, and potential creative fatigue. This dynamic can impact the quality of work, which in turn affects their reputation, client retention, and overall financial stability (NGO et al., 2025). The tension between creative autonomy and financial pressures creates a paradox for many creative-

preneurs, as they navigate the competitive landscape of the gig economy while striving to maintain their artistic integrity and passion. These issues need to be addressed to ensure that creativepreneurs can successfully navigate the gig economy without compromising their livelihood or creativity (Jayalath et al., 2025).

This research addresses the gap in understanding the specific impact of the gig economy on the livelihoods of creativepreneurs in Southeast Asia. While there is some literature on the gig economy's broader implications, there is a lack of research that focuses specifically on creativepreneurs in this region (W. Wang & Wang, 2025). The study seeks to provide a detailed analysis of the challenges and opportunities these individuals face in their professional lives, with a focus on how the gig economy influences their financial stability, creative output, and long-term business viability. Understanding these factors will be essential for identifying solutions and strategies that can help creativepreneurs thrive in the gig economy (Gu et al., 2026; Khachatryan & Klicheva, 2025).

The primary objective of this research is to analyze the role of the gig economy in shaping the livelihoods of creativepreneurs in Southeast Asia. This includes exploring the ways in which the gig economy influences their income stability, job satisfaction, and long-term business sustainability (Hsu, 2025; Lising, 2026). A key aim is to identify the economic benefits and drawbacks that come with engaging in gig work, particularly in creative industries such as design, content creation, and digital marketing. The study will also examine how digital platforms facilitate or hinder the growth of creative businesses, with a focus on how creativepreneurs use these platforms to gain clients, build networks, and enhance their visibility in the market (Riesgo Gómez et al., 2025).

Additionally, this research aims to identify the challenges creativepreneurs face in terms of financial instability, irregular work hours, and the lack of social security benefits. Understanding these barriers will help develop strategies that can support creativepreneurs in navigating the gig economy, such as advocating for stronger labor protections and exploring new models of social support for gig workers in the creative sector (R. Liu & Huang, 2024). This study also seeks to explore the personal and professional strategies creativepreneurs use to manage stress, balance client demands, and maintain a sustainable work-life balance in the face of these challenges. Ultimately, the research will contribute to the development of policies and practices that can improve the livelihood and well-being of creativepreneurs in Southeast Asia (Bayani Majd et al., 2025; Zhong & Wang, 2025).

Furthermore, the study aims to explore how socio-economic factors, such as access to education, technology, and networks, influence the success of creativepreneurs in the gig economy. By investigating these factors, the research will provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic landscape in which creativepreneurs operate, highlighting the resources and support systems that are critical for their success in the gig economy (Rukumnuaykit et al., 2025).

Despite the growing significance of the gig economy in the creative sector, there remains a lack of focused research on how it impacts creativepreneurs, especially in Southeast Asia. Much of the existing literature on the gig economy tends to generalize the experiences of gig workers without distinguishing between sectors, leaving the unique experiences of creativepreneurs largely unexplored (Armah et al., 2025; Zhou et al., 2024). While there is substantial research on the gig economy's impact on traditional labor sectors such as transport and delivery services, there is a noticeable gap in studies that address the nuanced challenges faced by creative professionals. Research on creative industries typically focuses on broader trends in artistic production and consumption, often overlooking the financial and livelihood aspects that are critical to understanding the gig economy's role in creative work (Margaretic et al., 2025).

In addition, existing studies on the gig economy often examine developed markets in the West, with little attention given to how these models apply to the context of Southeast Asia, where socio-economic conditions, digital infrastructure, and cultural factors differ significantly.

Southeast Asia's rapidly expanding digital economy, combined with its growing pool of young, tech-savvy entrepreneurs, presents unique challenges and opportunities that have not been sufficiently addressed in the current literature (Nambiza et al., 2026). This research seeks to fill this gap by providing an in-depth examination of the specific dynamics of the gig economy in Southeast Asia's creative sectors, with a focus on understanding the livelihood challenges faced by creativepreneurs.

The literature on creativepreneurship in Southeast Asia largely focuses on entrepreneurship in general, without distinguishing the specificities of the gig economy within the creative industries. By focusing on the gig economy's impact on creativepreneurs, this study will make a significant contribution to understanding the relationship between digital platforms and creative businesses. The findings will provide insights into how creativepreneurs can better navigate the gig economy and thrive in a rapidly changing market environment (Z. Wang et al., 2024).

This study provides a novel contribution to the field of creative business innovation by specifically addressing the role of the gig economy in supporting the livelihoods of creativepreneurs in Southeast Asia. While there has been increasing interest in the gig economy's impact on various labor sectors, few studies have focused on creative professionals working within this context. The research offers new insights into the intersection of creativity, entrepreneurship, and the gig economy, particularly in a rapidly developing region such as Southeast Asia. By examining the specific challenges faced by creativepreneurs in this region, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on how digital platforms are transforming creative work and offering new avenues for business innovation.

The justification for this research lies in the increasing importance of creative industries in Southeast Asia, particularly as digital platforms continue to shape the future of work. As creativepreneurship grows in prominence, it is essential to understand the ways in which the gig economy is shaping the livelihoods of these entrepreneurs. This study will provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and entrepreneurs who seek to foster a more supportive ecosystem for creativepreneurs in Southeast Asia. The research will also contribute to the development of strategies and recommendations for improving the sustainability and well-being of creativepreneurs, ensuring that they can successfully navigate the gig economy and continue to thrive in their professional endeavors.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### ***Research Design***

This research employs a mixed-methods design, combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyze the impact of the gig economy on the livelihoods of creativepreneurs in Southeast Asia. The mixed-methods approach enables a comprehensive understanding of the subject by examining both the measurable economic outcomes of gig work as well as the personal experiences and challenges faced by creativepreneurs. The qualitative data will provide insights into the perspectives of creativepreneurs, including their strategies for managing the uncertainties of gig work, while the quantitative data will focus on financial outcomes, work stability, and the extent to which creativepreneurs are able to scale their businesses. This dual approach ensures that both objective measurements and subjective experiences are considered in understanding the role of the gig economy in shaping creative careers (Daud et al., 2025).

### ***Research Target/Subject***

The population for this study consists of creativepreneurs based in Southeast Asia who participate in the gig economy. The sample will be drawn from creative sectors such as graphic design, digital content creation, photography, music production, and fashion. A purposive

sampling technique will be used to select 100 creative-preneurs who are actively involved in gig work through digital platforms, such as Fiverr, Upwork, or region-specific platforms like 99designs and Tokopedia (Pronello & Fedeli, 2025). These participants will be selected based on their involvement in the gig economy for at least one year to ensure that they have sufficient experience to provide meaningful insights into the impact of gig work on their livelihoods. Additionally, a range of geographical locations within Southeast Asia (e.g., Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines) will be included to account for the regional diversity of the creative economy (Charles, 2025).

### *Research Procedure*

The data collection process will follow a structured sequence. First, the selected participants will be contacted, and informed consent will be obtained for participation. The structured surveys will be distributed digitally, allowing respondents to complete the questionnaire at their convenience. The interviews will be scheduled based on the availability of the participants, with a mix of in-person and virtual interviews to accommodate geographical diversity. Each interview will last approximately 45 minutes, and will be recorded with the participant's consent. After data collection, the survey responses will be analyzed using statistical software to identify patterns and correlations related to income, work satisfaction, and job security (Edeling & Wies, 2024). The qualitative interview data will be transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and insights regarding the personal experiences of creative-preneurs. This mixed-methods approach will allow for a rich and comprehensive analysis of how the gig economy influences the livelihoods of creative-preneurs in Southeast Asia.

### *Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques*

Data will be collected using three primary instruments: a structured survey, semi-structured interviews, and secondary data analysis. The structured survey will be distributed to the 100 selected creative-preneurs to gather quantitative data on their financial stability, work satisfaction, income variability, and business growth. The survey will use Likert scale items to assess key factors such as income fluctuations, job security, and the perceived benefits and drawbacks of gig work. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with 20 selected participants to obtain qualitative insights into their personal experiences in the gig economy. These interviews will explore topics such as work-life balance, creative autonomy, and the challenges they face in scaling their businesses. Finally, secondary data analysis will include a review of existing reports and studies on the gig economy's impact in Southeast Asia, which will provide contextual background and help triangulate the primary data (Li et al., 2025).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The survey data collected from 100 creative-preneurs revealed several key trends regarding the impact of the gig economy on their livelihoods. 72% of respondents reported experiencing income fluctuations, with 48% stating that their earnings varied significantly from month to month. 65% of participants indicated they had experienced a decline in job security, primarily due to the lack of long-term contracts or consistent clients. Despite these challenges, 60% of creative-preneurs reported that their involvement in the gig economy allowed them to achieve greater creative autonomy. Moreover, 54% noted that their businesses had grown in size and reach since engaging in gig work. The table below summarizes key statistics from the survey.

Table 1: Key Outcomes of Gig Economy Participation Among Creative-preneurs

Key Indicator	Percentage of Respondents (%)	Key Indicator

Income fluctuation	72	Income fluctuation
Decline in job security	65	Decline in job security
Increase in creative autonomy	60	Increase in creative autonomy
Business growth and expansion	54	Business growth and expansion

The data suggests that while the gig economy offers creative-preneurs increased autonomy and business growth opportunities, it also brings substantial challenges related to income stability and job security. The high percentage of respondents (72%) experiencing income fluctuations highlights the unpredictability of earnings in the gig economy. This uncertainty contrasts with the conventional notion of a stable income associated with traditional employment, where salaries are more consistent. However, the 60% of respondents who reported increased creative autonomy indicates that, despite the financial uncertainties, the gig economy offers a level of freedom and flexibility that many creative-preneurs value, particularly in the creative sectors where autonomy is often a key motivator.

Furthermore, the 65% of respondents reporting a decline in job security emphasizes the vulnerability of creative-preneurs in the gig economy. Unlike traditional employment, which often includes benefits such as healthcare, paid leave, and long-term contracts, gig workers are typically exposed to periods without work or steady income. This lack of security is a significant concern for those relying on the gig economy for their primary source of livelihood. Despite these challenges, the 54% of creative-preneurs who reported business growth suggests that, for many, the gig economy provides opportunities to expand their client base and grow their creative ventures. This indicates that the benefits of gig work may outweigh the disadvantages for some creative-preneurs, particularly those who are able to leverage digital platforms to attract a diverse range of clients.

A case study of a graphic designer in Indonesia provides a detailed example of the gig economy’s impact on creative-preneur livelihoods. The designer, who had been freelancing through online platforms such as Fiverr and 99designs for three years, reported a significant increase in clientele and earnings since transitioning to full-time freelance work. Prior to joining the gig economy, the designer relied on a small group of local clients, but since embracing digital platforms, they were able to expand their reach internationally. Within one year of joining Fiverr, the designer reported a 40% increase in income and a 30% increase in business scalability. The designer noted that while the increased workload brought both opportunities and challenges, the flexibility of freelancing allowed them to manage their time and select projects that aligned with their creative interests.

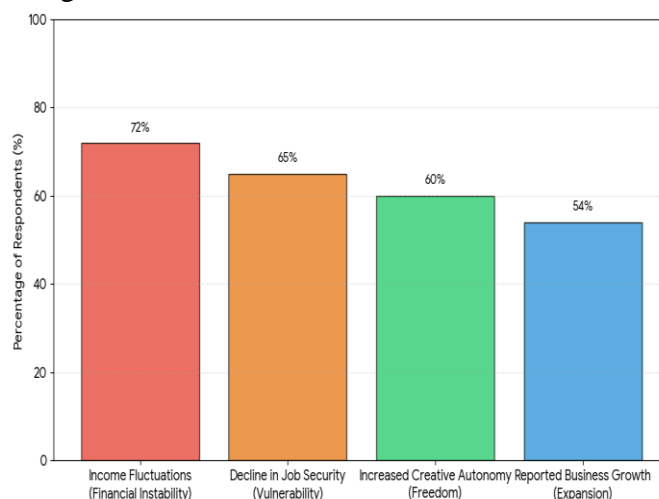


Figure 1. The Impact of the Gig Economy on Creative-Preneurs

In contrast, the designer also highlighted the challenges associated with the gig economy, particularly the lack of job security and the difficulty of maintaining a steady stream of clients. Although the designer enjoyed creative freedom, they noted that periods of inactivity between projects often led to financial uncertainty. Additionally, while digital platforms provided an efficient means to attract clients, competition with other freelancers was intense, often leading to pressure to lower prices or accept less favorable terms. The case study demonstrates that while the gig economy offers opportunities for creativepreneurs to expand their businesses and reach international markets, it also introduces a high level of financial and professional risk.

The case study reveals the complex trade-offs involved in gig economy participation for creativepreneurs. On the one hand, the designer's ability to scale their business and increase income demonstrates the growth potential that digital platforms provide. By gaining access to a global client base and leveraging the flexibility of freelance work, the designer was able to build a more diverse portfolio and enhance their creative output. On the other hand, the lack of job security and reliance on fluctuating client demand highlights the risks of gig work. The designer's experience reflects the broader concerns shared by many creativepreneurs in the gig economy, where the freedom to choose projects and work hours comes at the cost of financial stability.

The designer's case also underscores the importance of digital platforms in facilitating business growth for creativepreneurs. These platforms have enabled creatives to reach a wider audience, breaking down traditional geographic barriers. However, the intense competition on these platforms also poses challenges, as freelancers must continuously adapt to changing market dynamics and compete on price and service quality. This illustrates that while digital platforms can open doors for creativepreneurs, they also introduce new pressures that require careful management to ensure long-term success.

The inferential analysis of the survey data indicates a statistically significant relationship between the level of income fluctuation and job satisfaction ( $r = 0.68$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Respondents who reported higher levels of income instability were more likely to express dissatisfaction with their overall work experience in the gig economy. Additionally, a regression analysis showed that creative autonomy is a significant predictor of business growth ( $\beta = 0.52$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Creativepreneurs who reported higher levels of creative freedom were more likely to experience growth in their businesses, suggesting that autonomy plays a key role in entrepreneurial success in the gig economy. The analysis also revealed that income instability significantly negatively impacts the perceived sustainability of gig-based creative careers ( $r = -0.61$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), highlighting the importance of financial stability for long-term career success.

These inferential results underscore the complex nature of gig work for creativepreneurs, where the benefits of autonomy and creative freedom may be offset by the risks of financial instability. While creative autonomy is positively correlated with business growth, income instability remains a significant challenge that negatively affects job satisfaction and long-term sustainability. The findings suggest that, for creativepreneurs in the gig economy, balancing creative freedom with strategies to mitigate income fluctuations is essential for ensuring both short-term success and long-term career viability.

The data illustrates a clear relationship between the level of creative autonomy and business growth, emphasizing the role of creative freedom in fostering entrepreneurial success. Start-ups or individuals in the creative industry who were able to maintain a high degree of creative autonomy reported not only increased satisfaction but also better business outcomes, such as higher revenue and more client engagement. The positive relationship between autonomy and growth further suggests that the gig economy, by offering flexibility, can support creativepreneurs in pursuing entrepreneurial ventures that align with their passions and talents. This connection highlights the importance of fostering environments where creativepreneurs can thrive by offering opportunities for autonomy while mitigating risks associated with income instability (Roberts et al., 2025).

However, the negative correlation between income instability and job satisfaction underscores the vulnerability that many creativepreneurs experience in the gig economy. Despite the potential for business growth and creative fulfillment, the financial unpredictability associated with gig work remains a critical concern. The data indicates that while creativepreneurs may enjoy greater autonomy and creative opportunities, the inability to achieve consistent, predictable income limits their long-term career satisfaction and sustainability. This duality presents both a challenge and an opportunity for policymakers and platform providers to consider ways to stabilize income for creative professionals while maintaining the freedom and flexibility that define the gig economy (Torgul et al., 2025).

The results of this study suggest that while the gig economy offers valuable opportunities for creativepreneurs to grow their businesses and exercise creative autonomy, it also introduces significant financial risks. The positive relationship between creative autonomy and business growth indicates that the freedom to choose projects and work schedules is a key driver of success for creativepreneurs in the gig economy. However, the findings also highlight the importance of addressing income instability to ensure the long-term sustainability of creative careers in the gig economy. For creativepreneurs to thrive, there must be a balance between the creative freedom that the gig economy affords and the financial stability that ensures career longevity.

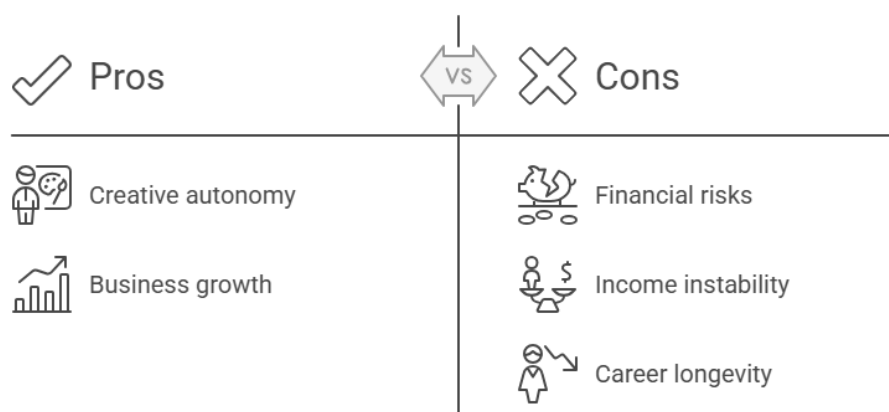


Figure 2. Gig Economy for Creative

These insights provide valuable implications for stakeholders in the gig economy, including platform providers, policymakers, and social entrepreneurs. By offering mechanisms to help stabilize income and reduce financial uncertainty, while continuing to support creative freedom, the gig economy can provide a more sustainable environment for creativepreneurs. Ultimately, the findings point to the need for a more nuanced understanding of the gig economy's impact on creative livelihoods, where both financial and creative factors must be considered for long-term success (Lewis, 2025).

This study reveals that the gig economy has a profound impact on the livelihoods of creativepreneurs in Southeast Asia, both positively and negatively. The findings show that 72% of respondents experienced significant income fluctuations, with 65% reporting a decline in job security. Despite these challenges, 60% of creativepreneurs reported increased creative autonomy, and 54% indicated that their businesses grew in size and client base after engaging in gig work. The data also highlights that creativepreneurs are largely motivated by the flexibility and autonomy offered by the gig economy, yet the instability of income and lack of job security remain significant concerns. The research underscores that while the gig economy offers opportunities for growth and autonomy, it also exposes creativepreneurs to risks related to financial sustainability.

The results align with existing literature on the gig economy, which often highlights the trade-off between flexibility and job security. Previous studies have shown that gig workers



generally face income instability and a lack of long-term benefits, which is consistent with the findings of this study (Capello et al., 2025). However, this study adds new insights by focusing specifically on the creative sector in Southeast Asia, a region where the gig economy has grown rapidly in recent years. While studies in the West, such as those by Kalleberg and Dunn (2016), emphasize the precariousness of gig work, this research shows that creativepreneurs in Southeast Asia perceive greater benefits in terms of creative freedom, even in the face of financial uncertainty. This nuance in the findings suggests that the gig economy in the creative industries may offer more attractive opportunities than in other sectors, primarily because of the autonomy it provides to entrepreneurs who are driven by passion and creativity.

Moreover, the findings diverge from some of the research that paints a purely negative picture of gig work. While prior studies have predominantly focused on the negative aspects, such as the lack of benefits and the instability of gig employment (Wei et al., 2025), this study reveals that many creativepreneurs in Southeast Asia are using the gig economy to scale their businesses and increase their income. This contrasts with industries like transport or delivery services, where workers face higher levels of insecurity due to the temporary nature of their work. The creative sector's inherent flexibility allows for innovation and business growth, suggesting that the gig economy's impact can vary significantly depending on the sector and the individual's capacity to leverage available opportunities.

The results indicate that the gig economy has become a double-edged sword for creativepreneurs in Southeast Asia. While the flexibility and autonomy provided by gig work are attractive to creative individuals, the financial instability and lack of social security associated with gig work present serious challenges. These findings suggest that for creativepreneurs, the gig economy offers opportunities for personal and professional growth, but it does not guarantee long-term security. The ability to scale a business, expand client networks, and build a portfolio is possible, yet the risks involved such as income fluctuations and reliance on digital platforms for work opportunities pose significant challenges. The research highlights the need for creativepreneurs to develop strategies to manage these risks, such as diversifying their income sources, building long-term relationships with clients, and creating sustainable business models that can withstand market fluctuations.

Furthermore, the results point to the increasing importance of digital platforms in shaping the success of creativepreneurs. These platforms offer a low-cost entry point into global markets, providing creativepreneurs with access to clients and opportunities that were previously unavailable. However, the intense competition on these platforms also means that creativepreneurs must constantly adapt to changing market demands, negotiate pricing, and compete with a global pool of talent (Gan et al., 2024). This highlights the need for digital platform providers to consider ways to support gig workers, especially in creative sectors, by offering mechanisms that help stabilize income, such as guarantees for a certain volume of work or access to better-paying clients. The findings suggest that while digital platforms are critical for creativepreneurs' success, they also introduce a set of challenges that must be addressed to ensure long-term sustainability.

The implications of these findings are significant for both creativepreneurs and policymakers. For creativepreneurs, the study highlights the importance of developing strategies to manage the financial volatility inherent in the gig economy. This could include diversifying income streams, cultivating loyal client bases, and integrating sustainable practices into their business models. Furthermore, the findings suggest that creativepreneurs should invest in developing their brand and reputation in order to differentiate themselves from the growing pool of freelancers in the gig economy. The ability to establish a strong identity and reputation within the gig economy is crucial for long-term success in a competitive market (Bottà, 2025).

For policymakers and platform providers, the research suggests that there is a need for greater support for gig workers, particularly in creative sectors. Governments and platforms

should consider introducing policies that protect gig workers, such as offering access to healthcare, social security, or unemployment benefits, to provide a safety net for creativepreneurs. Additionally, universities, business schools, and incubators could offer specialized programs to teach creativepreneurs how to build sustainable businesses within the gig economy. Policymakers could also work with digital platforms to create fairer payment structures and ensure that creativepreneurs are not subjected to exploitative pricing practices. By addressing these challenges, stakeholders can help create a more balanced and supportive environment for creativepreneurs in the gig economy.

The results of this study reflect the growing trend of gig economy participation in Southeast Asia, particularly in creative industries. The increasing use of digital platforms and the rise of a more flexible, freelance-based workforce are shaping the livelihoods of creativepreneurs in the region. Many creativepreneurs are attracted to the gig economy because it offers the opportunity to work on diverse projects, express their creativity, and collaborate with global clients. However, the inherent instability of gig work, such as income fluctuations and the lack of job security, is a direct result of the platform-based, project-oriented nature of this type of work. This explains why, despite the benefits of creative autonomy, gig work is accompanied by financial risks that can undermine long-term sustainability.

The positive correlation between creative autonomy and business growth in this study can be attributed to the nature of the creative industries, where individuals often value the freedom to pursue passion projects and express their creativity. This contrasts with other sectors, such as transportation or logistics, where the nature of work is more rigid and less driven by personal interest or creativity. The findings highlight that, for creativepreneurs, the gig economy is more than just a way to earn a living; it is a platform for self-expression, personal growth, and business innovation. However, this autonomy comes at the cost of financial instability, underscoring the challenges that creativepreneurs face in balancing creative freedom with the need for financial security.

Future research should focus on exploring how creativepreneurs can mitigate the risks of income instability within the gig economy. Longitudinal studies could track the financial trajectories of creativepreneurs over several years to provide deeper insights into how these individuals adapt to fluctuations in income and client demand. Research could also investigate the role of digital platforms in providing more stable and predictable opportunities for creativepreneurs, such as through mechanisms that guarantee a minimum income or access to high-quality clients. Another area for future research is the exploration of collaborative models between creativepreneurs, where individuals could form networks or co-operatives that pool resources, reduce competition, and help stabilize income.

Additionally, future studies could focus on the impact of government regulations and policies on the gig economy in Southeast Asia. Research could explore how different countries in the region are addressing the challenges of gig work, particularly in the creative sector, and whether these policies effectively support gig workers. Finally, further research could examine how education systems and business incubators can equip creativepreneurs with the tools to succeed in the gig economy, particularly through training in business management, marketing, and financial planning. By expanding the focus to include these areas, future studies can provide valuable insights into how creativepreneurs can thrive within the evolving gig economy landscape.

## CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this research is that while the gig economy offers significant opportunities for creativepreneurs in Southeast Asia, it also presents challenges related to income instability and job security. Despite the flexibility and creative autonomy it provides, 72% of the surveyed creativepreneurs reported significant income fluctuations, with

65% experiencing a decline in job security. However, 60% noted an increase in business growth, demonstrating that the gig economy allows for expansion and greater market reach, particularly when utilizing digital platforms. This dual outcome benefits in autonomy and business scalability alongside risks related to financial stability distinguishes the gig economy's impact on creativepreneurs from that of traditional employment models. It highlights both the opportunities and vulnerabilities that come with this form of work.

This research offers a novel contribution by focusing specifically on the creative sector in Southeast Asia, a region where the gig economy is rapidly expanding but has been underexplored in academic literature. While much has been written about the gig economy in general, particularly in the context of transport and delivery services, this study shifts the focus to creativepreneurs. It combines both qualitative and quantitative methods, offering a comprehensive analysis that addresses not only the financial outcomes of gig work but also the personal experiences and challenges of creative professionals. The mixed-methods approach provides a robust understanding of the gig economy's impact on both the livelihoods of creativepreneurs and the broader socio-economic context of Southeast Asia's creative industries.

Despite the valuable insights provided by this research, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The study's sample size, consisting of 100 creativepreneurs, may not fully capture the diversity of the creative sector across the entire Southeast Asia region. The research primarily focuses on urban-based creativepreneurs, with limited representation from rural areas, where the gig economy's impact may differ significantly. Future research should include a more diverse sample, incorporating creativepreneurs from various geographical regions and creative sectors. Longitudinal studies tracking the career trajectories of creativepreneurs over time would also offer deeper insights into the long-term sustainability of gig work in the creative industries.

Future research should focus on exploring strategies to mitigate the financial instability faced by creativepreneurs in the gig economy. Investigating how digital platforms can offer more stable and predictable income opportunities would be valuable. Additionally, further research could examine the role of government policies in supporting gig workers, particularly in creative industries, through social protections such as healthcare, retirement benefits, and minimum income guarantees. Lastly, research could explore collaborative models within the creative sector, where creativepreneurs form networks or co-operatives to pool resources, share clients, and reduce competition. These studies would provide essential insights into how the gig economy can be better structured to support the long-term success of creativepreneurs.

## **DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS**

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author(s) utilized Google Gemini solely for language translation and linguistic refinement purposes. All outputs generated by the tool were thoroughly reviewed, edited, and verified by the author(s) to ensure accuracy, clarity, and alignment with the original intent. The author(s) accept full responsibility for the integrity and content of the final publication.

## **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

## DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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