

The Disruption of Platform Economy on Income Generating: A
Case Study of Workers in On-Demand Food Delivery Platforms
in Bangkok



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การพลิกผันจากเศรษฐกิจแพลตฟอร์มต่อการสร้างรายได้: กรณีศึกษาของพนักงานบริการส่งอาหาร
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นับตั้งแต่เศรษฐกิจแพลตฟอร์มเริ่มขยายตัว การขยายตัวอย่างรวดเร็วและการเปลี่ยนแปลงที่กระทบต่อหลายฝ่ายในวงกว้าง ทำให้หลายฝ่ายได้กล่าวหาว่า เศรษฐกิจแพลตฟอร์ม (หรือเศรษฐกิจแบ่งปัน) นั้นมีพลังในการพลิกผันและปฏิรูปหรือภาษาอังกฤษคือ ‘disruptive’ ผลกระทบที่เกิดขึ้นจากเศรษฐกิจแพลตฟอร์มได้กระตุ้นให้เกิดการอภิปรายมากมายเกี่ยวกับผลกระทบทั้งในแง่บวกและแง่ลบจากเศรษฐกิจแพลตฟอร์ม โดยเฉพาะผลกระทบที่เกิดขึ้นต่อแรงงาน ซึ่งงานวิจัยฉบับนี้ได้ทำการศึกษานิยามของแรงงานกับการสร้างรายได้ผ่านว่า เศรษฐกิจแพลตฟอร์ม วิจัยฉบับนี้ได้ทำการรวบรวมและสรุปข้อกล่าวอ้างจากรวบรวมต่าง ๆ ซึ่งได้นำเสนอภาพของเศรษฐกิจแพลตฟอร์มว่ามีพลังในการพลิกผันเศรษฐกิจจากรูปแบบเดิมและเป็นทางเลือกใหม่ในการสร้างรายได้ซึ่งจะช่วยยกระดับรายได้ของแรงงานและพัฒนาสถานะทางเศรษฐกิจให้ดีขึ้นตามลำดับ นอกจากนี้ งานวิจัยนี้ยังได้พิจารณาถึงแง่มุมในเชิงลบของเศรษฐกิจแพลตฟอร์มที่ปรากฏในวรรณกรรมต่างๆ เช่นกัน ซึ่งข้อกล่าวอ้างในเชิงลบนี้ได้นำเสนอภาพของเศรษฐกิจแพลตฟอร์มในอีกแง่มุมหนึ่งว่าเป็นงานที่ไม่มั่นคงและเอารัดเอาเปรียบแรงงาน งานวิจัยฉบับนี้พยายามจะให้ข้อมูลเพื่อพิสูจน์ข้อกล่าวอ้างในทั้งแง่บวกและแง่ลบ โดยใช้ข้อมูลจากกรณีศึกษาของเศรษฐกิจแพลตฟอร์มในประเทศไทย ซึ่งทีมงานวิจัยได้เลือกบริการส่งอาหารตามสั่งผ่านแพลตฟอร์มออนไลน์ในกรุงเทพมหานครมาเป็นกรณีศึกษา

งานวิจัยฉบับนี้ใช้วิธีการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ โดยทำการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกกับพนักงานบริการส่งอาหารตามสั่งจากสามแพลตฟอร์มใหญ่ในประเทศไทยได้แก่ GrabFood, Foodpanda และ Lineman จำนวน 15 คนเพื่อสำรวจผลกระทบจากเศรษฐกิจแพลตฟอร์มต่อชีวิตของแรงงานในเชิงเศรษฐกิจโดยมุ่งเน้นไปที่รายได้และการสร้างรายได้ของพวกเขา วิธีการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพช่วยให้เห็นถึงความเปลี่ยนแปลงที่เกิดขึ้นกับชีวิตของแรงงานหลังจากเข้ามาเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของเศรษฐกิจแพลตฟอร์ม ผลการวิจัยของกรณีศึกษานี้ทำให้สรุปได้ว่างานในเศรษฐกิจแพลตฟอร์มก่อให้เกิดประโยชน์ต่อแรงงานจริงเนื่องจากงานดังกล่าวช่วงเพิ่มรายได้และพัฒนาสถานะทางเศรษฐกิจรวมไปจนถึงชีวิตของแรงงานให้ดีขึ้นได้ โครงสร้างของงานที่แตกต่างไปจากงานในรูปแบบเดิมมีส่วนช่วยเพิ่มโอกาสในการทำงานให้กับกลุ่มบุคคลที่เคยเสียเปรียบเมื่อต้องพยายามหางานตามแบบแผนในเศรษฐกิจรูปแบบเดิม เช่นกลุ่มคนที่ไม่มีวุฒิการศึกษาในระดับสูงหรือกลุ่มคนที่ถูกปฏิเสธจากงานในระบบเพราะรูปร่างหน้าตา แต่อย่างไรก็ตาม ผลการวิจัยก็ทำให้สามารถกล่าวได้เช่นกันว่างานในเศรษฐกิจแพลตฟอร์มนั้นมีการใช้ประโยชน์และเอาเปรียบแรงงานเนื่องจากทางบริษัทเจ้าของแพลตฟอร์มนั้นได้กำไรสูงสุดและผลักความเสี่ยง ความกดดันและความรับผิดชอบต่างๆ ให้แรงงานแบกรับ โดยไม่มีการรับรองความมั่นคงในการทำงาน ทำให้แรงงานต้องเสี่ยงและเผชิญกับความเปราะบางในการทำงาน

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Sujaree Wattanarat : The Disruption of Platform Economy on Income
 Generating: A Case Study of Workers in On-Demand Food Delivery
 Platforms in Bangkok. Advisor: Assoc. Prof. JAKKRIT
 SANGKHAMANEE, Ph.D.

Since the rise platform economy or as many called ‘sharing economy’, it has been called as ‘disruptive’ by many due to its rapid expansion and many changes it has caused. Its effects have incited many discussions on the positive and negative impact platform economy has on workers. Of which this thesis focused on especially in the aspect of workers and income generating. This thesis synthesizes the claims from existing literatures that framed platform economy as disruptive and alternative income generating opportunity that would improve people earning and subsequently their economic life. It also considers the negative claims that framed it as a precarious and exploitative job. The thesis attempts to provide data to both claims by using platform economy in Thailand as case study with a focus on online on-demand food delivery platform in Bangkok. The thesis employs qualitative method by conducting in-depth interviews among 15 drivers from three of the largest food delivery platforms in Thailand: GrabFood, Foodpanda, and Lineman in order to examine the effect that platform economy has on people’s economic life especially in the aspect of income and income generating. The qualitative method also helps in examining the changes that were made by participating in the platform economy. From the finding it can be concluded that platform work in this case study is indeed beneficial in the aspect of income generating and improve financial situation and life of workers. Its differences in work structure as compared to traditional work also give more job opportunities for those who are at disadvantage such as people with low level of education or those who get rejected from traditional work due to their appearance. However it could be considered exploitative in a way that companies are benefiting the most and putting risk, pressure and responsibility on workers instead without providing guarantee and job security causing workers to face with precarity in employment.

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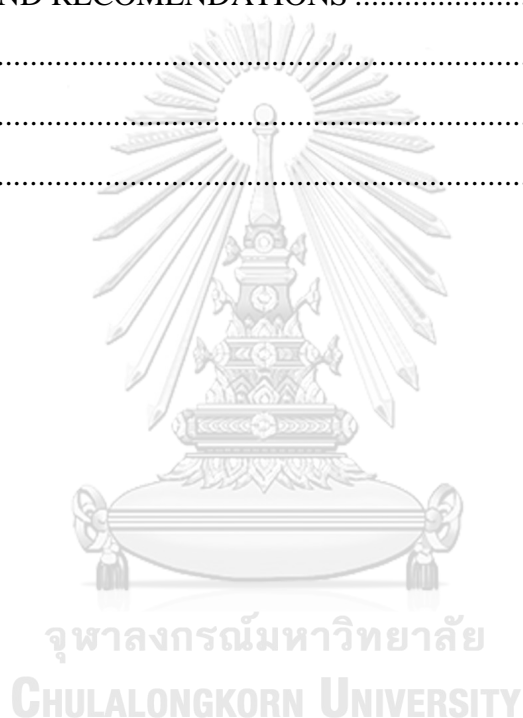
Sujaree Wattanarat

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT (THAI)	iii
ABSTRACT (ENGLISH).....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
CHAPTER I.....	11
INTRODUCTION.....	11
1.1 Introduction	11
1.2 Research Questions and Objectives.....	17
1.3 Significance of Research.....	18
1.4 Conceptual Framework.....	18
1.5 Research Methodology	20
1.6 Limitations	22
1.7 Scope.....	22
1.8 Ethical issues.....	22
CHAPTER II.....	23
LITERATURE REVIEW	23
2.1 Defining Platform Economy	23
2.1.1 Platform Economy, Sharing Economy, Collaborative Economy, and P2P Economy; Same or Different?.....	23
2.1.2 Characteristics of Platform Economy	24
2.1.3 On-Demand Food Delivery Service in Platform Economy	26
2.2 Platform Economy and Its Impact on Income Generating.....	28
2.2.1 How Characteristics of Platform Economy Impacts Income and Income Generating	28

2.2.2 Impact on Workers' Income and Income Generating Abilities in Different Sectors.....	33
2.2.3 Impact of Platform Economy on Workers' Income and Income Generating on On-demand Food Delivery Platforms.	37
2.3 Platform Economy in Thailand	39
2.3.1 Impact of Platforms Economy in Thailand: Controversies and Opportunities	40
2.3.2 On-demand Food Delivery Service Platforms in Thailand.....	41
CHAPTER III.....	45
AMIDST THE PRECARIETY: WHO ARE DRIVING AND WHY	45
3.1 Motivation in Joining the Platform Economy	45
3.2 Limitations of Traditional Jobs	47
3.3 How Do Workers Engage Themselves to the Platforms	51
3.3.1 How Did They Get Started?.....	51
3.3.2 Application Process	54
3.4 Platform Work and How It Affects Workers	55
3.4.1 Work Life and Routine	56
3.4.2 Payment and Changes in Income.....	59
3.4.3 Stability in Income, Work, and Life	62
3.4.4 Workers' Perspective toward Their Works and Platforms	66
3.5 Chapter Summary	68
Chapter IV.....	70
ANALYSIS: PLATFORM WORK, WORKER'S FRIEND OR FOE?.....	70
4.1 Positive Impact	70
4.1.1 Anyone can be micro-entrepreneur due to decentralized structure of business model in platform economy	70
4.1.2 Direct benefit for workers as companies don't own any asset and therefore can't reap ownership benefits	74
4.1.3 Accessibility allowed more equal opportunities for everyone to earn money including those who are at disadvantage	77

4.1.4 Flexibility in work hour and nature of work from the merging of casual job and fully employed job.....	82
4.2 Negative Impact.....	83
4.2.1 Workers have to be responsible for any risk and damage in job and have to pay for any cost themselves	83
4.2.2 Instability in income and job	85
4.2.3 Companies and/or platform owners benefiting without providing for their workers.....	87
CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS	90
REFERENCES	99
APPENDICES.....	113
VITA.....	119



LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1 Delivery fee and commission fee on Grab Food, Line Man, and Foodpanda	44
Table 2. Requirements and fee for GrabFood, Line Man, and Foodpanda Application	55
Table 3. GrabFood, Line Man, and Foodpanda Worker’s Payment and Commission fee	61



LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. Players and Distribution of Revenue in On-demand Food Delivery Market.	15
Figure 2. Framework used for the study.	20
Figure 3. Food delivery service and food sharing in platform economy.	27
Figure 4. Thailand On-demand Food Delivery Market Value.	42
Figure 5. Graph of maximum income threshold for each group of populations in Thailand, 2017.	79



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The financial crisis in 2008 started in the United States and developed into full-blown global financial crisis causing declination in economic all over the world. During this period which was then called 'Great Recession', unemployment rate in many countries spiked up as many people were laid off due to the economic recess.

In United States, the unemployment rate increased from around five percent in 2006 to 10 percent in 2009 during the recession. In fact, United States had the highest increase in unemployment rates among G7 countries during the recession (Hoffmann & Lemieux, 2014). The unemployment rates in European Union which consists of 28 countries is Europe also increased from 6.8 percent to 8.9 to 11 percent during and after recession. Eastern Europe and Central Asia are also facing sharp increase in unemployment rates and cut in paycheck (World Bank, 2011). Countries in Asia-Pacific also fare no better either; even countries with high economic growth such as Japan, Indonesia, Singapore, South Korea, and Philippines were experiencing rise in unemployment rates during 2008 to 2009 as well (Huynh et al., 2010). Thailand also faced similar problem since the global financial crisis affected Thailand's exportation which was about 60 to 70 percent of Thailand's GDP (Chomthongdi, 2009; Worawan, 2010). Due to the decline in exportation, workers in the sector lost their jobs or got lower payment. Report by TDRI stated that employees in the manufacturing sector in the age group of 20 to 29 were the most affected. Furthermore, the unemployment rate of the young workers also rose from 6.3 to 8.1 percent. Moreover, 25 percent of those who were still employed were also affected by lower payment and a cut in work hours (Worawan, 2010)

The increase of unemployment rates indicated many economic problems the workforces in the market would have had to face such as lower wage and increasing debt; for example, in the US, college graduates who entered job market during the recession faced with 8.8 percent of unemployment and 18.3 percent of underemployment. The high unemployment and underemployment rates indicated low payment and lack of income generating ability. These led to them having difficulty paying back their student loan and therefore making the student loan debt rose to the almost unprecedented amount (Elliott & Reynolds III, 2014).

Furthermore, as economic problems has arisen and impacted people down to individual level as it affected their livelihood and income, people begun see the urgency and severity of the situation. The Great Recession kicked off the Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011 where over thousands of people gather to protest

against economic inequality (Brownfield, 2019). The Occupy Wall Street protest gained media attention,

brought issue to the spotlight and afterward the Occupy Movement spread across the globe to 900 cities in 82 countries (Adam, 2011; Walters, 2011). From these events, it is safe to say that the Great Recession and its worldwide impact have brought forward the urgency and severity of economic problems to the mainstream press and public conscious.

Around the same period of 2008 financial crisis and subsequently, the Great Recession begun the rise of the new economic model under the name of 'sharing economy' or as known under various names such as collaborative economy, peer-to-peer economy, gig economy or platform economy. Regardless of the names, this new economic model operated through the usage of technology which around that period of time, digital technology like smartphone and internet was starting to become a common thing.

As stated above, the term 'sharing economy' begun to appear around the same time as the Great Recession in late 2010 (Sundararajan, 2016b; Máynez & Gutiérrez, 2016) Joseph Stiglitz stated that unemployment and low wage from economic declination made people realized that the economic and political system they were in was unfair and this frustration "were repeated throughout the world" (Máynez & Gutiérrez, 2016, p. 2). People were looking for something new, something that could disrupt the old and traditional system. The economic crisis made people realized that they need to create job for themselves and the fact there were large amount of underused resources (Máynez & Gutiérrez, 2016). Therefore they created an economic model that would make use of underused personal resources and would help create more jobs. These factors, along with the usage of technology that was then becoming increasingly accessible, propelled the sharing economy into the market. Platforms such as Airbnb, Uber, and TaskRabbit were found around the same period as well (Roof, 2019; Jesse, 2015). The platforms started by entrepreneurs were based on making use of the underused personal assets and create the new revenue of income for participants who were otherwise unemployed or underemployed (Jesse, 2015).

Forbes article regarding sharing economy had stated that during the Great Recession when people lost their jobs, many had turn to the sharing economy in order to make a living or earn income to make ends meet (Kaufman, 2014). Many have found work from various jobs on the platforms as part-time, freelance or full-time. Furthermore, as head of Airbnb global policy had voiced out, the sharing economy helped lessen the impact the 2008 financial crisis as it offered work opportunities to people who were affected by the impact of the crisis (Hunt, 2016).

Moreover, sharing economy proves to be fruitful as many platforms have expanded globally and each country has adapted this new economic model and created their local platforms themselves. For example, Uber has expanded to 250 cities worldwide (*The Sharing Economy*, 2015) and Airbnb was currently operating in 161 countries. And despite starting in the United States, now many countries have their own version of platforms in the sharing economy (Wadhwa, 2018). China even surpassed the US and became the world's largest sharing economy with over 600 million people participating in the businesses (Pennington, 2017).

The premise and the growth of the sharing economy indicated potentials and opportunities for participants to find employment and generate income. Its differences from traditional business model incited growth and provided opportunities for those who were excluded from participating in the traditional economy as shown in the abovementioned that people who were laid off due to economic crisis could find work in the sharing economy.

Could platform economy have positive impacts on income generating?

Ever since the rise platform economy or as many called 'sharing economy', it has been called as 'disruptive' by many due to its rapid expansion and many changes it has caused. Since late 2010s, Platform economy has become the big "gold rush" with many entrepreneurs, micro-entrepreneurs, companies, and investors all jumping to participate in hope of gaining some profits in this blossoming new business (Kenney & Zysman, 2016). And due to its business structure which had many different characteristics from traditional business mode, platform economy has changed character of work and employment; allowing flexible work hour, flexible workplace, and enabling more work opportunities. It also sparked many debates and controversies such as debate regarding laws and regulations in platform economy (McKee et al., 2018), exploitation of workers on platform (van Doorn, 2017), problem of discrimination (Schor & Attwood-Charles, 2017) or even controversy about how platform destroyed traditional business as could be seen from protest against Uber by taxi drivers in Thailand or claims that Airbnb was a big threat to hotel business (Ross, 2015; SOEG JOBS, n.d.).

For its 'disruptive' qualities, those who were in favor of platform economy have had a high hope that it could solve the economic problems such as unemployment, low wage, or income inequality (Sundararajan, 2016a) (Rinne, 2015a; Rinne, 2015b). Due to its network model and usage of technology, platform economy provided many more opportunities for everyone, including those who were excluded from opportunity before such as the unemployed, the poor (Dillahunt & Malone, 2015), informal workers with unstable jobs (Randolph & Galperin, 2019) women who were housewives and people with disabilities (Matofska, 2018; Woskowsky, 2014) to become a provider on the platform which enables them to become the entrepreneur of their

own business. It also provided an opportunity for ordinary people to generate more income which they normally would not be able to do so easily.

However there were also studies arguing that the platform economy might not be as disruptive in a positive way as some had promoted. While there were evidences as shown in the abovementioned regarding benefits of platform economy which suggested its potential to improve problems in the aspect of income by generating more income and job opportunities and could even become an alternative choice to the current economy and business model but at the same time, there were also evidences that show the downside of platform economy. For example, workers on platforms did not get employee benefits (Murillo et al., 2017) and faced the risks that come with work alone as they are self-employed, allowing the company to get away with taking responsibility for risks and cost (Murillo et al., 2017), (Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018). The risks and instability in work only added to global phenomenal of precarious work as more and more workers globally became part-time or temporary workers and experiencing lack of workers' rights, protection, and employee benefits (Quak & Van de Vijssel, 2014; International Labour Office & Bureau for Workers' Activities, 2012; Mosoetsa et al., 2016). These problems in platform economy suggested the exploitative character of platform business model which indicated that it could contributes to the problems under current economic regime instead of improving it.

Therefore it was important to examine the effect that platform economy had on people's economic life especially in the aspect of income and income generating as it could be seen that both positive and negative claims were still very much in debate. It was important to contribute information and data to the debate. Furthermore, this study examined the impact of platform economy not just in the aspect of whether or not platform economy could increase worker's income but also in the aspect of income generating ability and the differences in each person's economic life and life style as they participating in the platform economy. The impact also included precarity in platform work which ultimately helped determine how workers were affected in both work life and life in general by precarious work and whether or not platform work amplified the precarity in work.

Therefore this study tried to offer a holistic view on the impact platform economy could have on workers' life which goes beyond just income generating as it was also an examination of work life, stability in both in life and work, precarity and changes in various aspects of workers' life. All of which could help examine the disruptive potential of platform economy. And ultimately, such understanding and knowledge could be used to improve the platform economy to benefit the overall society.

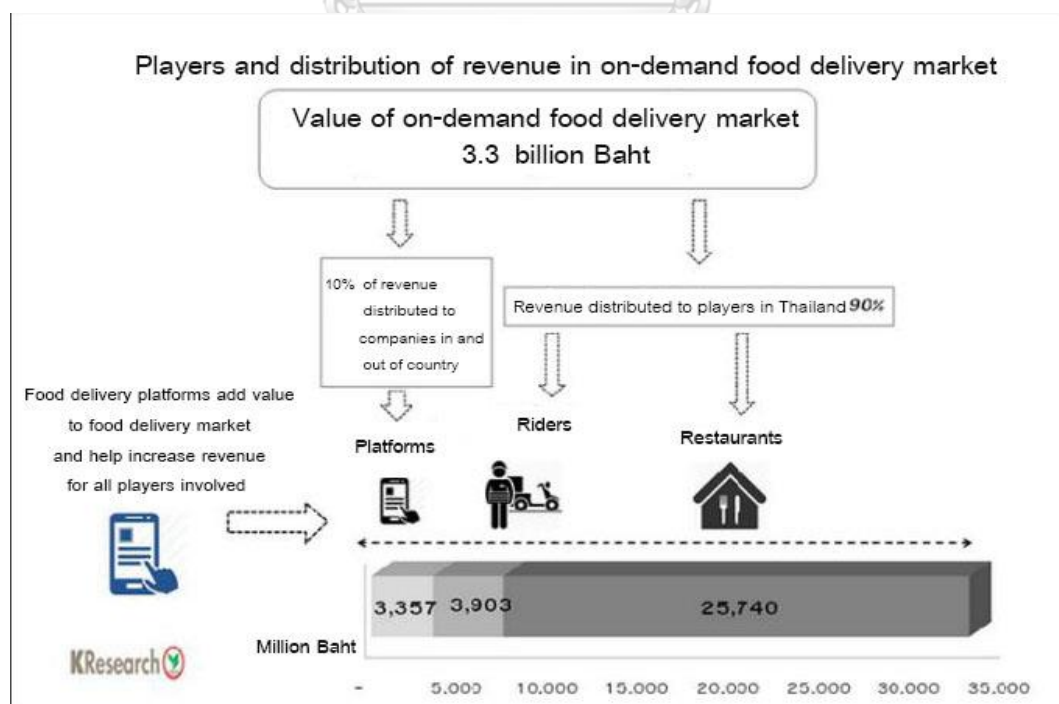
As for Thailand, platform economy has been getting bigger right along with the global trend of platform economy as well. It was relatively new in Thailand; many major

companies such as Line Man, Uber, and Grab have only just started operating in Thailand around 2014 and some even later. However, many of them are expanding fast; for example, Line Man reached milestone of one million users in 2018 (Leesanguansuk, 2018), Grab expanding its business to many category no limited to just ride-sharing, and Airbnb generated over 380 million Baht in just 2018 (The Bangkok Insight Editorial Team, 2019).

As stated that platform economy in Thailand has been growing fast, one of the fastest growing sector was the on-demand food delivery sector with growth rate of 10 percent per year, estimating to be worth over 30 billion Baht (Kasikorn Research Center, 2019). And it had potential to grow even bigger as research estimated that in 2019 on-demand food delivery sector growth would increase to 14 percent. Furthermore, there were 12 on-demand food delivery platforms operating in Bangkok and various provinces (this only included the platforms that branching out to various cities therefore the local platforms only were excluded).

More importantly, research by Kasikorn Bank also showed that the growth of food delivery sector means more income generating opportunities as billions of revenue were distributed to all the major players in the market including the platforms, workers, and restaurants as depicted in the figure below. This indicated major role and importance of food delivery platforms sector in the market. It also showed economic value and great potential for food delivery sector as well (SME One, 2019).

Figure 1. Players and Distribution of Revenue in On-demand Food Delivery Market.



Based on data from Kasikorn Research Center as cited in (SME One, 2019)

This information showed growth potential of on-demand food delivery platforms which, more importantly, indicating many job opportunities and good potential for income generating. Furthermore, most of on-demand food delivery service platform operated their delivery via motorbike because of its speed advantage. Usually salary for delivery service job such as delivery man or company driver which take role of both driver and delivery man often started at the average of 12,000 Baht as calculated from data collected from 40 works from four job websites namely Jobth.com, JobThai.com, th.indeed.com, and Jobbkk.com meaning that they earned around 300 Baht per day, the amount which was considered to be only a minimum wage in Thailand (Ministry of Labour, 2010; ‘Thailand Average Monthly Wages’, 2019)

These two facts indicated that on-demand food delivery platforms had growing opportunity for job and income generating which potentially could increase minimum wage of the delivery service jobs. Therefore it was worth examining whether the potential of food delivery platforms could improve their workers income or not. And furthermore, it was also worth examining the changes that were made in their economic life by participating in the platform economy. The knowledge could ultimately help identify the positive effect platform economy could incite economically on those who are participating in it and could contribute to finding the beneficial way platform economy could be used to benefit all participants.

Research Gap

While there were quite a few numbers of articles, news and academic researches written about platform economy, however regarding the topic of its impact in the income generating aspect as shown in the above section, there was still wide gaps with very little researches and studies. Many of articles and studies were mainly focusing on issues of labor and government role on law and regulation in platform economy or just mainly in the aspect of larger economic benefits such as economic growth (for example; Rogers, 2015; Drahoukoupil & Fabo, 2016; Koopman, Mitchell, & Thierer, 2014) and for case study of Thailand in (Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018; Juntiwarakij, 2017). Also due to the fact that platform economy just started gaining a momentum relatively recent and the fact that there were wide ranges of business on platform economy, the concept of platform economy itself was still in disarray. So it was not surprising that many studies were still focusing on conceptualizing and defining the concept of sharing economy and platform economy as could be seen in examples (Ranjbari, Morales-Alonso, & Carrasco-Gallego, 2018; Curtis & Lehner, 2019; Daunorienė, Drakšaitė, Snieška, & Valodkienė, 2015).

Therefore there were not many researches regarding the topic of platform economy impact on the aspect of income generating and how that aspect impacts people life. This research tried to contribute to the gap by offering data to the debate regarding

positive and negative impact platform economy had in the aspect of income generating. The platform economy in focus in this thesis was on-demand food delivery platforms in Bangkok, Thailand. To examine the impact of platform economy on income generating and gather empirical data, this research collected data from sample group of people who worked on large and widely-used on-demand food delivery service platforms namely Grab, Line Man, and Foodpanda.

1.2 Research Questions and Objectives

In this research, I chose to study the impact of platform economy on workers who work on on-demand food delivery service platforms. I explored the question of platform economy impact through interview with 15 people who worked on platforms. The main aim of this thesis was to explore platform economy and its impact on those who participated as workers in the aspect of income generating and how income generating impact their life economically. While the overall analysis, simultaneously, was to explore what the impact could reveal and contribute to the existing debate regarding the positive and negative effects of platform economy especially regarding workers. Therefore the main research question could be summed up as

“How does working on online on-demand food delivery service platform impact workers in Bangkok in the aspect of income generating and what the implication of such impact could contribute to the debate regarding positive and negative effects of platform economy?”

And in order to examine the main question, there sub-questions were needed and could be break down into four questions as followed;

1. How do workers engage in platform work?
2. How do workers perceive themselves in relation to platform?
3. How does working on online on-demand food delivery service impact workers in aspect of income generating?
4. What positive and negative implication does the impact have in relation to larger debate surrounding platform economic regarding its positive and negative effects on workers?

And the research’s objectives can be break down as followed;

Objectives

- To investigate situation of platform economy in Thailand with focus on on-demand food delivery platforms

- To examine how working on on-demand food delivery service platforms impacts workers/providers in the aspect of income generating and to examine how such impact affects their life in economic aspect
- To analyze and identify the positive and negative effects platform economy could have in the aspect of income generating and to make recommendation regarding how to maintain and increase positive effect while lessen the negative.

1.3 Significance of Research

This research contributed data to knowledge regarding impact of platform economy which in many aspects still need more data and examination as it was a relatively new phenomenon. But as data had shown in the previous section it has been expanding globally, generating billion of revenue and having millions of people participating in it. It has also generated controversies regarding its impact in many aspects with the main debate being whether or not platform economy was beneficial for workers, consumers, companies or even society at large. Therefore this research would provide data and details on both positive and negative impact of platform economy on workers in the focused topic which could help identify which factors make platform economy beneficial and which doesn't. This knowledge would contribute to the ongoing debate.

Furthermore, Thailand also started to embrace platform economy by supporting tech startup (Suchivoraphanpong, 2017; Startup Thailand, 2018) and aimed to promote platform economy as part of strategy for Thailand digital economy as could be seen in Thai economic masterplan "Thailand 4.0" (Teerakowitkajorn, 2018) which aims to use technology and innovation to create inclusive economic growth. Therefore the data and knowledge from this research identifying the positive and negative impact of platform economy on income generating could be useful for future research and future development policies by Thai government regarding startup and technology in businesses.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

The approach as discussed below was the framework for this thesis. The aim of this thesis was to examine how working on on-demand food delivery services platforms could impact workers' income generating and life in economic aspect. This thesis aimed to explore the changes that happened to workers as they participating in the platform economy. As illustrated in literature review, different characteristics of platform economy were what causing the impact on income and income generating of those who participate in platform economy. Therefore the framework used in this study was constituted of characteristics of platform economy as a base and built upon that base was the impact caused by specific characteristics of platform economy.

The characteristics of platform economy were discussed in the literature review and could be summarized as followed;

1. Network structure with platform acting as mediator between providers and consumers
2. Distributive quality due to networking structure and usage of technology which allowed people to easily connect leading to easy access for both providers and consumers
3. Non-ownership; companies did not own any asset and consumers paid for an access but not ownership
4. Blurring line between casual job and fully employed job

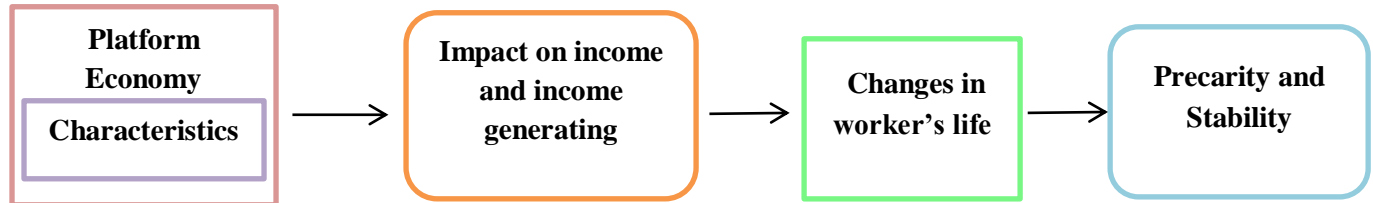
These characteristics were what make platform economy different from the mainstream business model and were the causes of the impact that happened to people who participate as workers (or some might even called them ‘providers’) on platform. The impact summarized below focused on the aspect of income and income generating which were the main focuses of this research. All the impact summarized here was drawn on existing literatures which was discussed in literature review.

Positive Impact	Negative Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anyone can be an micro-entrepreneur due to decentralized structure of business model - Direct benefit for workers as companies don't own any asset and therefore can't reap ownership benefits - Accessibility allowed more equal opportunities for everyone to earn money including those who are at disadvantage - Flexibility in work hour/nature of work from the merging of casual job and fully employed job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workers have to be responsible for any risks and damage in job and have to pay for any cost themselves - Instability in income and job - Companies/platform owners free-riding

These impacts as shown here were the effects of platform economy in the aspect of income and income generating. Therefore this chain of causes and effect were used as a framework to examine how working in platform economy impacts the income of the sample group; whether or not it could improve their income and income generating situation. Furthermore the framework helped assess how impact on income and income generating situation caused changes in life of the workers in sample group. And ultimately, the changes were also examined in order to see how those changes determined precarity in workers' work life and beyond. And lastly, these results from framework, as stated in the objective, contributed to identifying the positive and negative impact of platform economy.

The framework could be summarized as shown in figure 1 as showed below;

Figure 2. Framework used for the study.



Note: Compiled by author

1.5 Research Methodology

The aim of the research was to explore how working on on-demand food delivery platforms impact the income of workers and how the impact could improve or change their income generating situation. And furthermore, it also sought to explore and capture changes that occur in workers' life due to their work in platform economy. The framework used in this research focuses on examining the impact on workers. The impact covered more aspect than just income level; it also required information such as their job opportunity, stability in income, their spending and changes in their income generating, the experiences each individual informant had had with platform work; all of which helped paint a picture of how platform economy could disrupt the life of people who were participating in it. To explore impact of platform economy was the research's main goal and therefore the qualitative method was appropriate.

This research collected primary data through qualitative method of in-depth interview. The research conducted individual interview with 15 informants who worked through three delivery platforms namely; Foodpanda, GrabFood, and Line Man. These three platforms were chosen because they were the biggest platforms in the market due to their size of userbase and branches in many cities; Both Foodpanda and Grab Food were operating in more than 10 major cities in Thailand as shown in their respective official websites; foodpanda.co.th and guide for driver on Grab website (Where does Grab Food operate?, n.d.) making them significantly larger in size comparing to other platforms. Line Man also had the huge userbase due to the already existing 15 million users on Line Man application which offered parcel delivery service and ride-sharing and therefore comprising a large potential userbase for food delivery service as well (WP, 2019). Furthermore, Line Man was reportedly the most popular on-demand food delivery service with the growth rate of 468 percent in 2018 (Feed News, 2019; (Aripermpom, 2018). Apart from that, the three platforms were also well-known delivery platforms that offered on-demand food delivery services. And as the platforms were well known and large in size of company and userbase, the amounts of

providers who worked on them should also be large and diverse which could help broaden demographic of the informants.

Each respondent was asked with a set of questions. These questions were divided into four categories as followed;

1. General information of the informant such as age, education level, and hometown
2. Current employment including information such as their current platform work and other current employment, their income, and income generating situation in order to see how working on platform has impacted them and see the changes that were currently happening in their life
3. Previous employment including their previous salary, work, and motivation they had in changing from previous employment to current one.
4. Opinions regarding their experiences with platform work and plan for future employment

My approach was to use the delivery service myself in order to meet the respondents and ask to interview them. I used this approach because I could get to see the process of their work and experience a bit of their working condition myself. Apart from that, by meeting them through work, the informants felt less like I bothered them during work and felt more inclined to agree to the interview. As for location, platform work was not location-bound and platform like GrabFood actually operated in several provinces but I used the service specifically in Bangkok Metropolitan Region.

These interviews were conducted either face to face after ordering food or afterward via phone call. As stated, I started by ordering the food through applications and when the drivers came to deliver my order, I asked if I could interview them for my study. Some of them agreed to start the interview immediately while some stated that they had to get back to work but still agreed to be interviewed via phone call after they finished working. Only few declined to be interviewed.

Respondents' age ranged from early twenty to mid-thirty. Fourteen, the majority of the respondents, were male. Only one female respondent was found from the randomized approach in order to collect data. Majority of the respondents were full-time drivers on food delivery platforms. Their employment backgrounds were various but most were already working in service sector in jobs such as motorbike taxi driver, driver, store clerk, or porter. Few also shared similar background of being factory workers. Moreover, half of the respondents were born and raised in Bangkok while other half migrated from other provinces to Bangkok for work-related reason. Further details of respondents' demographic and general information could be found in Appendix B along with their pseudonyms used in this study.

As for secondary data, information regarding platform economy and its impact were collected in literature review. Information from existing literature regarding platform economy, its impact on worker' income and changes that occur due to the impact provided the ground for interview questions design. Furthermore, they also provided the base for data analysis as it provided framework that helped assess impact of working in platform economy on informant's income and income generating situation.

1.6 Limitations

This thesis and especially the data collection have certain limitations.

The first limitation was the limited amount of existing literatures due to the fact that platform economy becoming mainstream was relatively new. Although there were many news and articles written regarding platform economy, there were very few researches that focus explicitly on the topic of this thesis which was platform economy and its impact on workers' income and income generating and thus there was no widely used framework established.

The second limitation was the informants in the in-depth interviews. To really observe the impact of platform economy, the sample group should be of large amount. Large sample group would allow the research to examine the demographic of workers. Furthermore, it would allow the research to see the changes that occur to them due to participating in platform economy in bigger picture and determine whether or not platform work truly has positive impact in the aspect of income and income generating. However, I believed that the insight from the sample group in this research still provided some useful insight regarding the impact of platform economy and helped examine and identified the positive potential it might have.

1.7 Scope

This thesis focused on impact of platform economy on income of workers on platforms. The claims and potential of its impact as discussed in literature review were also focusing only on the aspect of income and income generating.

The case study of this thesis focused solely on workers in on-demand food deliver platforms in Bangkok.

1.8 Ethical issues

For ethical issue, some of the questions regarding money and employment experience might be sensitive and personal for the informants. However all of their identities and details were kept confidential. Apart from the issues as mentioned, there was no further ethical issue found in this study.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Defining Platform Economy

2.1.1 Platform Economy, Sharing Economy, Collaborative Economy, and P2P Economy; Same or Different?

Platform economy has various names; gig economy, collaborative economy, peer-to-peer (P2P) economy or sharing economy. These terms are similar and they share quite a few numbers of main characteristics such as decentralization model, direct contact between providers and consumers, and disruptive potentials to the traditional business model. World Economic Forum also stated that it is possible for one platform to fall under definition of more than one term (Rinne, 2017). However each of them does retain different characteristics (Botsman, 2013 as cited in Zvolska, 2015, p. 19).

Platform economy simply means any business which operated through digital platforms including website, social media, mobile application and such. While collaborative economy is an umbrella term for collaborative finance, education, production and consumption (Zvolska, 2015) with defining characteristic, according to Investopia, as “marketplace where consumers rely on each other instead of large companies to meet their wants and needs.” (Frankenfield, 2018). Collaborative economy emphasizes on the direct interaction between providers/sellers and consumers with companies only help facilitate such interaction but they do not engage in it themselves. One could say that platform economy is a blanket term which covers the definition of collaborative economy (Morell, n.d.).

For sharing economy and peer-to-peer economy, they both are part of collaborative economy as they also focus on direct interaction between providers and consumers or “community interaction” (Piscicelli, Cooper, & Fisher, 2015). Again, these two terms are also very similar to each other. But sharing economy can be differentiated from peer-to-peer economy by lack of ownership since sharing economy only grant temporary access to goods and services to consumers instead of having consumers buying and owning the goods (Bardhi & Eckhard, 2012 as cited in Andreotti et al., 2017). Sharing economy has no change of ownership and therefore makes it different from the peer-to-peer economy as the main characteristic of P2P economy is a model where two individuals can exchange the ownership of goods and services directly; for example, selling and reselling goods on eBay. Furthermore, one of the defining characteristics of sharing economy is the use of underutilized asset (Rinne, 2017; PwC, 2015). As PwC report defined sharing economy as business model that allowed people to “make money from underused assets” (*The Sharing Economy*, 2015, p. 5).

However it is important to note that these terms are often used interchangeably due to their shared characteristics and the exact definition of the terms are still in debate. For example, the term ‘sharing economy’ and ‘platform economy’ are often used as an umbrella term for business which operated through digital platforms such as website and mobile application. But the definition of the term ‘sharing economy’ itself is contested due to the word ‘sharing’; the word ‘sharing’ would implies giving something away and therefore implies the shared ownership between two people or more but there is no shared ownership in businesses such as Uber or Airbnb; customer remains a customer, not an owner. Simply put, the customers are merely ‘renting’ the service and/or the goods. This distinction was also addressed in the paper ‘Defining the Sharing Economy for Sustainability’ in which the authors also proposed that the nature of businesses such as Uber, Grab, Airbnb or Amazon is more matches to the definition of access-based consumption (Curtis & Lehner, 2019) and therefore should be excluded from the term ‘sharing economy’. Interestingly, business that was often cited as an example of sharing economy like Uber has also never identified itself as part of ‘sharing economy’ (Schor, 2017).

By definition, platform economy is closely related to peer-to-peer economy than it is to sharing economy although both P2P and sharing economy could be considered as subset of platform economy. The defining characteristic of P2P economy which is the direct transaction between providers and consumers resembles the way platform economy provides platforms for providers and consumers to interact directly. But platform economy covers a wider range of interaction than that of P2P; interaction in platform economy could be from business to consumer (B2C) or peer to peer (P2P).

Therefore although many articles and papers still used the terms sharing economy, platform economy, collaborative economy, and P2P interchangeably. However this study used the term ‘platform economy’ as this specific term covers all the important characteristics of this type of business which set it apart from traditional business model.

2.1.2 Characteristics of Platform Economy

In general definition, platform economy is any business which operated through digital platforms including website, social media, mobile application and such. Many has cited that the concept of platform economy or sharing economy has emerged with the book ‘What’s Mine Is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption’ in 2010. According to the book, the new business model or collaborative consumption (as they called it) possess a unique characteristic which set them apart of from the traditional consumption in the mainstream business model and that characteristic is collaboration “The collaboration at the heart of Collaborative Consumption may be local and face to face or it may use the internet to connect combine, form groups and find something or someone to create ‘many-to-many’ peer-to-peer interaction.” (Botsman & Rogers,

2014 in Sundararajan, 2016b). And such collaboration made possible and effective by the use of technology especially the internet.

Businesses on digital platform operated in a different type of business in which PwC's report categorized them into five major sectors; automotive, hospitality, finance, staffing, and media streaming (*The Sharing Economy*, 2015). Similarly, PwC and EU report in 2016 also divided platform work into five sectors as followed (Florisson & Mand, n.d.);

- Peer-to-peer accommodation;
- Peer-to-peer transportation;
- On-demand household services;
- On-demand professional tasks;
- Collaborative finance.

Despite the differences, various businesses still could be described by this definition; each platform operated in a different type of business but they do function as a place to mediate and connect people to one another. For example, platform such as Amazon, Etsy or Shopee function as marketplace while platform such as Uber, Grab or Airbnb function as mediator connecting service providers with customers; they might be different in the nature of their work type but the basic of each platform's operation is connecting one person to another whether for services or goods. According to its function as stated, therefore the basic composition of platform economy must contain three elements: platform, service providers and customers (Sundararajan, 2016b)

The characteristics of platform economy, apart from the usage of technology to facilitate business interaction between people, according to Arun Sundararajan (Sundararajan, 2016a), could be identified as followed; market-based, high-impact capital, crowd-based network, blurring lines between the personal and the professional, and blurring lines between fully employed and casual labor. PwC's report on sharing economy also presented similar characteristic which they stated as "Digital platforms that connect spare capacity and demand" (*The Sharing Economy*, 2015, p. 15). Interestingly, the report also mentioned various types of access over ownership in this business model such as renting, lending, subscribing, reselling, and swapping, all of which offers more choices of access of ownership to consumers comparing to traditional business model. In their book, Botsman and Rogers also identified the principles of collaborative consumption (or sharing economy) as critical mass, idling capacity, belief in the common and trust in strangers (Botsman & Rogers, 2014 in Sundararajan, 2016b)

It seems that the main characteristic of platform economy is networking between people whether in local community or online community through usage of technology. It is this characteristic that differentiates platform economy from

traditional business; platform economy (and interchangeably sharing economy) has business structure of person to person exchange (peer-to-peer). The biggest different being the ownership of asset; in platform economy, the providers own their own asset not the company or the platform which is the biggest different from traditional business model or business to peer model (Schor, 2017)

The networking between people through the use of technology also in turn create a type of job or employment that is different from traditional employment as Arun Sundararajan has described as “blurring lines”. According to Akkanut and Kriangsukt who referenced to report from FES (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung), they conceptualized this type of work as ‘digital work’. According to the report, digital work could be divided into two types: gig work and crowd work. Both gig work and crowd work are on-demand type of work, the only different, according to the report, is that gig work still relies on physical exchange of goods and services while crowd work could be performed anywhere (Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018). Gig work could be seen as a prominent feature in platform economy; for example, service exchange in Uber or Line man is gig work while crowd work might be less prominent when mentioning platform economy but it can still be seen plenty on platform website which act as a mediator between employer and temporary employee such as Freelancer, Craigslist, or FreelanceBay.

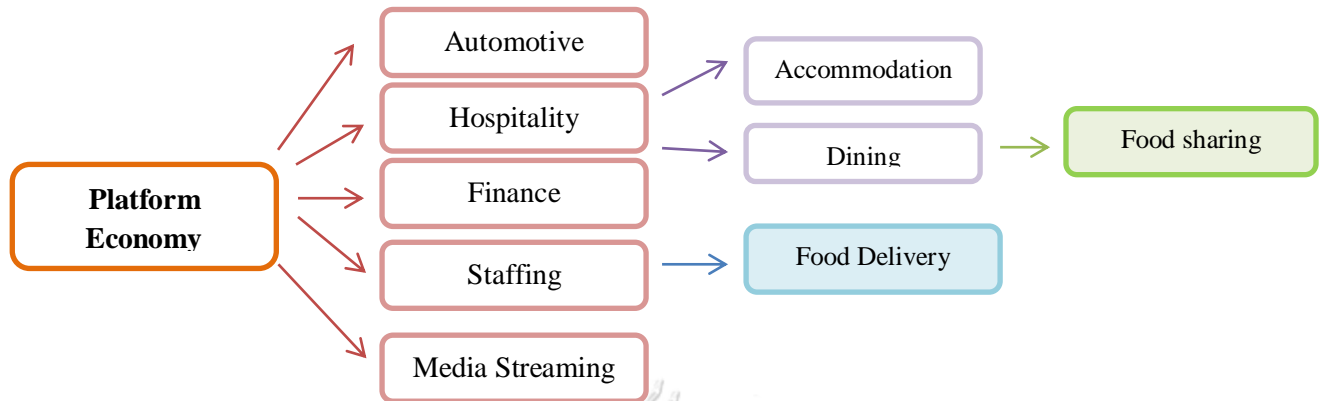
2.1.3 On-Demand Food Delivery Service in Platform Economy

Food sector in platform economy consists of various types of businesses. Digital platforms act as interface for various types of interactions such as (Auvinen, 2018);

- Finding, booking, paying and reviewing restaurants such as Foursquare
- Ordering and paying takeaway food or food deliveries from restaurants such as Uber Eat, Grab Food, etc.
- Buying and paying for food and groceries directly from local stores and/or producers such as Farmhouse (Australia), OurHarvest (USA), or Forestfoody (Finland)
- Meal sharing, activities such as cooking class, and food swap

It can be seen that the activities as shown above are vastly different; there are platforms for delivery services which could be considered a part of staffing sector according to category in PwC report as they offer a service by workers. But at the same time there are also food sharing platform which falls under the dining segment in hospitality sector along with accommodation segment (Zvolska, 2015). Food sharing platforms connect people with home restaurant within nearby community; its function very similarly to accommodation platforms such as Airbnb which connect people with regular home instead of hotel. Example of food sharing platforms are such as BonAppetour, COOKAPP, Eatwith, Travelling Spoon, Withlocals, etc. (HOTREC & Toposophy, 2018).

Figure 3. Food delivery service and food sharing in platform economy.



Based on data from PwC report (PwC, 2015) and (Zvolska, 2015)

As for food delivery platforms, food delivery is nothing new; many chain restaurants have already offered the delivery service, known as traditional food delivery service. However the online platforms that offer multiple restaurants for consumers to choose from in one platform have only begun to boom relatively recent along with the rise of digital technology and the platform economy itself.

The online platforms which offer food delivery service are categorized into two types; aggregators and new delivery (Carsten et al., 2016). Aggregators act as platform that connect consumers with restaurants; allowing consumers to view menu and price from various restaurants and place their order. However they do not handle the delivery service by themselves which marks a different between aggregators and new delivery type of platforms. New delivery platforms function similarly to those of aggregators however the platforms themselves offer delivery service and employed their own deliverymen.

Aggregator type of platform exists since around early 2000s while the new delivery type entered the market in 2013 (Carsten et al., 2016; Mingnot, 2015). While the traditional delivery service still dominates over 90 percent of the market (Carsten et al., 2016), the online delivery platforms are expanding rapidly as well. In 2015, half a billion dollars was invested in the online food delivery platforms (Mingnot, 2015). The online penetration rate of food delivery platforms also growth passed 30 percent in 2016 with expected rate of 65 percent in the future. And in 2018, the value of online food delivery market reached over 84.6 billion dollars (IMARC Services Private Limited, 2019). Furthermore, the value of top five global platforms (Just Eat, GrabHub, Delivery Hero, Deliveryroo, and Takeaway.com) in the online food delivery service combined is worth over ten billion. And in 2018, Uber Eats became

one of the fastest growing companies in the history with almost 1.5 billion earning (Thomas, 2019). More importantly, it is estimated that the global demand for online food delivery service will continue to grow in the future with the growth rate of 31.76 percent during 2017 to 2021 (Bansal, 2018).

2.2 Platform Economy and Its Impact on Income Generating

2.2.1 How Characteristics of Platform Economy Impacts Income and Income Generating

From the previous section, the characteristics of platform economy which set it apart from traditional business model could be identified as followed;

1. Network structure with platform acting as mediator between providers and consumers
2. Distributive quality due to networking structure and usage of technology which allowed people to easily connect leading to easy access for both providers and consumers
3. Non-ownership; companies don't own any asset and consumers pay for an access but not ownership
4. Blurring line between casual job and fully employed job

Due to these distinctive characteristics, platform economy has impacted many aspects of economy and society. However this section will focus on its impact and potential on the aspect of income and income generating that was discussed in existing literature.

Firstly due to its network structure, platform economy was praised for its distributive quality as power and money in platform economy could be distributed widely to those who work on it. Platform economy structure is functioning like a network connecting providers with customers directly, platform economy changes the top-down business model to bottom-up self-regulating mechanisms (Daunorienė et al., 2015) as factors of production such as land and labor are “no longer in the hand of the privileged few” (Su, 2018) but the mass of people who own those factors are now in charge of using and reaping benefits out of their property directly. The similar concept also shared by scholar, Michel Bauwens as he stated that in business model with distributed network structure, individual still retain some level of agency (Sundararajan, 2016a). He also stated that “P2P is based on distributed power and distributed access to resources”, the emphasis of distributive characteristic even more.

Due to its distributive characteristic in the abovementioned, it's not surprising that wealth redistribution is the claim that many have stated as benefit of platform economy. As contrast to the wealth accumulation that outgrows wage and incomes in the past decades, platform economy helps expand economic growth opportunities to wider range of population (Sundararajan, 2016a). Arun Sundararajan compared

platform economy to people making an investment through bank but instead of investing through the middleman, they can make an investment directly in platform economy with their own capital and property such as renting out their own room on Airbnb or renting out car on Relayride. For example; according to Sundararajan, millions of Airbnb hosts owned the capital that would have been concentrated in the hand of big corporate hotel chain.

Another praise regarding platform economy is that it provides income generating opportunity for everyone; lessening the inequality in life chance and job opportunity and thereby could decrease the inequality in income. As mentioned above, the structure of platform economy has distributive characteristic or as described as “decentralize power structures across the economy and society” (Martin, 2016, p. 154). This characteristic increase accessibility for providers and consumers; consumers could easily access service and asset while providers could easily access job. Due to this, now everyone can be entrepreneur or micro-entrepreneurs, the power in business doesn’t concentrated only in big company anymore; for example, Yokoo Gibran transitioned herself from full-time employee into owner of her own business of selling handmade scarves through Etsy, a platform marketplace or ThreeBirdNest which grew from Etsy into its own business platform, selling women’s apparel items (Sundararajan, 2016a).

Furthermore, not only that platform economy could provide income generating opportunity to everyone, it also especially beneficial to those who are at disadvantage economically. According to JPMorgan Chase data (Farrell & Greig, 2016) which collected from 260,000 sample accounts of people all over United States including both people who earn income from platform economy and those who doesn’t, it appeared that for those who earn their income through labor platform in platform economy were the one with higher income volatility compared to the rest. Those with high income volatility, according to the research, were mostly young people and poor people and jobs on platform economy attracted them because it was easier and quicker to get a job there. The data indicated that platform economy could help people who were facing income instability to mitigate the volatility. It could be seen from these examples that platform economy expands opportunity and redistributes wealth to wider range of people and is beneficial to those who are at disadvantage.

Despite the positive claims, the criticism that platform economy actually deepens inequality in income also exists as well. One of the main criticisms for platform economy is that despite of its decentralized structure of power, most of the owners of each platform are the one who gain most profit from the business. Platform economy is business and therefore many are operating in the interest of accumulating the most profit for their shareholders (De Grave, 2014). Each platform is in the competitive market and is essentially under the market pressure to “scale up their transactions”

(Murillo et al., 2017). Arthur De Grave also commented on the contrary of business interest to gain the most profits for the investor and the “egalitarian spirit” that seem to come with the structure of platform economy. He also stated that in the end, “you will have to choose one or the others” (Sundararajan, 2016b, p. 27). This is contradictory to the claims that platform economy redistributes profits (and power) to the providers instead of accumulating them like traditional business model.

Furthermore, while there is the claim that platform economy provides income generating opportunity for everyone; enabling everyone to become a micro-entrepreneur, that opportunity could become exploitation instead. Companies or platform owners in platform economy was criticized for putting risk on providers shoulders in order to lower the operating cost and in turn maximize the profits for the company themselves. This is due to the nature of platform economy which platform just acting as mediator between providers and their customers, the platform is not considered as employer and provider is not an employee; therefore provider/worker is walking along the blurring line of casual job and full employment. So as providers are not considered as employees of the platforms, they do not get the benefits and the protection that normally should have come with employment. The platform companies are free from obligation to give them any employee benefits such as health insurance or pension (Murillo et al., 2017). This also pushes platform providers to shoulder the risk that comes with the job themselves as the company is not under any obligation to deal with it, for example; Uber drivers are responsible for accident during their work or there is no pension for TaskRabbit workers (Murillo et al., 2017). But while not giving them benefits, the company is able to expand their business due to lower transaction cost as they now offloading some of the cost and risk onto platform providers or “independent contractors” instead (Murillo et al., 2017; Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018).

There are also few studies which pointed out the possibility of platform economy might have divide the income gap further. A study from JPMorgan Chase Institute presented the data showing the difference between income in capital type of platform and labor type of platform in platform economy. The capital type of platform is where people can rent out their asset such as room and car on Airbnb and Turo while the labor type of platform is where people sell their own labor such as offering driver service on Uber or doing task on TaskRabbit. The data which collected from 260,000 JPMorgan Chase client accounts shown that people who participated in capital type of platform tended to make more income than those in labor type of platform; their median monthly income was 3,218 and 2,514 dollars respectively (Griswold, 2016). The data shows that people who already have money and asset tend to benefit more from platform economy than those who do not. Therefore it could be said that “people who have capital will just keep getting richer” (Griswold, 2016) while income inequality still persist.

Moreover, according to research conducted from in-depth interview with people who earn their income from three platforms which are TaskRabbit, Airbnb and RelayRides, it is found that people who work on sample platforms are already able to economically support themselves and their work on platform is more of a supplementary income, not their main source of income (Schor, 2017). The research also found that many of them are highly educated; for example, data from TaskRabbit in 2013 shown that 70 percent of their workforce had bachelor degree. Juliet B. Schor, the researcher, noted that as demand for work on platform business increase, it might reduce the demand for work on non-platform business and therefore reduces work for low-wage workers in non-platform business and increase income inequality even further (Schor, 2017).

Moreover, the lack of security for workers in term of employee benefits, work security, and protection due to the nature of platform work which is the mixture between gig work and full employment as shown above are also discussed widely under the term of precarity in platform work. Precarity in work is defined in a simple terms as work that is “uncertain, unstable, and insecure” and employees have to “bear the risks of work” (Kalleberg & Vallas, 2017). However the scope of precarity and precarious work is still widely debated and is covering various angles; for example, while many focus on precariousness of work itself, there is an argument that the impact of precarious work goes far beyond work and other dimensions such as social life should also be included. This concept which furthers the meaning of precarious employment further is referred to as “precarious families” or “precarious lives” (Motakef, 2019).

As stated before, the nature of platform work makes workers’ status resemble those of independent contractors or freelancer; the business model of platforms only functioning as a link between workers and their customers through the usage of technology. This characteristic of platform economy is what leads it to the resemblance of “gig economy” or “gig work” (Muntaner, 2018). This exposed workers to precarious conditions such as lack of work benefits, temporary work contract, or lack of workers’ rights and protection. In fact, a report by EU concluded that “There is a strong association between platform work and precarity” (Forde et al., 2017). The report also pointed out precarity and risk that carried further than just work itself but also to workers’ health and social life as they faced with blurring line between work and life balance and stress that came from precarity in their job (Forde et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the precarity of work and workers’ economic independence on their platform work are also interlinked as showed in this study which conducted on 102 people from six platforms including Airbnb, TaskRabbit, Uber, Lyft, Postmates, and Favor (Schor et al., 2017). From the study, it appeared that the more dependent

workers were on the platforms for their income, the more precarious their platform works were. People in platforms such as Airbnb and TaskRabbit appeared to face lowest level of precarity especially for Airbnb hosts since many of them only rented out their house for supplementary income and generally had stable full-time job. Workers on TaskRabbit (or Taskers) experienced more precarity compared to Airbnb hosts as they faced with instability and less control in their earning but according to the interviews, some stated that they still had a lot of control over their work. For example; Charles, one of the interviewee in the study replaced his catering job which he labeled as “undesirable position” with job as tasker on TaskRabbit, a job which he described as flexible and allowed him more control over what kind of work he chose to do and for how much (Schor et al., 2017).

However for others full-time taskers on TaskRabbit and other full-timers on platforms like Uber, Lyft, Postmates, and Favor, they seemed to be experiencing high level of precarity as they had to deal with lack of control over many aspects especially over work since they felt pressured to accept any and every tasks and orders in order to get enough work and earn enough money for their living. Many had to put up with harsh working condition as they felt that they needed to put their work first. Furthermore, the increasing competition from many workers and similar platforms also contributed to the precariousness workers had experienced.

However as observed in Social Europe article, precarity or precarious work is nothing new and certainly not exclusive to platform work only since the last few decades even before the rise of platform economy, there has been an increase in “non-standard forms of employment” including casual work, temporary work, self-employment, etc. (Garben, 2019). In fact, it seemed that the rise in casualization of workforce has been happening since 1970s due to global marketization which caused high competition worldwide for business and the state itself (Hewison & Kalleberg, 2013). Global capitalism and marketization demanded cheap labor and low production cost in order for businesses to be able to compete. This was one of the reasons for changes in government regulations regarding labors (Moody, 2018) as states tried to promote business and their territories with advantages such as cheap labor and tax cut since they believed that economic growth was the path for development. Furthermore, the digitalization of society and economy in 2000s was also contributing factors to precarious work as well (Garben, 2019). Therefore the article suggested that precariousness in platform economy should be discussed as wider phenomenal rather than just discussing it as challenge or negative characteristics specific to only platform economy.

2.2.2 Impact on Workers' Income and Income Generating Abilities in Different Sectors

As already stated in the previous section, PwC and EU report in 2016 had categorized platform work into five sectors (Florisson & Mand, n.d.);

- Peer-to-peer accommodation;
- Peer-to-peer transportation;
- On-demand household services;
- On-demand professional tasks;
- Collaborative finance.

As work in each sector is different due to nature of work itself, this section will explore how workers in different sector experience change and impact in their income and income generating as they participate in platform work and subsequently, platform economy and how different the impact are.

1) Accommodation sector

The accommodation sector in platform economy is expanding and growing fast. Study in 2017 shown that the total transaction made in accommodation sector in platform economy was estimated to be around 75 billion dollars. With the well-known platform like Airbnb making revenue of two billion dollars and over 500 million guests since it was founded, according to Bloomberg (Gmelich, 2019). Furthermore, data also shown that number of guests checking in Airbnb in the low-income and lower middle-income countries has increased by 1,160 percent in 2017 (World Bank Group, 2018) proving that the platform truly expanding on a global scale.

Providers on accommodation platforms could generate income by renting out their asset which in this case is their home. According to (Schor, 2017), a research which conducted data on three types of platform in the US; accommodation (Airbnb), transportation (RelayRides), and household service (TaskRabbit), it appeared that providers on Airbnb earn the most income out of the three platforms. This might be due to the fact that short-term room renting in Airbnb generates three to four times more income than general renting. Furthermore, when asked to compare their income from Airbnb and their full-time job, about 60 percent of sample providers said that they earn more on platform than their other job (Schor, 2017).

Providers could make the revenue from platforms their main source of income or supplementary income. However, according to (Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018), it seems that majority of providers on Airbnb platform use the platform to earn their supplementary income; most providers already have other job and only want to earn extra money from the platform work. But interestingly, it is not only those with full-time employment or freelancer who benefits from

accommodation platform. Those who are unemployed or in retirement period can also earn extra income by renting out their house. Statistic shown that providers with older age on Airbnb are increasing. In the United States, providers who are 60 years old and older are now making up 13 percent of overall host in Airbnb. Homestay.com also reported that 23 percent of their providers are 55 years old and older (World Bank Group, 2018).

Furthermore, data from World Bank shown that over 55 percent of providers on accommodation platforms are female. Both Airbnb and Homestay.com data shown that women are the majority of providers on the platforms all over the world. Except in Africa where women make up of 43 percent of providers and in Asia with 37 percent (World Bank Group, 2018). This implies the growing business opportunities for women. Moreover, the extra income earned from platform is reportedly used to pay debt; according to study, providers in younger age use the income from renting out their house and/or room to pay for their college debt. While the unemployed use extra income from platform to stay afloat while looking for a job (Schor, 2017).

However it is also important to note that while accommodation platform might yield the highest income in comparison to others, providers must already have capital (in this case, land property) to begin with which has been a point criticized by few (Schor, 2017; Griswold, 2016) in the aspect of inequality. Furthermore, according to (Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018), a research which conducted sample Airbnb providers in Bangkok and Chaing Mai, it appeared that providers whose Airbnb is their main source of income mostly are already in a long-term renting business and they just switch to the short-term renting on Airbnb as it is more profitable.

2. Transportation sector

Ride-sharing platforms are a big part of transportation sector in platform economy. Successful and well-known platforms for ride-sharing are such as Uber which operating on international scale, Lyft which operating only in the United State, BlaBlaCar in Europe, Ola in India and Grab which is widely used and mainly operating in Asia. Drivers use platforms as a way to connect and find customers. Anyone with personal car can earn money by working through the ride-sharing platforms.

While it might be easy to get start on working as driver on ride-sharing platform, the pay one get from their work is still in question. According to data from JPMorgan Chase, people who work on ride-sharing platform such as Uber earn less those in accommodation sector (Griswold, 2016). Furthermore, study on Uber drivers' wage in the US reveals that Uber driver income is averagely 11.77 dollars per hour (after deducting fee for the platform and vehicle expense) which is less than income of

private sector workers and service occupation workers (Mishel, 2018). However the vehicle cost such as gas, maintenance, car insurance or even car wash and interior detailing can be different depending on the usage of the car; for professional driving, driver would have to pay more vehicle cost due to heavy usage of the car than compare to those who drive as their side-job. Some could earn up to 12 dollars per hour while some earn less than 4.50 dollars per hour (Lamberti, 2019).

Furthermore, the same study by (Mishel, 2018) also found that many of Uber workers are only working through Uber platform as a part-time job in order to earn supplementary income. Similarly, according to study which conducted on Uber drivers in Chiang Mai, Thailand; 54 percent of them drive Uber as a part-time job. And their occupation range widely from travel guide to office worker or even public official (Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018). Interestingly, Uber in 2017 and 2018 had also advertised for driving job on their platform with the slogan of “get your side hustle on” which indicate that people who work through their platform would benefit from the work by earning supplementary income.

Despite that, those who earn their main income from platform work are still a big part of the workforce as well. But it seems that some of the full-time drivers are facing a more difficult situation compared to those who works part-time. In this case, full-time driver who used to work only on week days now have to work almost seven days a week in order to pay their bill due to change in platform’s payment policy (Laughlin & Reyes, 2019). Many drivers have complained about low wage compared to long work hours. In 2019, Uber drivers across the United States in major cities like Los Angeles, New York City, San Francisco, Chicago, San Diego, Philadelphia and Washington DC went on strike to demand better work condition and guaranteed minimum wage per hour (BBC, 2019). The protest also happened in other countries like Montreal, Canada and London, United Kingdom (The Associated Press & Montreal Gazette, 2019). Furthermore, in 2018 Uber drivers in Cape Town, South Africa also protested for similar reason as they stated that they were being exploited by their company (May & Tembo, 2018).

However, in many cases, platform such as Uber still provide a good employment opportunity to both part-time and full-time drivers alike. As study on Uber Black drivers in Oslo, Norway had shown, many full-time drivers on the platform found the job to be reliable and offers stable income (Oppegaard, 2018). Furthermore many drivers which were interviewed had a trouble finding job before becoming Uber Black drivers due to their low skilled or language difference as some of them are not Norwegian and therefore could not speak the language. It seems that platform work help integrate those who were excluded from the job market back into playing field. Case study by (Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018) also shown similar point as one of the Uber driver stated that she was unable to work before due to being a

housewife and having to take care of her kids but due to flexible work schedule of Uber, she was able to work again.

Regarding employment opportunity, ride-sharing platforms seem to offer a bit more job opportunity for women as data collected from Uber drivers in 20 cities in United States revealed that there were 14 percent of female Uber drivers which was higher than the eight percent of traditional taxi drivers (Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018). Platforms such as Lyft and Sidecar have even higher percentage of female drivers at 30 and 40 percent respectively (Huet, 2015). Although the percentage might not be significantly different, this still indicates more job opportunities for women as compared to traditional drivers work.

3. On-demand household service sector

Household services sector comprised of platforms for small and/or miscellaneous tasks such as house cleaning, dog sitting, grocery shopping up to food and meal delivery. In this section, food delivery service platforms will be excluded as it will be the main focus of the next section as a comparison to other platforms mentioned here.

As stated, tasks in service sector platforms are of various types. For example, TaskRabbit which is a platform based in United States offers to connect customers with workers who will do all kind of task even if it is just buying coffee or doing laundry. But workers or “taskers” on TaskRabbit also offer skilled services such as carpentry, plumbing, and more. Handy which listed as one of the leading platforms in the market (Yale, 2018) offers cleaning, installation and other house maintenance service. Or BeNeat in Thailand which offers solely a cleaning service.

In on-demand service sector, especially on platform that offers variety of tasks, the payment rate is varied depending on the type of task each worker have taken. On TaskRabbit, the rate can start at 22 dollars per hour for beginner and goes up to 70 dollars (Delfino, 2018). It is estimated that workers who are working as part-timer could earn averagely 110 dollars a month (Leadem, 2017). Payment rate on Handy is also depending on nature of task; for example, job for electrician could earn them over 34 dollars per hour while job for handyman payment rate is around 26 dollars which is a pretty wide gap according to Handy’s salary as posted on job search website Indeed.com. However, the cleaning job on this platform seems to have a stable enough payment rate with the average of 17 dollars per hour (Griswold, 2015).

Workers on TaskRabbit are those of high education as data shown that 70 percent of them have a bachelor degree and around 20 percent of them have a master degree (Newton, 2013) and it seems that they are not inclined to build a full-time career on the platform. Workers often work on TaskRabbit to earn some money while looking for job after being laid off (Newton, 2013). Study by Julia Schor also revealed similar details, people in the sample group who work full-time on the platform seem to use

the work as the mean to earn extra income while transitioning from one job to another. Furthermore study also found that more than half of their sample group works on the platform as a side-job while already working full-time in other profession (Schor, 2017).

On the contrary, workers platforms that focus on a more skilled task like those that required the skills of professional handyman such as electrician or plumber seem to be people who already working full-time in such profession as the platform required them to have “paid experience” in work they are applying for on the platform as stated in the requirement on Handy official website. Similarly, workers on cleaning service on platform such as Handyman or BeNeat seems to be those who are already working full-time in the profession they are applying. As can be seen for the sample case of one of the workers on BeNeat, the worker had already worked full-time as house cleaner but just transitioning to work on the platform due to it flexible work schedule (Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018).

However while people only tend to make an extra income from the platform like TaskRabbit, there are also some who could make full-time employment out of their job through the platform. For example, multiple workers turn their job on TaskRabbit into a full-time work and earn regular payment that is high enough to support themselves without having to work on any other side or full-time job (Pope, 2019). However their cases are considered to be uncommon as many people considered such work to be only a part-time or side-job (Batt, 2019).

2.2.3 Impact of Platform Economy on Workers’ Income and Income Generating on On-demand Food Delivery Platforms.

Online on-demand food delivery service is a big market. As shown in the previous section, global online on-demand food delivery service market is worth over 80 billion (IMARC Services Private Limited, 2019) and still has potential to grow over 31 percent in the future (Bansal, 2018). This indicates huge potential for revenue and income generating opportunity. One could even say that the delivery service in food sector create more jobs as they turn the activities that previously people would do by themselves such as going out and buy food or eating out at the restaurant into a job (Dablanc et al., 2017).

In Europe, online food delivery platforms such as Foodora and Deliveroo are growing fast. However their workers seem to be facing a problem due to low payment (Finger, 2018). It was reportedly said that workers in the abovementioned platforms earn around 450 to 850 euros per month which while making it a good amount of extra income, is not enough for those who relies on it as their main source of income. People claimed that they are not making enough to make the ends meet due to the cost which come with the job such as vehicle repair, insurance, and more and there are not

enough deliveries for the high amount of workers (or couriers) (Finger, 2018). But as one of the workers from London had stated he doesn't have any other qualification for job and at least his work from platform provide him with work hours (Khaleeli, 2016).

However many people seems to rely on these platforms only to generate their supplementary income. Data comprised by Deliveroo shown that more than 75 percent of workers in Germany are working on Deliveroo as their side-job which is similar to the survey on workers in the UK (Deliveroo, n.d.). Furthermore, most workers only work on the average of 15 hours per week. And workers could still earn more than their national minimum wage per hour, for example; workers in the UK earn 9.50 pound per hour while in France they earn 14 euro per hour; and earn over 10.50 euro per hour in Spain, Italy and Netherlands.

For food delivery workers in the United States, low payment seems to be the problem as well; survey revealed that workers from their sample group found the job's low payment to be their main issue (Coworker, 2019). Furthermore, similar situation also happens in China which is one of the top five countries with biggest revenue in food delivery sector (Bansal, 2018). Workers on Meituan, a popular online food delivery platform in China are finding it hard to generate sufficient income through their platform work due to the wage cut and the cost such as fuel cost, internet bill, and vehicle repair, all of which they have to bear themselves. Many workers had said that their income was not enough to support their families anymore and many even went on strike against wage cut and poor working condition in 2018 (China Labour Bulletin, 2018).

It should also be noted that over 77 percent of workers on the online food delivery platforms in China are from rural area and rely on delivery job as their main source of income (China Daily, 2019). One of the workers on Ele.me stated that she left her job in the field and came to Beijing to work for better income and better future for her children (Naik et al., 2019). And according to the study many earn income of 4,000 to 8,000 yuan which is actually higher than those who work in private sector. And over 60 percent of the workers reportedly choose the delivery job due to its salary system and flexible hours (China Daily, 2019).

Singapore is another big market for online food delivery platforms. In 2019, it is reported that over 70 percent of consumers prefer using food delivery application than going out to eat. And among intense competition between many platforms such as GrabFood, HonestBee, Foodpanda, and Deliveroo, platform like Deliveroo still managed a 70 percent increase in revenue in 2018 (Singapore Business Review reporter staff, 2019). And according to article, delivery platform such as Foodpanda is growing fast and in turn demand more workers which is a factor that help increase their wage simultaneously. One of the full-time workers at UberEats earn over 1,500

SG dollars a week and stated that working on platform like UberEats is better than delivery job at traditional fast food company (Leo, 2016).

Furthermore, job on food delivery platform also offers better salary for people who were previously limited by lack of required education degree. As can be seen in the case of one of the workers on Deliveroo who doesn't have a degree in tertiary education; he previously worked as sales agent and in construction sector but now switches to Deliveroo and earns over 4,000 SG dollars a month which is similarly to salary of white-collar workers (The Edge Singapore, 2019). Moreover, people with disabilities could also work on food delivery platforms as deliverymen. Although for now they are still a minority as they are only one percent of people with disabilities working as riders on Foodpanda platform and only 60 workers with disabilities out of 13,000 workers on GrabFood. However each company open policy indicates that the number is rising (Iso, 2019).

2.3 Platform Economy in Thailand

Platform economy or as many Thai articles and news called it 'sharing' economy is relatively new in Thailand. Many well-known companies in platform economy have opened and operated in Thailand only in the past few years ago. For example, Uber and Grab started operating in Thailand in the same year in 2014 while Airbnb started in 2015. Platform such as Shopee is even newer as it originally started operating in 2015. However despite only having a few years to establish themselves, these platforms are rapidly growing in Thailand. Uber operated in several major cities in Thailand such as Bangkok, Pattaya, Chaing Mai, Chaing Rai, Chonburi and Khon Kaen (*Interesting Annual Facts from Uber*, 2017). Grab is also growing fast as well; it is now operating in over 18 cities in Thailand (Grab Thailand, n.d.). In fact, it was also able to bought Uber and taken over all of its business in South East Asia in 2018 (Piyubon, 2018). Not only that, Grab also expands its business in Thailand further than just ride-sharing; apart from GrabTaxi, Grab also operating food delivery service, delivery service, motorbike service, and even becoming hotel booking platform by partner up with Agoda. Shopee and Airbnb are also prospering; with homeowners in Thailand making over 380 million Baht in 2018 by renting out their houses through Airbnb (The Bangkok Insight Editorial Team, 2019) and Shopee being the second most visit shopping platform in Thailand (Kure & Yasmin, 2019).

Apart from well-known platforms in the examples above, Thailand is also embracing the growth of platform economy as many platforms in various categories start expanding to Thailand along with the growth of local Thai platforms. According to PwC's report, platform economy has five major sectors; automotive, hospitality, finance, staffing, and media streaming (*The Sharing Economy*, 2015). All five of major sectors are expanding well in Thailand and not only are those transnational platforms that grow; many local Thai platforms are opening up as well. For example,

in automotive sector, Thailand has Drivemate (Kittiya, 2018) which is a car renting platform originally established and operating in Thailand. Or in staffing sector, there is BeNeat, a local Thai platform connecting housecleaner with people who are looking for cleaning staff. Media streaming sector such as Joox, Spotify and Netflix are also quite popular in Thailand but along with them, Fungjai, Thailand very own music streaming platform is starting to get popular as well.

2.3.1 Impact of Platforms Economy in Thailand: Controversies and Opportunities

Thailand is currently embracing platform economy as can be seen from the major banks adapting to online and mobile platform format (The Nation, 2018) and the growing platform businesses in Thailand. Leading Thai banks such as Siam Commercial, Kasikorn, Bangkok Bank and Bank of Ayudya are transforming their structure and opening up to the mobile platform format. This change signified how greatly how platform economy has impacted Thailand since its effect is apparent on major financial sector.

As shown in the previous section that businesses in platform economy are growing rapidly in Thailand, some has viewed it as good economic opportunity for Thailand as it will bring higher productivity while reducing costs and inefficiency in traditional businesses (The Nation, 2018; Manager Online, 2018). Formal vice-chairman of The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission also gave an opinion saying that platform economy could encourage the growth of local economy as it utilized underused personal assets and the money goes directly to workers without middleman therefore will increase personal income and reduce inequality (Naewna News, 2019). Furthermore platform economy also encourages creativity and competitiveness in the market which is good for market growth (Suchivoraphanpong, 2017). Thai government also encourages that by supporting tech startup (Suchivoraphanpong, 2017); Startup Thailand, 2018) and aims to promote platform economy as part of strategy for Thailand digital economy as can be seen in Thai economic masterplan “Thailand 4.0” (Teerakowitkajorn, 2018).

However despite the positive opportunities and potential, there are also controversies as well. The biggest clash is the one in ride-sharing sector as traditional taxi drivers and motorbike claimed that riders in platform economy taken away their customers. As can be seen from the news, taxi drivers in Thailand are extremely against Uber (when it was still operating) and Grab taxi. For example; in 2017, hundreds of taxi drivers gather in front the parliament to protest the legalization of Uber (*Hundred of taxi protest against Uber after NLA planned to legalize them*, 2017). Or in 2019, Thai Taxi Cooperative filed a complaint against legalization of Grab to Department of Land Transport (The Thaiger, 2019). And as for motorbike taxi services, over 2,000 motorbike taxi riders were protesting against Grab bike in 2018 (Songsakul, 2018).

This conflict did not only happen in Bangkok, it also happened in major city such as Chiang Mai as well (Kemasingki, 2017).

Furthermore, there is also a concern regarding exploitation of people who work in platform economy. According to study by FES (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung) which conducted research on platform businesses in Thailand namely Uber, Airbnb and BeNeat, it appears that providers/workers on Uber and BeNeat are concern about their wage from platforms as the income they gain is pretty low and they have to shoulder all the expense such as cars and cleaning equipment themselves (Shopova, 2018). The researcher, Akkanut Wantanasombut, viewed this as exploitation from platform owners because platform still benefit from business but now they don't have to pay as much for the costs and risks (Shopova, 2018).

Legal issue is another controversy. Ride-sharing platforms such as Grab and Uber are not legalized in Thailand yet and therefore create a legal vacuum. As cars used in ride-sharing platforms are personal cars and were not registered like traditional taxi, they don't have to pay tax which could mean the platforms are free riding on other people's tax (Juntiwarakij, 2017). Furthermore, as cars used in platforms were not registered under Vehicle Act as public car and therefore are personal cars, it means that the customers are not legally protected under Consumer Protection Act (Tanchalee, 2018).

2.3.2 On-demand Food Delivery Service Platforms in Thailand

Like any other type of platforms in platform economy in Thailand, the on-demand food delivery platforms are still quite new with the oldest one in the market being Foodpanda which begun its operation in Thailand in 2012 ¹. Despite being relatively new, the food delivery market is growing fast; food delivery platforms enjoy the annual growth rate of 10 percent during 2014 to 2018 (Kasikorn Research Center, 2019). And according to Kasikorn Research Center, in 2019, the business will grow over 14 percent from 2018, amounting to 33 – 35 billion Baht. In fact, it is one of the fastest growing sector out of all types of platforms in Thailand (Kasikorn Research Center, 2019).

Furthermore, the on-demand food delivery service is expanding continuously for five years in a row since 2014 to 2019. As can be seen from the graph below; its growth continues with an impressive rate; and if compared the growth in 2014 to 2019, in the span of just five years, its value skyrocketed almost over 10 billion baht. Moreover, the food delivery sector which is now worth of over 30 billion baht is making up to eight percent of growth in food industry (Sethethorn, 2019).

¹ Although there are other few on-demand services such Food By Phone and ChefsXP that have been operating before but they were operating through phone call and website, not applications and Food By Phone is now closed and is partnering up with FoodPanda.

Figure 4. Thailand On-demand Food Delivery Market Value.



Based on data from Euromonitor International, 2018 as cited in Thailand Food Delivery Report (Sethethorn, 2019)

As can be seen from the growth of the platforms, food delivery service is a growing market. Along with it, the growth in food delivery application userbase could also be found as well which is another indication of the food delivery platform rapid expansion. According to research, consumer behavior also shifts drastically as more people are now prefer to order food via application instead of going to the restaurants themselves. Over 55 percent of sample group have ordered food via food delivery applications. They also have used them regularly as the result from sample group showed that consumers order food via application on average of five to six times a month (SME One, 2019).

Currently there are three major platforms in on-demand food market in Thailand; Grab Food, Line Man and Foodpanda (Hicks, 2019) and all claimed to have the largest share in the market although none of them is willing to disclose just how much. Nonetheless, all three of them can claim to be the major platforms due to their size. Both Foodpanda and Grab Food are operating in in various provinces in Thailand as shown in their respective official websites; foodpanda.co.th and guide for driver on Grab website (*Where does Grab Food operate?*, n.d.); in fact, Foodpanda is operating in 18 major cities in Thailand such as Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Pattaya, Nakhon Ratchasima, Udon Thani, Hat Yai, and many more. Similarly, GrabFood is also operating in over 10 major cities as well. Most platforms only operate in Bangkok or few provinces for example; Foodranger is operating three provinces including Bangkok, Nakhon Ratchasima and Khon Kaen (Korat Colla, 2016). Therefore Foodpanda and Grab Food are significantly larger than the rest. As for Line Man, their food delivery service is branching out from their parcel delivery service which is already operating all over the country. Food delivery service via Line Man

got a huge userbase due to their established delivery service and the large amount of people who is already using the Line application. In fact, Line application has one of the largest userbase in Thailand with over 44 million accounts and over 15 million users on Line Man application (WP, 2019).. Furthermore, Line Man was reportedly the most popular on-demand food delivery service with the growth rate of 468 percent in 2018 (Feed News, 2019; Aripempon, 2018).

Furthermore, apart from userbase and branches which are significantly larger than the rest of food delivery platforms as mentioned above, all three platforms are reportedly widely-used especially in Bangkok. Foodpanda being the first one to enter the market in 2012 enjoy the growth of over 2,000 deliveries a day and is now partner with over 5,000 restaurants (Hicks, 2019). Grab Food and Line Man also enjoying the fast growing market as well. However many new players are also entering the market such as GET Food and Now Delivery in 2019, HonestBee in 2017, etc.

According to study (Makarapon, 2016), food delivery services can be divided into two major types; restaurant-controlled and independent. And on-demand food delivery service platform is categorized under independent type. The differences of on-demand food delivery from traditional restaurant delivery service are usage of application, delivery fleet and customer support. The platforms and deliveryman gain profits through gross profit margin and delivery fee (Makarapon, 2016). Furthermore, by using on-demand platforms which operating through mobile application, customers are able to find out how many restaurants are in their area and thereby have more choices as compared to traditional restaurant controlled delivery service. The comprehensive list of operating on-demand food delivery service platforms in Thailand which fit the descriptions above can be found below;

1. Grab Food
2. Line Man
3. Foodpanda
4. Skootar
5. Happy Fresh
6. Honestbee
7. Zabdelivery
8. EatRanger
9. Send Ranger
10. Now Delivery
11. GET Food

Most of the on-demand food delivery platforms use motorbike riders as their deliveryman. Motorbike is known to be advantageous for speed and agility which are the qualities required delivery service. Therefore there is no surprise that many food

delivery services use motorbike riders as their deliveryman or ‘partner’ as Grab called.

As stated above that deliveryman gain their incentive through delivery fee; below is the list of how delivery fee is calculated and charged on three biggest on-demand food delivery platforms namely Grab Food, Line Man and Foodpanda.

Table 1 Delivery fee and commission fee on Grab Food, Line Man, and Foodpanda

	Grab Food	Line Man	Foodpanda
Delivery fee	- 10 Baht within first five kilometers - 10 Baht per kilometers after the first five kilometers - extra charge on food fee depending on each restaurant	- Starting at 55 Baht - Plus 10 Baht per kilometer	- 40 Baht, no extra charge
Commission fee for platform	15 percent from delivery fee	15 percent from delivery fee	No commission fee as deliveryman doesn't get delivery fee per delivery but instead they get paid 100 Baht per hour

(Note: data regarding platform fee and commission fee are compiled from ‘Comparing on-demand food delivery platforms’, 2019; ‘Answering all your questions: LINE MAN – Grab Food – GET Food’, 2019; Robots, 2018)

CHAPTER III

AMIDST THE PRECARITY: WHO ARE DRIVING AND WHY

In this chapter, I examined workers' motivation in participating in platform work. I also investigated how each worker proceeded to engage themselves with the platform of their choice and how they viewed their work and the effect of it on their life. All of these were an attempt to answer two sub-questions of this thesis which were; how do workers engage in platform work and how do workers perceive themselves in relation to platform. Furthermore, altogether this chapter was an attempt to put together a life story of workers including their background which fuels their motivation in participating in platform economy, their process of engagement, their work's life and routine, and lastly, how they view their work.

3.1 Motivation in Joining the Platform Economy

In this section, I discussed the motivations each worker has in joining the platform work, in order to understand why workers chose to engage themselves with platform economy. Furthermore, in order to fully understand their motivation, I also examined their previous working experience.

As shown in introduction that at the period of Great Recession which aligned with the rise of platform economy, many had turned to the platform economy in order to make a living or earn income to make ends meet (Kaufman, 2014), it seems that people's main motivation in joining platform work was money. This was also supported by a survey of Uber drivers in the United States in 2014 which stated that 91 percent of Uber drivers' main motivation for working as Uber driver was to earn income to support themselves and their family (Hall & Krueger, 2017 as cited in Oppegaard, 2018).

The same thing can be said for the respondents interviewed in this study as well; most of the respondents' main motivation in becoming driver on food delivery platforms was to earn money. In fact, 12 out of 15 respondents' main motivation was money while the other three had chosen to work on food delivery platforms due to the flexibility of work hours. While not all 12 respondents were working full-time as drivers on the platform as some of them also had a full-time job but all of them had stated that their current and previous employment simply did not pay enough. The shortage of income was what motivated them to look for other job and eventually participated as drivers on food delivery platform.

Although the current and previous employment of the respondents were various, their monthly salaries were around the same base ranging from 14,000 to 17,000 baht, the amount which was not enough for their living expense as they had stated in the interviews. Somchai (Part-time Grab Food driver, 32 years old) said that despite his

full-time job as draftsman, the payment he received still was not enough to pay for his living expense as he got student loan to pay along with credit card and car debt. Similarly to Chatri (Part-time Line Man driver, 28 years old) who was working a full-time job as handyman at Toyota repair center, he said in the interview that his monthly salary of 16,000 baht was not enough and was the main reason he started looking for secondary job. Somchai even planned to transit from his current employment to work full-time in platform work as he told in the interview that he was in the process of quitting his current job and about to work as full-time driver on GrabFood.

Many respondents who worked full-time as drivers on their respective platform also gave similar answers to Somchai; stating that they left their previous employment as they could earn higher income through platform work. Three respondents who used to work as motorbike taxi riders said that they were experiencing a drop in their customers which caused their income to decline along with it. Therefore they decided to work full-time as Line Man instead. Sukrit (Foodpanda driver, 25 years old) who used to work in a factory also experienced a decline in his income as he noticed that the payment for overtime was getting cut and overtime hour was also reduced. He told in the interview that the monthly salary without overtime was not much to begin with and now with less overtime payment, he said that it had made his decision to switch job from being factory worker to Foodpanda driver “easy”.

While there were those who left their previous job for platform job, there were also those who worked part-time as well. In fact, out of 12 respondents who listed money as their main motivation for working on food delivery platform, six of them worked on food delivery platform as their part-time job (although one of them was in transitioning process of changing job to full-time platform work). And four of them also earned similar amount of income from their full-time job which was around 16,000 baht. Karn (Part-time Grab Food driver, 38 years old) who worked as government employee said that he was living “paycheck to paycheck” and wanted to earn extra money to improve his family financial situation. This was similar to Chatri’s remark regarding how his salary as handyman was not enough to pay for his monthly expense as shown in the abovementioned. Although they stated that they needed extra income apart from the payment from their current full-time employment as it did not pay enough, all four of them still insisted that platform work would remain their part-time work only.

Flexible work hour was another motivation listed by the rest of the respondents as the main reason they decided to become drivers on food delivery platform. Komson (Part-time Foodpanda driver, 25 year old) told in the interview that his previous employment as assistant manager of 7/11 convenience store had paid over 20,000 baht which was around the same amount he was getting from current employment as

Foodpanda driver and messenger of Kerry outsource company. He said the main reason he quit his previous job was not because he wanted to find a new job with higher salary but because his job as assistant manager was “taking too much time out of my life” and the fixed shift schedule which required him to rotate between night shift and day shift was too constrictive, so much that he did not have time to do anything else. So he decided to start working as GrabFood driver because he viewed that this kind of online platform work allowed more flexible work schedule. He later switched platform to Foodpanda which was still the platform he was working with currently.

Prasert also answered that the main reason he switched to platform work was because of the flexible work hour as well. Prasert was 28 years old and had been working as factory workers for many years before he moved to Bangkok. He told me that since he moved, he worked as merchandise stocker in a department store for two years before quitting due to work schedule conflict. The time conflict began when he started studying at Ramkhamhaeng University for his bachelor degree and found that his work schedule made it difficult for him to attend class and taking a leave to take an exam was also difficult as well. So he decided to quit and became a full-time driver on Line Man.

Although money was the main reason why he decided to leave his previous employment and became Foodpanda driver, Sukrit also had faced with the constrictive work schedule as well. He said that his factory work required him to work overtime in order gain more than minimum wage but working overtime usually meant that he had to work 12 to 13 hours a day which left him exhaust and barely had time for anything else “Every day I came home late at night and in a few hours I have to get up and go to work again. I did not even have time to do my laundry”. That was why the job on food delivery platform with the schedule he could manage himself was more appealing to him.

3.2 Limitations of Traditional Jobs

Others than the main motivation each worker had, to fully understand why they had chosen to engage themselves in platform work, we also needed to look further into the condition workers had faced in their previous employment; what condition had pushed workers into seeking out another job. We needed to understand the condition that prevent workers from getting what they wanted such desired wage, flexible work hour or good working condition, not only in their past employment but in potential employment as well. By doing so, we can understand the limitations of traditional job and how the differences of platform work could offer an alternative to it.

From the interviews, it appeared that the first condition in their previous employment that prevented workers from getting their desired wage was the *fixed position* in their job along with fixed payment. Six out of 15 respondents had said that the fixed

payment in their previous job although secure but they could not see it ever risen up any higher. Which made job as driver on food delivery platforms more appealing to them as one of the respondents, Pol, told in the interview “(in this job), you get what you work for; if you work hard, you get more money but if you work less, you will also get less money. It’s worth the work you put into.”. Pol, a 28 years old full-time Foodpanda driver, used to work as porter with salary of 17,000 baht. He said being a Foodpanda driver earned him almost double the amount of his previous job. Ruj (Full-time driver on all three platforms with main platform being Foodpanda, 27 years old) also said similar thing. Before started working as driver on food delivery platform, he worked as baggage handler in the airport. He said that his job as baggage handler without overtime pay only earned him around 14,000 baht a month and the work he put into it “was not worth it”. He said that the work was “exhausting physically and mentally. We only had 20 minutes between flight to carry the baggage down from the airplane and carry the new set of baggage up again. If we were late, we would get chew out by the captain and afterward our supervisor would also scold us. And we did this all day outside under the sun”. He told me that working as driver on Foodpanda and other platforms was just as physically tiring but he could earn more depending on the work he put into it so it was more preferable.

The bottom line was that most of the respondents used to work as temporary employee such as factory worker, porter, staff in department store, messenger for company and bank which gave them a steady payment but their job position hardly had any room for mobility or promotion. Even those who had a more secure job like Panya (Part-time Grab Food driver, 36 years old) who was a government employee also said that although his full-time work as government employee gave him a secure employment along with full benefits but he could see that working as GrabFood driver got paid worth the amount work he put in which was different from his job as government employee where he would get paid the same no matter if he work hard or work less.

The second condition was *work hour*. Although constrictive work hour was not an the main issue for most of the respondents as it appeared that only three of them had chosen platform work in particular due to its more flexible work schedule. However the flexible nature of platform work did offer an easy work opportunity for those who were constrained by schedule of their full-time work but still wanted to earn some extra income.

As stated, not all of the respondents were full-time driver on the platforms, four of them only worked on the platforms as their part-time job; two of them were government employee, one was a handyman at Toyota repair center and one was S&P restaurant employee. The four of them worked full-time from nine to five on a week day which took up most of their time and made it difficult for them to find secondary

job. Sukda who was working as S&P restaurant employee along with his part-time job as Foodpanda driver said that without Foodpanda, he would still tried to find another part-time job to earn more money but “without this kind of work (platform work like Foodpanda), I couldn’t see what job I could find as a part-time job, because any other type of job would totally conflicted with my full-time work schedule”. His reasoning was similar to other respondents who wanted to keep their stable full-time job but also wanted to earn more income as well as such Panya, Karn, and Chatri.

The third condition was *pressure and stress in workplace*. Power structure of traditional workplace seems to be one of the reasons that caused stress and dissatisfaction among the respondents. Although it was not the main reason that made respondents quitted or sought out other job but few had admitted that they did not like their previous employment working condition and atmosphere especially the stress and pressure that came from being subordinate and it did motivated them to change job. Prasert stated that he became Line Man driver due its flexible work schedule that allowed him to work and also attended his classes and exams. However he also mentioned that when he was working as merchandise stocker, he was under a lot of pressure from work “When I was working at the department store, I actually had two bosses because I worked for the company that was outsourced by the department store. So I was pressured a lot by both. It was mentally exhausting”. And he also said that the pressure was “one of the reasons why I quitted the job.”

Five other respondents also gave similar responses by saying that their previous employments were more pressuring mostly due to their position as subordinate and having a boss which made platform work more appealing to them. Pol told in the interview that although money was the reason he chose to work as Foodpanda driver but being his own boss and not being anyone’s subordinate was also an important factor that made him chose to become Foodpanda driver specifically. Furthermore, Parin (Grab Food driver, 24 years old) used to work as firefighter which was a government officer. He said that as government officer, he had to face a lot of office politic problem that came with bureaucratic system “I had to put up with the politic in the office, both from my boss and local politicians and their power struggle”. He also told me that local politicians had a lot of influences in the office and could order low level officers to be removed from their station. He said that he liked being GrabFood driver a whole lot better and part of it was because he did not have to deal with the stress of power struggle in the office anymore.

Interestingly, although work structure among motorbike taxi driver was not exactly like in regular office as it was looser and drivers were not subordinates under their leader, but according to the three former motorbike taxi drivers among the respondents, it seemed that it still retained a few rules and power structure. All three respondents told me that motorbike taxi driver each have their own assigned area or

zone that they could pick up their passengers but they could not cross over and pick up the passenger from another zone. It was an established rule. This rule made it hard for drivers to pick up many passengers because they were confined within their area as Veera, one of the respondents told in our interview. Veera had worked as motorbike taxi driver for 10 years since 23 before switching to Line Man. He said that “Motorbike taxi driver could actually earn more than being a Line Man driver but it all depends on your location; if your location is great then you could earn a lot but my location was not good”. He said that working as Line Man driver, he did not have to be bounded by specific location. The other two motorbike taxi drivers had also faced similar problem as their assigned location was not bustling with people so they had trouble finding passengers. But working through platforms, they could take customers from anywhere, so they could find more customers and also earn more.

Moreover, as stated in the abovementioned, it was not only conditions or limitations from workers’ past employment that should be considered, limitations that limited them from future or potential job should as be looked into. The main limitation that respondents had said to be what prevent them from getting job with their desired wage was education level. Nine respondents which were the majority of respondents had graduated high school or equivalent of 12th grade; four of them had high school diploma while other five had vocational certificate and higher vocational certificate. Two respondents had finished secondary education (the equivalent of 10th grade). And the other four had bachelor degree. Meaning that 11 out of 15 respondents did not have bachelor degree.

Low level of formal education could be an obstacle for obtaining a secure or high paying job as respondent 11 said in the interview that being company employee or government officer would require a bachelor degree which he did not have. Ruj also said that he would like to have a more secure job such as government official but with his degree he did not what else to do. Furthermore, he earned around 30,000 baht a month by working as Foodpanda driver and he did not know if there would be any other job that would pay this much “I graduated 12th grade, I don’t have a degree. What job could I do that would have earned me this much money?”.

The previous comment was similar to what Parin had told me; Parin was Foodpanda driver who earned around 1,000 baht and more per day. He said he could earn a lot for someone who only had a high school diploma. He also commented that platform work like being Foodpanda driver gave opportunity for people with low level of education to earn more money compared to usual job they did. Furthermore, Sukrit also echoed this sentiment by saying that platform likes Foodpanda or GrabFood was beneficial to wide range of people as it accept everyone.

Moreover few respondents also mentioned few obstacles or limits that they had faced in applying for other job but not their platform food delivery job. Pol said that he had

a full body tattoo which making it hard for him to apply for high paying job but he could applied as Foodpanda driver and earn up to 30,000 baht. Pong who worked as Line Man also mentioned the criminal record check. He said that despite the company doing the record checks as long as you did not record of committed serious crime, you wouldn't have any trouble getting a job. He mentioned that people who had petty crime record could also get a job there which marking the platform job different from others.

3.3 How Do Workers Engage Themselves to the Platforms

After examining the reasons and the stories behind why each worker decided to participate in platform work, in this section, I examined the process of how workers engage themselves to the jobs and to the platforms. To fully understand the process of engagement, we needed to take a look into how each worker start working on their respective platform and why. Therefore in this section I've discussed how workers first engage with the platforms, how do they find out about this specific prospect of a job, why do they choose to work on their respective platform and the process of applying for the job. This section combining with discussion regarding motivations and job limitations in two previous sections would contribute to answering the question of how do workers engage in platform work

3.3.1 How Did They Get Started?

In this section, I discussed how workers first got started with their food delivery job on their respective platform as there were many ways that workers could have found out about platform work and many factors that could have influenced that decision process in choosing one platform over another.

Firstly, among the respondents, almost half of them first learnt about the prospect of new job through word of mouth. Six of them said that their friends had recommended the food delivery job through online platforms to them. In the interview, respondents whose friend recommended platform job to them seemed to be interested because their friends said platform job could earn more money and that they could see their friends earn money from it which was a guarantee of platform trustworthiness in some degree. For example, Ruj said that his colleague was working as a Foodpanda driver and told him he could earn so much more money from the delivery job which got his attention and prompted him to try working as Foodpanda driver "After my friend told me, I tried working part-time as Foodpanda driver and after one month I quit my old job". Similarly to Komson, a Foodpanda driver also told in the interview that his friend specifically recommended Foodpanda to him by saying that he could earn more on Foodpanda than others which was how he decided to apply for the job.

Niran answer also confirmed that many got interested in the prospect of working through platforms through word of mouth. Niran was a motorbike taxi driver and he

had a friend working as GrabFood driver, said friend introduced him to the online delivery job. He also told me that a lot of motorbike taxi driver were now working through online food delivery platforms and a lot of them had introduced their friends to the jobs and that was how the words kept spreading.

However among the respondents, the majority of them actually got interested and started to apply for platform job because they saw many people working as food delivery platform drivers. Eight of the respondents answered that they saw drivers from platforms such as Foodpanda, GrabFood, and Line Man and decided to become one themselves without any recommendation from people they personally knew. Karn who was working as government employee said that he saw many GrabFood drivers everyday so eventually he decided to try working as one himself. Chatri who was currently working part-time as Line Man driver also had similar experienced “I saw a group of Line Man drivers hanging out near my workplace every day. So I wanted to try my hand on their job” and that was how he got started. Another person who got exposed to platform work through their workplace was Sukda, a 32 years old who was working at S&P restaurant. He said that many Foodpanda drivers came to pick up the food at S&P therefore he got to interact with them and saw how they worked. He told me that he got interested in the job and decided to talk to them about they work before applying himself. Other than that Somchai also mentioned that apart from seeing other drivers, he got interested because of the advertisement promoting GrabFood drivers. He also pointed out that people who got interested in platform job like him were often people who already wanted to start working and was diligently trying to work.

Lastly, there was one respondent who found out about prospect of platform job through YouTube video. Sukrit told in the interview that he watched YouTube videos about online food delivery platform drivers and got interested after seeing how much they could made. His way of getting start on platform work was uniquely different while others were learning about the work through their friends or experiencing them first hand by seeing and interacting with workers, Sukrit learnt about the platform works through social media platform. This indicated that there were many more ways especially via technology one could started to learn and get engage with platform works other than just basic word to mouth or firsthand experience.

After examining how workers first learnt about the prospect of platform work, the second part of this was to discuss reasons why workers decided to choose to work with their respective platform. From the interviews, one of the reasons respondents chose one platform over another seemed to be the delivery rate. Two out of five respondents who worked as Line Man drivers had told in the interview that they both had previously worked for GrabFood but switched to Line Man due to its higher delivery rate; Line Man started off at 50 baht for all delivery within the five kilometer

area and increased with the rate of seven baht per kilometer after. This rate was already higher than GrabFood as two Line Man drivers had said in the interview. Pong who had previously worked as GrabFood and Skootar driver also emphasized on the higher delivery rate Line Man driver got by saying that “I might go back to GrabFood (in case it got more popular than Line Man) but it will be really hard to let Line Man job go and go back to that because the delivery rate are so starkly different”. Similarly to Sukrit who worked as Foodpanda driver, he said that after finding out about the work via YouTube, he also did his own research regarding delivery rate of each platform and decided to go with Foodpanda.

Another reason being location, location was the main reason. Komson decided to switch from GrabFood to Foodpanda. He told in the interview that he used to work as GrabFood driver in inner Bangkok area but he found out that Foodpanda had as much job for the outer Bangkok area which was where his house located. So he decided to switch to Foodpanda in order to work near his house. Another reason the respondent decided to choose to work as Foodpanda driver being its application process. Respondent 15 said that he had chosen Foodpanda because the application process was easy and there was no application fee. And more importantly “They called me back soon after I applied. It made me felt like they really care which was different from other companies”.

The other respondents’ reason for choosing their respective platform was that they had a friend who worked on the specific platform and they just followed their friend who recommended the job to them; for example, few respondents such as Panya, Parin, and Prasert all had friends working on GrabFood and Line Man therefore they chose the same platform as their friends. While the rest of the respondents reasoned that as they got interested in the job by seeing many drivers from their platform of choice therefore that was how they chose their respective platform. As can be seen from Sukda’s case where he got to interact with Foodpanda drivers through his work and eventually decided to apply as Foodpanda workers as well. Few other respondents like Karn and Chatri also had similar reason as well. They both saw GrabFood and Line Man drivers often so they got interested and decided to apply on GrabFood and Line Man, respectively.

However while majority of the respondent worked solely on one platform; which was understandable due to the fact that already five of them or one third of the respondents had platform work as their part-time work therefore it made sense that they would not want to juggle working for too many platforms all at once. But there was respondent who worked on more than one platform too. Ruj worked on three platforms all at once; he worked as Foodpanda driver in the morning then switching platform to GrabFood and Line Man in the afternoon. He reasoned that each platform had its own

advantage and he chose to work on Foodpanda in the morning because at least he got paid hourly despite the slow business in the morning.

3.3.2 Application Process

After examining how workers started working in platform work on their respective platform, this section focused on discussing about the process workers had experienced when applying for the job. The application process of the three platforms; GrabFood, Line Man, and Foodpanda shared some similarities and had few differences which were discussed as followed.

The first thing that all respondents seemed to agree on was that the application process was easy. The process for all three required them to send in personal documents namely copy of identity card, copy of driver's license, copy of their compulsory motor insurance and copy of their bank book "It's just like normal job application process. Everyone can do it", Prasert had told me. Answer from Chatri who was also a Line Man driver echoed this sentiment as well "It was so easy. That's why there are so many people applying for it". And afterward workers were required to attend the one day training which would train them how to properly use the application as driver. The training seemed to be mandatory process for all three platforms.

However the documents and details each platform required in the application process had a few differences depending on the platforms. Foodpanda seemed to be the simplest one according to Sukda "I just went and applied at their headquarter. They don't require many documents, just identity card and driver's license. They don't require criminal record check". This made Foodpanda application process a bit different from the others two as respondents who worked for GrabFood and Line Man all said that their application process required they criminal record check. Komson who used to work as GrabFood driver said that he applied online, sent in documents and waited around four to five days from them to check his documents and criminal record. Veera, a Line Man driver also said that the application process was easy but the company did a strict background check on their criminal record. Other respondents from Line Man and GrabFood also mentioned the criminal record check although they did not seem to be bothered by it.

Another difference was application fee. Respondents who worked as GrabFood driver did not mention about application fee at all when talking about application process. It seemed that they did not have to pay the application fee at all and the answer on Q&A section on Grab Driver Thailand official website seemed to confirm this as well. As for Foodpanda and Line Man, the respondents who worked for the two platforms had talked about the application fee in the interviews. Respondents from Foodpanda said that they had to pay 2,000 baht in the application process although the company said that it was not an application fee "They said it was not an application fee" Ruj said

“But a fee for Foodpanda jacket and cooler box. It’s more like a deposit. If you decide to quite one day you can return it and get your money back”. While Foodpanda drivers had to pay for the deposit of their equipment, Line Man drivers had to pay 100 baht application fee which Niran, a Line Man driver had talked about in details. He told in the interview that while the application fee was 100 baht, the applicant had to actually paid 400 baht; 100 baht for the application fee, 200 baht as credit for the commission fee, and another 100 baht for criminal record background check fee.

It seemed that the main differences between the three platforms were the criminal record check and application fee. Although from the respondents’ answer, these differences did not factor much into their decision to apply for the job as most of them already decided which platform they would work for before applying in an application process. However the convenient and uncomplicated application process could also help encourage applicants to go through with the process and not switching to another platform. For better comparison the differences and similarities among the platforms’ application process can be found in the table below;

Table 2. Requirements and fee for GrabFood, Line Man, and Foodpanda Application

	GrabFood	Line Man	Foodpanda
Required documents	- Copy of identity card - Copy of driver’s license - Copy of compulsory motor insurance - Copy of bank book	- Copy of identity card - Copy of driver’s license - Copy of compulsory motor insurance - Copy of bank book	- Copy of identity card - Copy of driver’s license - Copy of bank book
Application Fee	-	400 baht - 100 baht for application fee - 200 baht as credit for the commission fee - 100 baht for criminal record check	No application fee but 2,000 baht as equipment deposit
Other requirements	- Criminal record check - Pre-service training	- Criminal record check - Pre-service training	- Pre-service training

Note: Complied by author using information from respondents

3.4 Platform Work and How It Affects Workers

In this section, I discussed and tried to paint a comprehensive picture of the platform work workers have engaged themselves in including their work routine, overall work environment such as colleagues, customers, risks, and work pressure. Furthermore this will also include the changes workers had experienced in life and income since they started working through online platforms. Lastly, this section will examine how workers view the effects caused by their work in the aspect of stability in life and income and how do they view themselves regarding to their relationship to the platform. Not only that this section was an attempt to answer question of how do workers perceive themselves in relation to platform but a part of it would also

contribute to answering the third sub-question of the thesis which was ‘how does working on online on-demand food delivery service impact workers in aspect of income generating?’

3.4.1 Work Life and Routine

There were two types of respondents; those who worked full-time and those who worked part-time and their work routine were obviously different due to the nature of their work. Therefore the respondents could be grouped into two groups regarding their work hour and routine as full-timer and part-timer. Those who worked as part-timers had their platform work scheduled around their full-time work hour resulting in them working in late afternoon up to 10.00 p.m. as they had to finish their regular job first; for example, two of the respondents were working as government employee so they had to get off work around four to five pm. every day and could only started working afterward. There were six respondents who were working as part-timer and most of them answered that the average hours they spent working as food delivery driver were around four hours per day on a weekday. Except Komson who had full-time job at Kerry Express outsource company with work hour ending at two in the afternoon allowed him more time for his job as Foodpanda driver. He said that he usually worked directly from two in the afternoon to 7 p.m. or later at night but the average was around five hours. As for weekend and holidays, four part-timer respondents seemed to prefer choosing to work on either Saturday or Sunday and saving another one day for resting and relaxing. Except Karn and Somchai who stated that they worked every day even on the weekend and only taking a break when there was another thing coming up or they felt like they should rest. But they did not slotted the rest day specifically every week like the others.

While for the respondents who worked full-time as driver on their respective platform, interestingly, no one arranged their work schedule to work five days a week and have two days rest like traditional job, all of them either worked six days or seven days a week. Five respondents who worked full-time on the platforms all stated that they worked six days a week and usually saved Sunday as rest day but it could be any day they wanted to take a break, there was no fixed weekend as Respondent 9 told in the interview. And the rest of the respondents all worked full-time seven days a week. This might seemed like a packed work schedule but many of the respondents said that they started working fairly late in the morning; Prasert said that “I started working around the time the department store open, so it’s around 10.30 a.m. and I got off work at 6.00 p.m. so it was not very late”. His schedule was similarly to that of Niran who started working at 10 a.m. and often got off work at 7 p.m. “but it depends on whether or not I make enough money like I intended to that day. But it usually just around 6 to 7 p.m. not later than that”. Other full-time respondents started working around 9 a.m. or 9.30 a.m. and finished working around the same time at six. All of

the full-time drivers did not work at night except Pol who worked until 10 p.m. in the evening.

Furthermore, it seemed that respondents who worked on platform full-time were satisfied with their regular work schedule. Ruj said that despite working every day but he got to finish working pretty quick in the evening which allowed him to fit other activities into his every day schedule “After work, I have more time to relax. Now I can go play football with my friends, spend time with my kids and go on date with my girlfriend”. Sukrit, another full-time Foodpanda driver said that compared to his previous job as factory worker which was also a full-time work, this job as Foodpanda driver allowed him more free time. He told me that he even considered finding a second job since he had time to spare in the late afternoon and evening,

However while full-time platform workers seemed to have more free time, some of the respondents who had platform work as their part-time job found that their work had taken over their free time. Karn, a father of one said that since he started working part-time as GrabFood driver, he “have less time to spend with my family”. Same as Sukda who told in the interview that since he was working two jobs, he had less “me time” and that “I don’t really have time to hang out with anyone anymore”.

Furthermore, each platform system has its own differences which affect the work process each worker had experienced. GrabFood system would automatically assigned each order to worker who had their application opened and was in near vicinity of the restaurant the order was made. Foodpanda also operated in the similar fashion except that according to the respondents when the system assigned their order, it would not show the destination driver had to delivery their order to; they would show only the order and the restaurant driver had to pick the order up which was the major difference Foodpanda had when compared to GrabFood. Sukrit, a Foodpanda driver also complained that not only the system did not tell the driver at first where was the destination they were supposed to delivered the food to, the system also did not give much details about the restaurant where the driver supposed to pick up the food either.

While the two platforms had fairly similar systems, Line Man system operated very differently. Instead of assigning order automatically, the system would show the orders and let the drivers decide whether or not to accept that order themselves. However what made it challenging was that many drivers could see the same order all at once so it became a race to click accept the order the fastest or else one could risk losing the order they wanted to another driver. This was the issue mentioned by few respondents from Line Man. Pong had said that “It was a lot of pressure as we all had to act fast and clicked accepts order before anyone else could”. Similarly Niran told in his interview that since there were many more drivers, everyone had to be really fast in order to accept the order they wanted. And due to that, nobody had time to read the

order detail before they accept it which meant they did not get to choose their order. He said that it seemed like they were forced to accept the order either way.

Ironically Foodpanda drivers actually wanted the Line Man system instead of theirs. Ruj told in the interview that many Foodpanda drivers had made a complaint to the company regarding their order system, suggesting that they should let drivers choose their own order instead like Line Man system. “But they (the company) said that they already paid us an hourly fee so we should accept any and every order no matter what” he said.

Despite the differences of the three platforms regarding their order assigning system, other characteristics of work such as working environment, colleagues, workplace’s pressure, and workplace’s problems were commonly shared among all respondents from three platforms. One thing that most respondents agreed on was the freer work’s environment as they did not have to take order from their superior or be responsible for their subordinate. Sukda who worked full-time job as S&P restaurant employee said that comparing the two job being Foodpanda driver was obviously a more relax work “My full-time job is surely more stressful, I have to be responsible for a lot of things including taking care of my subordinates”. Other than that, two former factory workers also mentioned the relaxed working environment due to the fact that they no longer have to operate under their superior and following strict rules in workplace. Similarly to Pol who used to work as porter and messenger for bank “Nobody tell me what to do or pressure me to take certain amount of order according to their own goal. It’s better than having a boss like my old job”.

However platform work had its own type of work pressure as Somchai had described as “They have different type of pressure. For my GrabFood job, the pressure comes from myself”. For the platform work, workers had to set their own goal on how much money they intended to make each day and worked accordingly to achieve the goal. Similarly to Somchai, few respondents who worked full-time on the platforms had said that they did feel the pressure to work hard despite not having any superior giving them an order. For example, Veera said that he felt pressured to take many orders a day in order to get the amount of money he had set as daily goal. He also said that as there were many more drivers on the platform (Line Man), it increased a lot of pressure at work since he felt like they all need to compete to get the order. Panya and Karn, two drivers from GrabFood also mentioned similar pressure they felt among their peers about needing to work more and compete against other drivers.

Apart from the common work pressure, respondents had stated few similar problems they had faced in their line of work. The main problem everyone had experienced being their customers. Most respondents stated that the major problem from their customer was sudden cancelation of their order which caused many subsequent problems for the drivers. Pong who worked as Line Man driver explained that when

customer cancelled their order, if the driver already picked up the food, in order to claim the money they had already paid for the food, the driver had to take the food went to Line Man headquarter. This process wasted a lot of work time and energy for driver. Many drivers ending up paying for the food themselves without notifying the headquarter; for example, Respondents from Line Man such as Chatri and Pong admitted that they would pay for the food themselves in case of cancellation in order to avoid the hassle that would follow.

Other than cancellation, many respondents had said that another problem was difficulty when trying to contact their customer. Chatri said that sometimes customers wouldn't pick up the phone or sent him a wrong location which made the delivery even more late. Pong said that few customers claimed that they forgot that they ordered the food and ignore his phone call. He said that sometimes he couldn't contact his customer and had to call the headquarter for help "The headquarter would tell me to wait while they try to contact my customer for me and sometimes I wasted 25 minutes before I could get a hold of my customer. In those 25 minutes I could have finished my delivery and took on a new order but instead I had to waste it by waiting around uselessly".

Moreover, it seemed that wasting time was a major theme of the problem workers had to face as Pol, one of the respondents from Foodpanda said that another problem he experienced was that sometimes customers ordered him to deliver the food directly to their room instead of coming down to pick up the food themselves which resulting in him wasting a lot of time trying to navigate unfamiliar building. Pol said that he can't waste that much time. "I need to save time" he explained "Because in one hour, I should be able to take at least two orders".

3.4.2 Payment and Changes in Income

GrabFood, Line Man, and Foodpanda all had different delivery rate and commission percent that platform took per order. Foodpanda was different from other two platforms since on top of delivery fee per order, they also paid hourly fee for their workers. Ruj said that hourly fee was one of the benefits Foodpanda offered better than other platforms. Sukda who worked part-time as Foodpanda driver for almost a year told in the interview that the hourly fee used to be as high as 50 baht which was why many drivers had preferred Foodpanda. But Foodpanda recently decrease the hourly fee from 50 to only 20 baht. This fee cut did result in many drivers leaving the platform, according to him. However respondents who worked with Foodpanda such as Komson still said that Foodpanda delivery rate was still high anyway.

According to all five respondents from Foodpanda, drivers were separated into four groups and each group had different delivery fee rate. The groups were categorized by workers' work hours; the first group was the group of drivers with the most work hours which meant that they also got the highest delivery fee of 50 baht per order. The

other groups got 45, 40, and 35 baht all proportional to their work hours. All five respondents have been working as Foodpanda drivers for a while therefore none of them was in the fourth group with lowest delivery fee. As for commission fee, respondents stated that they took three percent from the delivery fee per order. Which was not too much in respondents' opinion; "It's only three percent" Sukda said. Ruj, fellow driver from Foodpanda also said similar thing "I think compared to others; Foodpanda really takes less commission fee than other platforms".

The comment by Foodpanda drivers was seemingly true as respondents from GrabFood and Line Man said that the commission fee for their platforms was 15 percent and 17.55 percent per order respectively. However the delivery fee per order from both platforms was higher than Foodpanda; delivery fee for GrabFood started at 60 baht while Line Man started at 55 baht. Although Line Man took higher commission fee than the rest, many respondents from Line Man had defended them by explaining that three percent of the commission fee percentage was actually tax and drivers could request for tax refund by the end of the year. "So it is actually 15 percent" Chatri told in the interview. Niran also said similar thing as he reasoned he could request tax refund for the three percent back "so it (commission fee) is not too much". But not everyone was satisfied with the rate, Veera said that while the delivery fee for Line Man driver was high, the commission percentage was still quite a lot "If you make only 400 baht a day then it won't be enough because they will take 18 percent of that 400 baht".

Meanwhile respondents from GrabFood seemed satisfied with their commission fee and delivery rate. No one had voiced their complaint regarding the commission and delivery fee. "I'm okay with this rate". Somchai said "15 percent is fine by me since the company have to take care of a huge system for us". Parin said that GrabFood platform actually helped shoulder a lot of cost by itself "For example, the delivery fee is 60 baht but the customers usually pay around 10 baht and Grab pays the rest of the fee for us drivers". Furthermore, Kaew (Grab Food driver, 35 years old) stated that she thought GrabFood delivery fee was higher than any other platforms. The differences and similarities among three platforms in payment for clearer understanding can be found in the table below;

Table 3. GrabFood, Line Man, and Foodpanda Worker's Payment and Commission fee

	Grab Food	Line Man	Foodpanda
Payment per order	- 60 Baht per order and within first five kilometers - 8.50 Baht per kilometer after the first five kilometers	- 55 Baht per order and within the first five kilometers - 7 Baht per kilometer after the first five kilometers	- 20 Baht per hour as hourly fee - 50/45/40/35 Baht per order. The rate per order separated into four groups which divided by the amount of work hours each worker has
Commission fee for platform	15 percent from payment per order	17.55 percent from payment per order	3 percent from payment per order

Note: Compiled by author using information from respondents

Despite different delivery fee and commission fee, respondents from three platforms earned similar range of income from their platform work. Those who worked as part-timers said that they earned around 10,000 baht more or less per month. While those who worked full-time mostly earned around 25,000 to 30,000 baht a month. And 13 out of 15 respondents stated that their income has increased since they started working on their respective platforms. The other two who said that their income did not increase were Pong and Komson as they stated that their income from platform work was around the same amount as their previous work.

Respondents used their increased income in various ways. But they could be categorized into three major things; debt payment, long-term saving, and paying off general expense. Many respondents said that they used the income they gained from their platform works to help paying off their debt. Somchai said that he earned around 8,000 to 10,000 baht more from his job as GrabFood driver and he used the extra money to pay off his student loan and credit card debt. Similarly to Veera, a Line Man driver, said that he could earn over 30,000 baht a month and used that money to help pay off his long-time debt. He just finished paying off his long-time debt of 500,000 baht by using the higher income he earned from his job as full-time GrabFood driver "I felt like I've unlocked many things since I've started working on this job. It helped me recover from my bad financial situation" he said.

Furthermore many respondents told in the interviews that they used their extra or increased income to increase their saving. Six respondents all mentioned the obvious increased in their saving since they started working their platform job. Panya and Chatri were working on GrabFood and Line Man as part-time driver respectively and they both said that their income increased around 10,000 baht from their part-time job, allowing them to put extra 4,000 – 5,000 baht into their saving every month. They both did not have concrete plan for their saving as they were already in a stable

position with their full-time job but they said it was for emergency and ensuring their financial stability. Chatri also said that he wished to use his saving as budget for opening a small shop or restaurant.

Moreover, Niran who has been working as full-time Line Man driver for over a year said that ever since the end of last year, his saving has increased dramatically due to influx of orders on Line Man. "I think I save up almost 100,000 baht now ever since last year" he told in the interview. Three other respondent also experienced dramatic increase in their saving since started working on their respective platforms as well. For example, Ruj said that despite having to support his kid who was currently in primary school, he still had over 15,000 baht set aside for saving since he made over 1,000 baht a day, almost 30,000 baht per month. Moreover, Pol told in the interview that he did not really have long-term saving since he only made around 14,000 to 15,000 in his previous employment. But now he had his own saving since he could earn around 30,000 baht a month (which was similar amount of income as Ruj). He also added that "I don't really have time to spend money so I put them all in my saving". Apart from his own saving, he said that he could send more money to his parents. The money he sent increased from 2,000 baht to 4,000 baht per month since he now made almost twice the income of his previous job.

Aside from using their increased income to pay off their debt or put them into saving, the rest of the respondents said that they used income from their platform works to help paying for general expense. Komson who worked part-time at Foodpanda said that he used his extra income for daily and general expense such as food, utility bill, and such. This allowed him to set aside the income from his full-time job for his car and his house mortgage. Prasert and Pong also said similar thing; their income has increased compared to their previous job and they used the extra money to help pay for expense such as rent, utility bill, and car payment. Prasert said that extra income helped making his financial situation less tight each month. Same as Sukda who earned up to 6,000 baht an more from his part-time job as Foodpanda driver, he said that some months he had to borrow money from those around him to make ends meet. But since he started working part-time, he had enough money to pay for monthly expense without having to borrow from anyone and still had about 1,000 baht set aside for saving. His situation was also similar to Karn who said that he used to live from paycheck to pay check each month but extra income from his job as GrabFood driver helped improve his financial situation "a lot". He also added that "I also have extra money for some shopping, entertainment, and eating out at the restaurant".

3.4.3 Stability in Income, Work, and Life

Information from respondents revealed that the majority of the respondents had their income increased by participating in platform work and each respondent also used their extra income in various ways to improve their financial situation. However

increase in income did not necessary guarantee a stability of the income and neither a stability in how workers generate that income. This section worked to examine how workers viewed the stability of their own income and work. And also explored how work and income affect stability and security in workers' life as viewed from workers' perspective.

Stability meant less variation or being resistant to change. Income stability often meant steady stream of income such as fixed and stable income of government officers or office workers. Income stability also defined as stable employment since it indicated that one's income was less likely to change or decrease drastically. From the interviews, it was clear that many respondents thought of their income from platform work as less stable compared to other traditional jobs. Many reasoned that it was due to the inconsistent nature of income from the platform work "You don't know if you will make money that day. If the weather is bad then you can't work and basically get no money that day" Komson explained. He also said that compared to his full-time job even if he miss a few days of work, he would still get pay but for the platform work, he would get nothing at all. Kaew, GrabFood driver, gave similar reason as well "This job is not stable. There is nothing to guarantee your income. If it's raining then that would be it for you that day. I think normal, full-time job is definitely better".

Although the non-fixed income from platform work was what many respondents pointed out as its advantage over traditional job but on the other hand, it was what created the instability in workers' income as well. Income from platform work depended on how much one could work which mean that one could earn much more than minimum wage as they could from traditional job; for example, Ruj said that he had made as much as 42,000 baht in one month. However as much as one could earn, there was no guarantee for minimum wage in platform job either therefore their income could drop drastically. Veera said that there were periods where he could earn a lot and a period he could earn very little. This instability was what made him hesitant to call his job as Line Man driver stable "If you interview me months ago, I would have said that income from this job was very stable. But recently there were many new drivers so the amount of orders I got dropped down. So I don't feel like my job is very stable right now".

Pong's opinion was similar to Veera. He did not think that his job as Line Man driver made a very stable income and also said that he was more worried about his income because "It's more risky; when you make a lot, you make a lot but when you make less, it could be dramatically less". Other respondents who worked full-time on the platforms also voiced the same opinion regarding the instability of their income from platform work.

As for respondents who worked as part-timers, most of them viewed platform work as something that helped make their income from their full-time job more stable and

secure. But for their view on its stability, they shared the same view as many respondents who worked as full-timer. Karn and Panya were the two with most secure job as government employee and they said that compared to their full-time job, their platform work was obviously less stable “I do plan on working both jobs for a long time because being GrabFood driver really help with my income. But in my opinion, I prefer my full-time job and think it is more stable” Panya said. He also told the interview about his friends from GrabFood who were worrying over their income since they started to get less and less orders recently due to the influx of new drivers.

Furthermore, Sukda who worked full-time as S&P restaurant employee viewed his platform work as less stable not only for its non-fixed monthly wage but for its lack of employee benefits. “I actually thought about becoming a full-time Foodpanda driver” he said “But I changed my mind because at least my S&P full-time job is more financially stable. And I also get employee benefits, social security benefits, and pension when I retire”.

However there were few respondents who had different opinion and viewed that platform work and their current income from it as stable as well. Parin said that he viewed his job as GrabFood driver to be “very stable”. He said that “If you ask me about stability, I’d say if you prepare yourself and keep working steadily then this job is as stable as any”. He also pointed out that in his opinion financial stability and stability in job were two different things. Traditional job like government officer offered a very stable job “You could do drug in your workplace and still wouldn’t get fired” while platform job like GrabFood was able to offer a good income and that was stability in his opinion. “I think it depends on what type of stability you actually look for” he added. Similar answer was also shared by Somchai who was in process of transitioning from his current job to full-time GrabFood driver. He viewed his income from GrabFood as relatively stable and he also said that since he prepared a lot for the job by registering as insured person and buying accident insurance, he was not worry much about the instability in this job.

Ruj had compared his job on platforms such as Foodpanda, GrabFood, and Line Man to factory work and said that “I personally think that the income from this kind of job is better and even more stable since applications like these grow and expand widely nowadays”. And similarly to two previous respondents, he said he was not worry too much about instability in this line of work since he was well prepared by having accident and life insurance ready. However despite these, he also said that he still wanted to find a traditional, full-time job if he could.

Furthermore, stability doesn’t necessarily mean longevity. However, longevity could indicate stability. Therefore it is important to examine how each respondent planed their long-term plan in order to understand their full perspective regarding the stability in their income and work and how they affect their overall life. It was clear that none

of the respondents planned to on the platforms until their retirement age. But most of them said they intended to continue working through the platforms for quite a long time; many had said more than two years. Furthermore, interestingly, the respondents who worked as part-timers all said that they planned to work both jobs for a long time with no plan of quitting at all. For example; Panya had said that he planned to work as GrabFood driver along with his full-time job as government employee “I think I will work with GrabFood until it goes out of business. I earn quite a good amount of money from it”. Same as few others who said they plan to continue working until their respective platform goes out of business “I’m keeping my full-time job but I also have fun with this job as well so I want to continue working until the company goes out of the business” Sukda told in the interview.

On the other hand, as for respondents who already worked full-time as food delivery platform drivers, they did not plan to work on the platforms as long as those who were part-timers. Some of them such as Parin and Prasert said that they would like to continue working as GrabFood and Line Man driver but only as part-timers. Prasert said that for now he was working full-time as Line Man driver while studying at Ramkhamhaeng University but after he got his degree, he’d like to apply for other job such as government officer. However he also said that he would like to keep his job as a Line Man driver as well. He reasoned that while being Line Man driver had its own advantages, he would still like to have a more stable job and furthermore, being a Line Man driver had more risks than any typical job. Prasert said that not only that Line Man drivers had to bear risk of accident; their health also got affected as well. Therefore he wanted to lessen those risks by getting another job.

Parin also said that he would be looking for another job in the future “I might try working another freelance job along with GrabFood”. However his stance on the stability and risks of platform work was quite different from Prasert. He said that as his previous job was a firefighter, he thought the being GrabFood driver had almost “no problem at all”. He explained that the risks and stress he faced in his job as GrabFood driver were very little and easy to deal with which was why he preferred to continue working on platform for quite a long time. He also added that “People who really understand how to do this job usually won’t leave”.

However for the rest of the respondents who worked full-time on the platforms, they planned their long-term future without their current platform work. All of them seemed to only intend to work on platforms for a while to collect money for their saving. But despite that, the length of time the respondents had stated they intended to continue working on their platform work was quite long; many had said that they planned to work at least for another two years and more. For example, Pol who was currently working as Foodpanda driver said that he planned to work with Foodpanda for another two to four years. Afterward he planned to go back to his hometown and

use his saving to open second hand cars shop. Other respondents also had similar plan of starting their own business as well. Five of the respondents all had planned to open their own business after save up enough money. For example, Veera said he planned to work as Line Man driver for another five years then he would quit and open his own business. Somchai said similar thing; he planned to work as GrabFood driver for a few years before use all his saving to open his own business in selling livestock. Niran also told the interview that he wanted to open noodle shop back in his hometown after saving up enough money.

From the interviews, respondents explained that the reasons many of them did not think to working on the platforms permanently was because the instability they felt regarding the stream of income each month as shown above. Furthermore, few of them also mentioned that the risks from accident and health problem also factored in their decision to not making platform work their long-term and permanent job. Chatri said that his health has deteriorated since he started working as Line Man “I’m very exhausted every day since I have to be out in the sun and drive around all day. My body is aching and I think my health is getting worse”. Niran also mentioned the risk of accident in his line of work “Many drivers got into an accident because we need to hurry all the time and we also ride a motorbike which make the accident even more severe. Few drivers also died while working”. This concern for accident was also mentioned by various respondents such as Ruj who said that “It’s a risky job. You need to know your limit or else you could get into a serious accident” and few others who said that their platform job had more risks compared to any other job they’ve had.

3.4.4 Workers’ Perspective toward Their Works and Platforms

This section focused on examining workers’ view regarding themselves and their relation to the platforms in the aspects of work and income. I discussed workers’ perspective on their work; whether or not they think their work is beneficial for them and whether the benefit is worth their labor or not. Furthermore, this section further discussed how workers viewed their platforms and its relation to society at large in terms of its effects.

First of all, when asked with the question regarding their opinion on platform work benefits and whether or not the benefit is worth their labor or not, most of the respondents’ answers were positive. 13 out of 15 respondents said that they thought their work as food delivery platforms driver were beneficial and worth the amount of labor they put into. Most respondents viewed that despite the commission fee taken by the platforms and the cost of work, the payment they got in return was higher. Respondents had stated that there was a cost in working they had to bear themselves such as oil and/or gas fee, maintenance cost for their vehicle, and insurance payment. One of the respondent from Line Man, Ruj explained in details the expense most

drivers had to bear in their line of work “We have to pay more in order to compete with other drivers; I pay 800 baht each month for high-speed internet so I can accept my order faster than the rest, I pay 500 baht for maintenance cost to keep my motorbike in good condition, and another 80 baht each day for gas”. He said that paying a bit more was necessary in order to keep up good condition and compete in getting order with other drivers. “But compared to my old job, it’s totally worth the effort” he added. Komson also compared platform work to his previous employment at 7/11 convenience store in the same manner. He said “I pay 80 baht a day for gas but in one hour I make almost 100 hundred baht if I take two orders. Compared to three hundred something per eight hours at 7/11, the cost I pay for this job is more than worth it”

Other than the cost, respondents also considered the commission fee that was taken by their respective platform. In which many had said they thought the amount taken was reasonable enough. Somchai said that 15 percent commission fee was not too much since “(The companies) have to take care of a huge system for us”. Few respondents also said that the platforms helped bear a few cost for them as well; for example, Somchai and Parin from GrabFood said that GrabFood had accident insurance insured for drivers when they worked with the platform more than 250 hours. Furthermore, Respondent 5 added that GrabFood also gave them discount for motorcycle spare parts in case of maintenance check.

However there were Kaew and Pol whose opinions were different from the rest. Kaew who worked full-time as GrabFood driver had flat out said that the payment workers got from the platform was not worth the risk and the labor they put into. She recalled the experience of her motorcycle breaking down in the middle of nowhere and having to call her family for help and afterward having to pay over 800 baht for the food herself “Drivers have to be responsible for everything. The company doesn’t have much. There are a lot of risks. I don’t think it’s worth the money”. She also added that she thought this kind of job was better suited as part-time job but not full-time job since it was too risky. Pol also shared similar opinion although he did not stated that he think the work is not worth the payment but he also stated that he couldn’t say it was worth the risks and the exhaustion he had to face either.

Lastly, when asked about their opinions regarding whether or not platform work is beneficial toward people at large in the aspect of income and work opportunity, all of the respondents gave the positive answers. The common answers everyone seemed to agree on was that platform work like their food delivery job provided work opportunities for larger group of people compared to traditional jobs. Few respondents also said that it provided opportunities to earn high income for those who lack opportunity before. For example, Komson said platform work provided opportunity for “Those who lost their job” and it also gave opportunity to those who were

“rejected by big companies”. He explained that platform like Foodpanda which he was working on was more acceptable toward certain group of people such as people with tattoo or people with petty crime background. Similarly Pol said that platform work gave income generating opportunity to people with low level of education such as himself who only had high school diploma.

Moreover, Sukrit also mentioned how platform work was more open toward larger group of potential workers as well. He compared it to his previous job as factory worker “If you are older than 30 years old, you can’t even get a job at any factory anymore. They won’t take you. But this job is open for everyone even old people can still apply”. This was similar to Veera’s opinion since he thought that platform work opened up opportunity for various group and “Even if you are old like 50 or 60 years old, you can still take a few orders each day and earn some money for yourself”. Others like Prasert also shared similar opinions on the convenience of platform work which made it easily accessible for both workers and users. Niran said “This work is open for many group of people whether you are just college student or someone with full-time job who is in need of extra money. Everyone can work here”.

Furthermore, few respondents had said that not only that platform work was beneficial for workers like them, it was also beneficial towards restaurants on the platform as well. For example, Karn said that “It’s beneficial to every worker. The restaurants also have more customers. It helps boost the economy as a whole”. Same as Kaew who despite her negative view regarding the risks drivers have to bear also thought that platforms such as GrabFood still helped restaurants gain more money and customers along with creating income for drivers.

3.5 Chapter Summary

From the interviews and discussion as shown in this chapter, it can be seen that there were two apparent positive and negative traits of platform work. The positive traits being its flexibility which included not only just flexibility of work hour and structure of work but also the flexibility in worker’s criterion and entire process of admission. The criterion for worker’s application was loose and applicable for wide range of people since it disregarded any education degree, experience, or age.

Furthermore, the flexibility in nature of work itself was also open for more work opportunities as it allowed people to choose however many hour of work they would like to do, making it possible for people to do it as secondary job and not just limited it to being a full-time job. This flexibility also affected the income generating aspect as well due to the fact that the monthly salary workers got was not determined by the company itself but by the amount of work therefore there was no fixed salary. This factor made it so that worker’s monthly earning could rise higher as compared to their previous minimum wage. More importantly, it should be noted that for majority of respondents even those who worked on platform full-time, their income did increase.

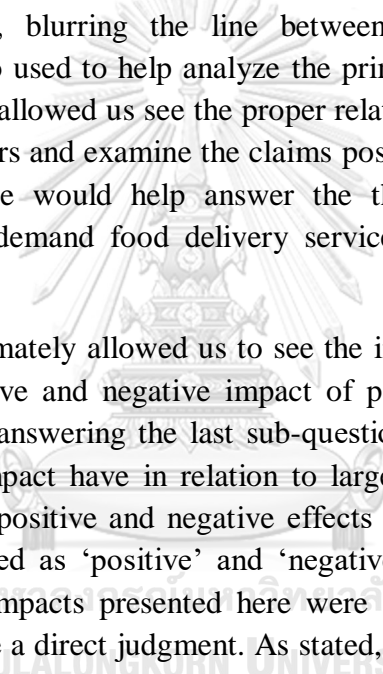
The increased income also assisted them in various aspects such as debt-payment and personal, long-term saving. All things considered, it seemed that this flexible characteristic could bypass certain limitations of traditional job.

Meanwhile the glaring negative trait of platform work also shown to be its precariousness and instability. This negative trait was also due to platform work's distinctive characteristic as well as its positive one. The flexibility of work and earning, in turn, created precarity in work life and affecting worker's life in general as well. From the interviews, it could be seen that lack of security in work and guarantee minimum wage put pressure on many workers, making them worked harder and took even more orders. Majority of them worked six days a week and few even worked seven days a week. This was quite worrying as people could be driven into overworking themselves while there was no one to take responsibility for it.

Moreover, it's important to note that despite their positive perspective regarding their work in aspect of income generating, many workers especially those who were full-timer felt the sense of instability and felt that they would need to change job eventually, sooner rather than later for something more secure and safe. This revealed a troubling aspect of platform work and raised question on risk of exploitation workers might have had to face, seeing that their work invoked quite strong sense of instability and insecurity.

Chapter IV

ANALYSIS: PLATFORM WORK, WORKER'S FRIEND OR FOE?

In previous chapter, I've discussed and shown the changes that happened to workers after participating in platform economy especially in the aspects of income and income generating. This chapter would focus on analyzing how and why the changes happened using the framework based on impacts and characteristics of platform economy which draw from existing literature in literature review. The chapter was sectioned based on positive and negative impact of platform economy which emerged from the literature and already established in the framework. Furthermore, the characteristics of platform economy namely; its network structure, distributive quality, non-ownership, blurring the line between casual and fully employed, traditional job were also used to help analyze the primary data as shown in previous chapter. By doing so, it allowed us see the proper relation between platform economy and its impact on workers and examine the claims posed in existing literature as well. More importantly, these would help answer the thesis sub-question 'How does working on online on-demand food delivery service impact workers in aspect of income generating?'.


Lastly, the analysis ultimately allowed us to see the implications these changes have in relation to the positive and negative impact of platform economy at large. The analysis contributed to answering the last sub-question 'What positive and negative implication does the impact have in relation to larger debate surrounding platform economic regarding its positive and negative effects on workers?'. But although the impacts might be labeled as 'positive' and 'negative', it should be noted that the positive and negative impacts presented here were aimed to show nuances in the impacts and not to make a direct judgment. As stated, the aim was to present how the impacts manifested using result from primary data and existing literatures at large and how they added to the bigger arguments surrounding platform economy.

4.1 Positive Impact

4.1.1 Anyone can be micro-entrepreneur due to decentralized structure of business model in platform economy

The most appealing claim of platform economy impact was that it allowed workers to become their own boss or one might even called it 'micro-entrepreneur'. The structure of platform economy which distributed control over resources to workers allowed workers to gain their autonomy. As power in business was not centralized, workers could be in charge of how much to put in their labor, how to use their resources, and be in control of their own payment. This seemed to be the case with online shopping platforms or accommodation platforms such as Airbnb. For example, Yokoo Gibran

went from full-time employee into owner of her own business of selling handmade scarves through Etsy, a platform marketplace (Sundararajan, 2016a) or house owners who rent out their room via Airbnb and made a proper business out of short-term renting as shown in study (Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018), where the sample house owners on Airbnb platform in Chaing Mai made their business almost hotel-like with more than one room for rent and influx of guests which required professional cleaning service.

However for workers on online on-demand food delivery platforms, their work was different. They were more like an employee than business owner. While similarly to those in accommodation sector or sellers in online market, workers on food delivery platforms were also in charge of their own labor and resources. However they relied much more on the platforms when it came to distribution of orders and pricing.

The interviews with respondents from GrabFood, Line Man, and Foodpanda showed that drivers had to rely on platform to assign them their order. Especially for GrabFood and Foodpanda as the system would automatically assign the order for them individually. Technically they could decline the order but there was limit on how many times they could decline. “You could only decline twice” Ruj, driver from Foodpanda told in the interview “More than that you could get banned from taking order for three hours”. GrabFood also had similar rules as well; if drivers declined or did not click accept the order to certain number, they could get locked out of the system. This meant that they did not get to choose whether to accept order or not.

More importantly, workers also lack of control over their work and work condition as evident in the case of Foodpanda workers where drivers had once sent in the complaint to their company regarding the order system that forced them to take every order. But their company declined their protest by saying that “they already paid us an hourly fee so we should accept any and every order no matter what” according to the words of respondent from Foodpanda. This lack of control also shown in other platforms as well since it appeared that workers had very limited channel for their own complaint regarding work. While each platform had call center to have solve problem between driver and customer, there seemed to be lack of direct channel for worker’s own problem regarding work or company policy which directly affected workers and not customers.

Out of the three, only Line Man had a different system which allowed drivers to decide whether or not to accept that order themselves. But according to the respondents, it became a competition of who could accept order the fastest since they were many drivers who were waiting for work. Many from Lineman said that nobody had time to read the order detail before they accept it. Niran, one of them, said that it felt like they were forced to accept the order either way.

Apart from the platforms' system of assigning order, the platforms had tight rein on the pricing as well. This might be the biggest different between workers on online on-demand food delivery platform compared to another type of platforms such as accommodation or marketplace. For example, in case of Airbnb, according to guideline on their official website, hosts were free to set the price of their listing however they want. Similarly, marketplace platforms such as Etsy or Shopee also allowed sellers to set the price of their products however their deemed fit as well. Sellers operated on marketplace platforms with freedom and control over the product price and their own payment.

However for the online food delivery platforms, as stated, the platforms had total control over pricing delivery fee and commission fee. The price were fixed and changed accordingly to the platforms without drivers input. For example, when Foodpanda lower their hourly fee from 50 baht to 20 baht, it caused dissatisfaction among drivers and many did decide to leave to platform. However it did not affect them much since the platform recruited new drivers all the time as can be seen from their official website that they were always open for new driver with no limitation on the amount of drivers. GrabFood and Line Man also controlled their drivers' delivery fee as well although most of the respondents did not seem to be bothered by the rate.

However even if drivers were not satisfied with the rate, much like Foodpanda, GrabFood and Line Man continuously recruiting new drivers all the time and thereby wouldn't be affected by drivers instantly quitting their job as a protest either. The choices were either to continue working or quit and find another platform which some of the drivers who were not happy with the delivery fee rate stated that they preferred to continue working for now. This method of recruiting large number of workers or 'surplus population' was observed as being one the ways to control workers by rendered them replaceable and making them 'invisible' to the company and to each other (van Doorn, 2017). This emphasized even further as it could be seen that drivers did not have many choices to choose from or voice out their complaints.

Apart from the rule on order declination limit, drivers on food delivery platforms also had to go through evaluation process. GrabFood had point system to evaluate their drivers. The system would deduct point from drivers if they decline order more than the limit or getting complaint or low rating from their customers. If any driver's point is lower than the standard, they would get banned from the system and have to go through training again. Furthermore, they would have to take five more orders as compensation for the point they've lost before the platform open the system for them again. Other platforms like Foodpanda and Line Man also had their own evaluation process as well. Respondent from Line Man said that they have rating system and the platform could ban drivers from the system as punishment. This could be seen as another form of control which some of the respondents also viewed it as such as well.

“The company controls us from higher up through this” said Veera, a Line Man driver.

It was clear that drivers’ relationship to the platforms was more like that of employee and employer due to the control platforms had over workers’ and their works. However workers still retained independence and control over some aspects of their work and payment. Firstly, workers were in control of their own work schedule. Workers could freely schedule their work hours and choose which day to work and to rest without having to follow the nine to five schedule of traditional work. This allowed them to choose any day that was convenient for them as their so called ‘weekend’. Although for many of them the weekend was not a fixed day and in case there was something else came up or they wanted to take any vacation, they could just choose any day and go.

More importantly, workers could arrange their work hours freely which was convenient for many as they did not have to be confined by tight schedule or conflicting work schedule which used to be the case for few respondents who had wanted to find part-time work. For example, Sukda with full-time job said that he could take part-time job as Foodpanda driver by arranging the Foodpanda schedule to be in the late afternoon and evening. He said any other part-time jobs would be conflicted with his full-time job since he wouldn’t be able to control his work schedule.

The control over work schedule also allowed workers to work more or work less depending on their capability and needs. Even though none of the respondents were working less than usual as of now but the control over their own work hour was beneficial as workers could still continue to work despite not being able to work from nine to five like in traditional job. Or even at old age when workers might be able to work only two or three hours a day, they would still be allowed to continue working on the platform to earn some money which was what few respondents actually had planned as well.

Other than the control over work schedule, workers were also able to control their own payment leading to the control of their monthly income. Being a business owner or entrepreneur had a perk of getting high income since they had no one to control or set a fixed amount of income one would be getting. Similarly, although workers on on-demand food delivery platforms were experiencing more control from their platforms resulting in a more of employee and employer relationship, but in the aspect of generating income, they still retained control over it. Respondents from three food delivery platform said that the advantage of working through the platforms was that there was no limit on how much income they could earn each month which was different from other type of job where the salary was already fixed. Respondents who worked full-time on the platforms all said that they could earn around 25,000 to

30,000 baht a month, much higher than their previous job. Some could even earn over 42,000 baht in just one month. Their earning depended solely on the amount of their work which in this case seemed to be of advantage for workers as they could earn as much as they wanted without having to face with restriction of fixed salary. These shown that platform work had less control over workers' salary and allowed workers to increase their income accordingly to their capability and their own goal.

In conclusion, it can be seen that workers on online food delivery service platforms had less control over their work as they had to rely on the system to specifically assign order to them and had delivery fee rate depended on the platform. Furthermore, it could be seen that workers had little influence over their platforms' decisions whether regarding delivery fee rate or regulations policy, workers did not have many channels to voice out their complaints and made the impact.

However, workers on platform still retained their own autonomy in the aspect of their salary and work hours. They could determine their own payment and work schedule. The structure of platform which relinquished control over fixed work hours and total control over workers made this possible. Platforms lessened their centralized control through the usage of technology that still allowed them to monitor their workers but also gave them more flexibility in other aspects as shown. Moreover, their less centralized structure allowed for larger group of workers which in turn gave workers more freedom to arrange their work.

But again, at the same time, this freedom could be a double-edged sword as shown in the abovementioned that since the company was capable of recruiting large group of workers at all time, it also less attentive to workers' protest and complaint which lessen workers' control in their own work and working condition. It also meant that workers could be considered disposable since they could be replaced even more easily than traditional work which seemed to the shared problem in platform work and other type of similar work such as freelance, gig work or various types of non-standard forms of employment (Garben, 2019).

Therefore although the claim that workers were similar to entrepreneur or micro-entrepreneur might not be true in this case for food delivery platforms workers, but the freedom and control they had were still apparent. The term "freelancer" or "independent contractors" (Murillo et al., 2017; Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018) seemed more fitting in their cases.

4.1.2 Direct benefit for workers as companies don't own any asset and therefore can't reap ownership benefits

Platform often function as mediator which connect people to one another and foster their interaction. Unlike traditional business model, company hold no ownership over assets. As platforms only act as the middleman, it limits their legitimacy to set too

high a price for their service as mediator. For example, Airbnb charges only three percent of commission fee for the host according to their official website and around six percent for the customer. In the case of online food delivery platforms; platforms don't own the restaurants and they don't own any resources drivers use such as the vehicle, fuel, and such. Therefore, the benefits they get only come from the commission fee.

From data in this study, it could be seen that the platforms set their delivery fee and commission rate roughly around the same amount. GrabFood and Line Man especially, since GrabFood had their delivery fee at 60 baht per order and 15 percent for commission fee while Line Man had 55 baht delivery fee with 17.55 percent of commission fee. Foodpanda delivery fee might start low at 35 baht but they also offered hourly pay of 20 baht and taken only three percent of commission fee. Not only for the food delivery platforms but the commission fee for other platforms such as Uber or GrabCar usually hover around 20 percent too.

With this limit, workers could get direct and full benefits from their work which seemed to be the cases with workers from GrabFood, Line Man, and Foodpanda. Most respondents were satisfied with the rate of delivery fee and commission fee of their platforms. And more importantly, this resulted in the satisfying amount of payment they got from the job. Even part-timer who said they worked around four hours a day on a weekday stated that they earned 10,000 baht more or less per month which was around the minimum wage of those who worked full-time in other type of job. While those who worked full-time mostly earned around 25,000 to 30,000 baht a month which was the amount that equal to some office workers and middle-level of government officer.

The payment per order also proved that workers got quite a high amount of delivery fee. For example, for Foodpanda drivers, even with those who had lowest delivery fee of 35 baht per order, in one hour most drivers still earned around 100 baht; as drivers usually was able to take two orders in one hour, therefore they could get the delivery fee of 70 baht combine with hourly fee of 20 baht, making it 90 baht already although according to the respondents they usually got more than that. Respondent 13 a former clerk at 7/11 convenient store compared his salary from 7/11 store to his income from Foodpanda as "I worked at 7/11 for 10 hours a day and still earned one time less than what I got from Foodpanda in three hours"

Furthermore, the increase in income and the accumulation of saving also indicated that workers could directly reap the benefit from their platform work more as compared to the traditional job they used to have. As shown in the finding, six respondents stated clear increase in their saving as result of their income from platform job; their accumulation of saving was visible as some accumulated over 100,000 bath over a year and not to mention monthly saving which few workers could

reportedly save more than 2,000 baht and more per month. Moreover, debt-payment could also indicate the accumulation of money for workers as well, seeing that workers were able to pay off their debt such as student loan or huge long-time debt.

It could be said that workers reaped higher and direct benefits from platform works as shown in the case of workers on food delivery platforms here which seemed to go according to what scholars in favor of platform economy had argued for such as (Su, 2018) who stated that people are now in charge of using and reaping benefits out of their property directly or (Sundararajan, 2016a) who had optimistic outlook that platform work was beneficial for workers.

Although one could argue that the accumulation of money the platforms could earn posed a question on whether or not the benefit really leaned toward the workers. For example, just in Thailand alone on-demand food delivery sector was estimated to be worth over 30 billion Baht (Kasikorn Research Center, 2019). Platform in other sector such as Airbnb also generated over 380 million Baht in just 2018 (The Bangkok Insight Editorial Team, 2019). However it should be noted that these amounts were not the profit because mentioned platforms and other major platforms were currently not profitable; for example, Foodpanda was not profitable in 2018 as reportedly stated in the news; the platform generated over 17 percent growth but their net loss widened five times over previous year (Pitchiah, 2019). Similarly to Grab, despite its expansion and high value of 76 billion dollars as reported in 2018, it still was “not profitable yet” (Trefis Team, 2019). Airbnb also lost over 150 million dollars in the operating loss and was not making profit during 2013 to 2015 (Mitra, 2016) before finally turned profitable in 2017 to 2018 (Dickey, 2019).

But one should also consider that workers and food delivery platforms in focus of this study were only a small sample. While workers in this study and focused platform could earn high amount of income, there were cases that said otherwise as well; as could be seen from the case of workers on Meituan, online food delivery platform in China who found it hard to generate sufficient income through their platform work due to high competition and high cost (China Labour Bulletin, 2018) or American Uber drivers who earned less than 4.50 dollars per hour, a stark contrast to tale of prosperity as showed here and also a stark contrast to some of their fellow workers who earned over 12 dollars per hour (Lamberti, 2019).

More importantly, the CEO and the executives of each platform still did profit highly from the businesses. For example, Rocket Internet the company which found Foodpanda sold Foodpanda to Delivery Hero in an exchange for 37.7 percent shares of the company which worth over millions of dollars (Husain, 2016). Anthony Tan, Grab cofounder was listed as one of Malaysia's 50 richest with net worth of 380 million dollars as Grab raised billions of dollars its fundraise in 2019 (Cunningham, 2018). Furthermore, Central group in Thailand spent 200 million dollars to acquire

shares from Grab Thailand (MarketingOops, 2019). Line Man was a localization service in Thailand and was a part of Naver Corporation a mega internet search engine and internet service content company worth over billions of dollars in stock market. Another important example was from Uber; Dara Khosrowshahi its CEO earned over 45 million dollars while Barney Harford Uber's COO (Chief Operating Officer) earned over 47.5 million dollars in total with salary of 500,000 dollars per month (Wolverton, 2019) (Johnson, 2019).

From these examples, it could be seen that the highest accumulation of money concentrated on the top among the company owners and executives. Owners of platforms gaining the most profit from the business was the issue that has been criticized by many (De Grave, 2014; Murillo, Buckland, & Val, 2017). Arthur De Grave observed that platform economy is business and therefore many are operating in the interest of accumulating the most profit for their shareholders (De Grave, 2014).

In conclusion, workers could experience higher gain of income by working on platform due to business model of platform which allowed workers to reap higher benefit from their work since platform only operated as mediator and had no ownership control over assets or labor. However the highest gain still belonged to the head of the company like in traditional business model. The reason for this was due to the structure of the platform business as well; the structure of platform allowed the platform to accept large amount of workers and expanded widely through usage of technology which was beneficial toward workers in the aspect of control as shown in the previous sub-section and more importantly, the structure that could expand widely in size including amount of workers and large base of users which meant it could generate high amount of revenue and increase its value, enabling the highest gain for the owners.

In short, it was the unique platform business model that made it more beneficial for workers but also made it capable of enabling most profit for its owner as well.

4.1.3 Accessibility allowed more equal opportunities for everyone to earn money including those who are at disadvantage

Platform economy is highly accessible for both users and workers since all platforms operate mainly through the internet and in the internet age where everyone has internet access along with smartphone and/or laptop, it is easy for increasingly large group of people to participate in platform economy. Not only that it is accessible as people could easily participate, it is also accessible as it is widespread in usage and public knowledge.

Online food delivery platforms have been widely used especially in Bangkok in the past few years. Everyone is getting used to seeing drivers from any of the delivery

platform working either driving by or coming in the restaurant to order food. People are also getting familiarize with using the platforms to order their food. The wide usage and popularization of food delivery platforms make it a job that is well known by public and thereby making it easy to apply. As can be seen from the respondents, majority of the respondents applied for their jobs at food delivery platforms because they have been familiarized with the work by seeing it in their everyday life; they saw drivers from platforms such as Foodpanda, GrabFood, and Line Man worked and decided that they could try their hands at it.

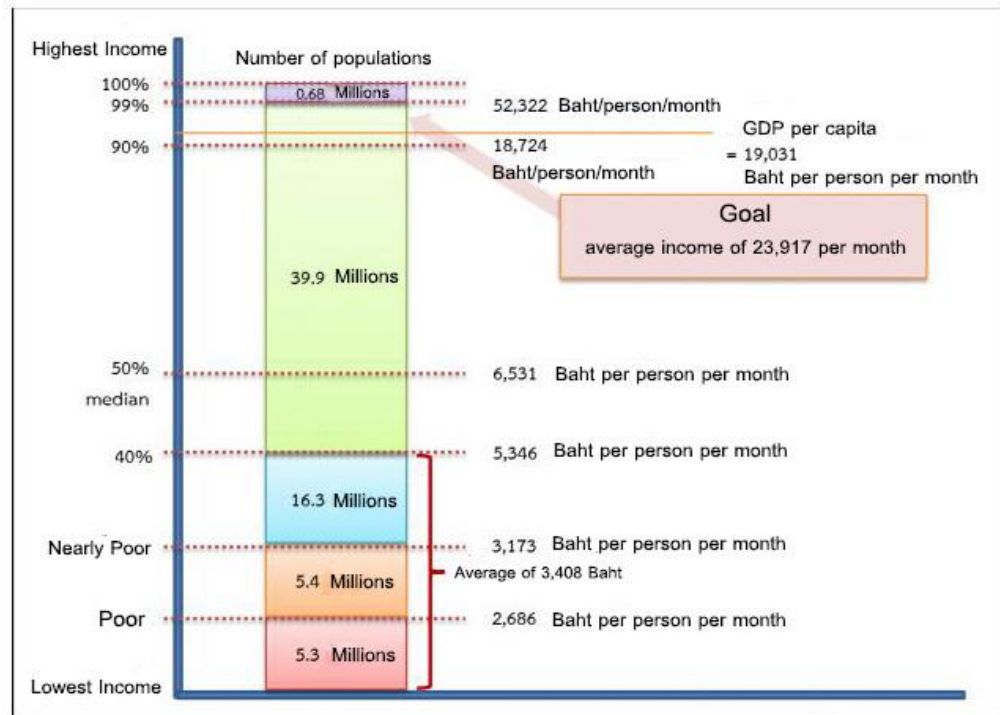
Not only that platform work was familiarize in public eyes and therefore making it seemingly easy to apply, it was also highly accessible since its requirements for workers were very few to almost none. According to the respondents and their official websites, GrabFood, Line Man, and Foodpanda only required their applicants to have their own vehicle and mobile phone as it was necessary in accepting order. There was no other requirement.

Lack of requirement made the work easier to apply to for everyone but especially those who used to be limited by certain requirements from applying for other type of job before. This advantage was shown evidently from the interviews with the respondents as majority of them said that their education level was one of the main obstacles that prevented them from applying for the job with their desired wage. Majority of them only graduated high school or equivalent of 12th grade. As stated before, low level of formal education could posed as an obstacle from obtaining a secure or high paying job; applying for government officer position which considered a secure and high paying job in a long run with good welfare required at least a bachelor degree. Furthermore, employment at private company with higher than minimum salary also required a bachelor degree or higher as well. For example, jobs with 20,000 baht salary and higher posted on job hunting websites such as jobsdb.com, jobkk.com, or Jobtopgun.com mostly stated in their requirement that the applicants should have at least bachelor degree.

However for job as food delivery platform drivers, this obstacle was not a problem for people who wanted to apply anymore. It should also be noted that not only that the platforms were open toward everyone regardless of any qualification, they also offered opportunity to generate high income. This was an important point as the opportunity to generate high level of income previously limited by constraints such as education level or type of job. As shown in the abovementioned, majority of respondents did not have bachelor degree and their previous employment salary was ranging from 15,000 to 20,000 baht per month with variation added by overtime payment. Regardless, it could be said that their previous salary was the average of monthly income as can be seen from NESDC graph showing maximum income threshold for each group of population in Thailand in 2017. From the graph, it can be

seen that bottom 50 percent up to 90 percent group which made up the majority earned average of 18,724 baht per month. This amount was still not up to the official goal of 23,917 baht per month and is also starkly different from the top 9 percent who earn the average of 52,322 baht per month.

Figure 5. Graph of maximum income threshold for each group of populations in Thailand, 2017.



Taken from Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council, 2018

But according to the respondents, by working as drivers on their respective food delivery platform, they've experienced the rise in their income. 13 out of 15 respondents said their income increased significantly; those who worked as part-timers said that they earned around 10,000 baht more or less per month which combined with their current income from their full-time job made their income increased around 25,000 to 30,000 a month. Similarly, those who worked full-time also mostly earned around 25,000 to 30,000 baht a month as well.

From the data, it appeared that their income increased from the average amount shared by the majority of population to the amount that exceeded official goal and even higher as some of the respondents could also earned up more than 30,000 baht a month. It was clear that platform work had provided more income generating opportunities by getting rids of limitations that were found in traditional job especially the limitation in applying for job which prevented workers from applying for job with higher wage and constrained them to job with wage that was lower than they desired.

Apart from being accessible due to its lack of requirement in applying, platform work was also made more accessible by simple process of job application. Respondents from three sample platforms all agreed that the application process was easy to apply as it only required personal documents namely copy of identity card, copy of driver's license, copy of their compulsory motor insurance and copy of their bank book which everyone already had in hand and could easily send in. Considering the application process, it was not surprising that each platform had no trouble recruiting large group of workers and able to attract people to apply for the job.

Therefore it could be said that platform work could expand income generating opportunity for people or more specifically it could provide opportunity to generate higher income compared to the traditional job. It was especially beneficial for people were prevented from earning higher income due to certain condition such as their education level since its accessibility and the application process that was easier and quicker allowed them to apply for the job that could earn them higher amount of income compared to their previous employment. This supported the claim that platform economy could help elevate income of people who were at this advantage. This case was similar to the finding done by JP Morgan Chase (Farrell & Greig, 2016) which revealed that people who earned their income through platform work were those with high income volatility.

However despite the fact that platform work was highly accessible, it was not exactly accessible for all. Platform work had very few requirements; it did not require any education degree, previous working experience, or any specific condition. It only required those who applied for the job to have their own vehicle, cellphone, and more importantly, a driver's license as they were necessary in order to take order and delivery it. Personal vehicle and cellphone were the items most people already had as basic necessities. But it was undeniable that this requirement had alienated some people from the job since not everybody owns a motorcycle or a car and even if they do have a car, they might not even have driver license. Furthermore, working as driver on food delivery platform required drivers to be familiar and proficient with technology in certain level in order to be able to work solely through mobile application. Not only that, drivers had to be literate enough in order read order and instruction.

The fact that there were certain requirements that not anyone could have in order to participate in platform economy was a concerning point that was observed in several studies. (Griswold, 2016) observed that people with more assets tended to benefits more in platform economy such those who own property like room for rent or car for rent more so than those who sold their labor. (Schor, 2017) also added further by pointing that this alienation in platform economy could widen the income gap instead of elevated it.

More importantly, as in order to work as driver, people who applied for the job had to be able-bodied since they had to drive. While this job might allow people with certain type of disabilities to work, it also prevented people with certain type of disabilities from working as well. Furthermore, *gender* seemed to be another limitation. The claim that emerged from existing literatures had shown platform work as expansion in working opportunity for women; for example, data from Airbnb and Homestay.com had shown that women were the majority of host listed on the platforms and ride-sharing sector such as Uber and Lyft in the US also had higher percentage of women driver compared to traditional taxi drivers (Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018).

However that didn't seem to be the case here as out of 15 respondents in this study, there was only one female driver. This pointed out that there might be gender issue in on-demand food delivery work space. From female driver's perspective, she felt that there were much more male drivers. This factor seemed to differentiate and isolate her from her peers. Furthermore, while a few respondents who worked late at night such as had no problem working at night, one even said that he preferred working night over day but however female driver said she tried to avoid it and felt that it was more unsafe and risky.

It appeared that the number of women in the type of platform work that had been traditionally dominated by men were still significantly smaller than their male counterpart despite the open recruitment policy of the platforms. The issue was prominent in ride sharing service as well. Few numbers of studies had done research regarding this problem; similar to result as found in food delivery service in this study, women were held back from working in ride sharing platform by obstacles such as concern of their safety and financial barrier. The research by International Finance Cooperation (IFC) surveyed 7,357 female Uber drivers from various countries around the world including Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, and the United Kingdom and found that over 60 percent of them cited safety as a reason why significant amount of women did not want to participate as driver in ride sharing platform (International Finance Corporation, 2018).

Moreover, financial resources to access car and other types of vehicle seemed to be another obstacle that people have underestimated. According to study, women were less likely to own cars than men; only 42 percent of people who planned to buy a car in 44 countries were women. However, this percentage was just average percentage from all regions; the gap in percentage was even larger in each region especially in Asia, Middle East and Africa.

Another important obstacle to consider was social norm. Driver job was almost exclusively men's job; for example, in Thailand, driver job of all types such as motorbike taxi driver, taxi driver, trucker, deliveryman, chauffeur for private

company or government sector mostly taken up by men. Therefore it seemed atypical for women to take up job as drivers and it was possible that many weren't even considering it or were objected by family and friends. Research by IFC found from the interviews that some of women drivers from their sample groups from Egypt and Indonesia faced objection from their families as they viewed driver job unsuitable and uncommon for women. Moreover, interviews with male Uber drivers also revealed that many of male drivers didn't want their female family members to become an Uber driver (International Finance Corporation, 2018).

As can be seen, there seemed to be more barriers which preventing women from entering platform work than compared to men. These factors indicated that platform work or at least in work space that was previously male-dominated, platform work still could not make their work space inclusive for women.

4.1.4 Flexibility in work hour and nature of work from the merging of casual job and fully employed job

As discussed in the first sub-section, platform work allowed workers more freedom especially in the aspect of work schedule. This was due to the less centralized control platforms had over their workers; meaning that instead of full-time traditional employment, the platforms opted for working with workers like they were freelancers instead. Platform work was a mixture of traditional employment and freelance job because its nature was to act as middleman between workers and customers. Therefore the platform did not employed workers as much as mediated the interaction between workers and customers who wanted to hire them to get their task done. However as platform grew, it also behave like traditional company. This could be seen in the case of online food delivery platform with its control over delivery fee and evaluation process which made the relationship between platform and workers became like that of company and employee. However it was clear that there was much more flexibility for workers compared to traditional job.

The flexibility in work schedule was advantageous for workers. This was especially evident in workers who chose platform work as their part-time job as flexible nature of platform work offered an easy work opportunity for those who were constrained by schedule of their full-time work but also in need of extra income. People with steady full-time job but low level of income could apply for platform work as their part-time job and arrange the work schedule freely to match with their full-time work schedule as was the case with part-time driver respondents in this study.

From the interviews with part-time driver respondents, it could be seen clearly that the flexibility in platform job allowed them to arrange work hour for two jobs without them conflicting each other. As they all work full-time from nine to five, they were available for work only in the late afternoon. Moreover, three of them also already

worked six days a week for their full-time work which made it more difficult for them to add in another part-time job. Part-time job such as part-timer in shop or restaurant often required shift that fixed on opening hours of department store and required fixed hours per day which was difficult for people with full-time work schedule to adjust to.

However as the result from the interview showed, by working as food delivery platform drivers, workers could arrange their work schedule accordingly to their own time and convenience. They could work late in the afternoon or if their full-time work required overtime, they could also arrange for their part-time job to be a night shift easily. More importantly, for those who worked six days a week for their full-time, they could choose to work only in the late afternoon and save one day for resting or easily switch to working seven days a week as they deemed fit for them since there was no fixed schedule. For example, Sukda, one of the respondents worked full-time at S&P restaurant six days a week, he slotted Sunday for Foodpanda but switching between working all day and half a day depending on his convenience and he also said he was able to take a day off whenever he wanted.

4.2 Negative Impact

4.2.1 Workers have to be responsible for any risk and damage in job and have to pay for any cost themselves

The prominent negative claim regarding platform work was the risk of exploitation. As stated that nature of platform was to act as mediator between workers and customers, therefore anything that happened in the interaction between workers and customers was technically out of the platform direct responsibility. This pushed the risk and responsibility that came with the job on the shoulders of the workers while the platform could still benefit from the commission fee and expand their business due to lower transaction cost as they now offloading some of the cost and risk workers instead (Murillo et al., 2017; Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018). Furthermore, the platform was also free from obligation to give workers any employee benefits such as health insurance or pension (Murillo et al., 2017).

From in interviews, it was found that majority of respondents felt that they had to bear more responsibility from accident risk and problem in delivery process. Despite having the companies providing them with accident insurance, many still felt insecure and few also decided to get an accident insurance themselves. Furthermore, it should be noted that the accident provided by the platforms came with certain condition that could make it difficult for workers to claim them in case the accident happened. For Foodpanda, there was no insurance for part-timer regardless of how long they have worked with the platform. Foodpanda only provided group insurance for full-time driver who worked longer than six months (*Foodpanda, a high paying part-time job*, n.d.)). While for GrabFood and Line Man, they provided insurance for drivers who have taken more than 250 orders, according to drivers.

Most companies usually got group insurance for their employee including Foodpanda. Although there was no specific information on Line Man and GrabFood but it could be assumed that they provided group insurance as well. Group insurance for accident usually covered case of death and disability caused by accident and covered any hospital bill within the insurance credit.

However the risk of accident as a result of being on the road all day was higher than other type of job especially for those who worked full-time on the platforms. Risks of accident that could happen were high and the damage that would follow in physical damage was more costly than any compensation insurance could provide. It was reasonable that workers would feel anxious about their safety. Furthermore, according to the interviews, this worry was also confirmed by many cases of accidents among drivers and some of the accidents also resulted in death.

The risk was one of the reasons why, despite the admitting that they could make more money through platform work, most respondents who worked full-time had no plan of working on the platform permanently. It appeared that they seemed to intend to work on platforms for a while to collect money for their saving. It could be seen that the combination of physical risk and risk of instability in work life made many hesitate to make platform work their permanent job or integrate it into their long-term life plan.

Apart from high risks of accident, there was also risk of health problem as well. Since drivers had to be on the road, it was inevitable that they had to face air pollution from various sources including gas emission from cars, fine dust, waste, fire, and more. The health problem was obviously not covered in any insurance the company had given drivers which meant that drivers had to take precaution themselves. This was also one of the reasons few respondents such as Pong wanted to quit the job as he reasoned that he needed to save himself and quit after reasonable amount of time before his health got worse.

However unlike the risk from accident, only few drivers had mentioned the risk of getting health problem. But if considering it in longer timeframe, health problem could be even more worrying than risks of accident since it still could affect their health in the long run even after they quit the job and there would be no compensation for that from the platforms

Apart for the risk in accident and health, drivers on food delivery platforms had to be responsible for damage that happened to the food during delivery and in case of customer' order cancellation, sometime they had to be responsible for the payment too. This was a common problem among drivers. Since drivers from all three platforms had to pay for the food first, sudden cancellation from the customer after drivers already ordered and picked up the food would often mean that the drivers were responsible for the payment themselves. Although all three platforms had policy that

the companies would be responsible for all the payment in case of cancellation from the customer but the process of contacting the platform headquarter in order to claim the money back was too complicated and wasted too much time, many respondents said they often paid for the food themselves.

The same type of problem could be found in other platforms as well. People in ride-sharing service still needed to shoulder risks that come with taking passenger and all type of cost that came with it. Same as Airbnb owners and workers in other types of platform especially service platforms. This was due to the business model of platforms and how it operated, the relationship between platforms and workers lessen responsibilities from platform companies and lessen the legitimacy workers could demand it from them. Study by Niels Van Doorn had also observed this and rightly called it 'immunity' which enforced on the company itself (van Doorn, 2017).

It could be seen that despite the platforms' attempt (however feeble) to provide some form of benefit such as insurance and take responsibility for problems that happened during the job, workers still had to shoulder much of the risks and responsibility by themselves.

4.2.2 Instability in income and job

Since platform work is similar to freelance work combining with traditional fully employed job, workers work in a way that is similar to gig work. It could be said that they work from one order to the next with no long-term contract to guarantee the next work at all. This could affect the income of workers leading to instability in the income and could eventually lead to job change. Instability in platform work is another characteristic of negative effect that emerged from existing literature. In literature review, there were cases of workers in service type of work in the platform economy such as ride-sharing and food delivery service who had experienced instability in their income as they participated in platform economy. For example, full-time Uber drivers in the US were faced with decline in their income which forced them to work almost seven days a week in order to get by (Laughlin & Reyes, 2019). This was also the case with workers on Meituan, a popular online food delivery platform in China as well. According to the news, workers were having the hard time generating the same amount of income as they used to due to wage cut and higher cost. They said that their income was not enough to support their families anymore (China Labour Bulletin, 2018).

It was interesting to note that the sense of instability seemed to be prevalent among respondents in this study as well although majority of them had yet to experience any significant decline in their income from their platform work. This was due to the reason that although there was not a significant decline yet but the income from platform work could change inconsistently. Since there was no guarantee for fixed salary each month, workers' income could be various depending on how many days

they could work and how many order they could take. These were factors that could be affected by many things such as weather condition, day off, holiday, traffic, and more. Compared to traditional full-time job with fixed salary, despite missing a few days at work or in case of emergency, workers would still get at least the regular salary each month while in platform work they would get nothing. In this aspect of stability, platform work was clearly less stable.

More importantly, although majority of the respondents haven't experienced significant drop in their income but Veera who worked as Line Man driver told the interview that in these past few months he noticed that the amount of orders he got had lowered noticeably which resulted in his income dropping. He had worked as GrabFood driver before switching to Line Man. He said that the order from GrabFood was dropping so he decided to move to Line Man but now Line Man order also dropped as well. "Recently there were many new drivers" he said "so the amount of orders I got dropped down. So I don't feel like my job is very stable right now". The fact that he changed platform twice due to significant decrease in income from both platforms further highlighted the instability that platform workers had to face.

As stated before, stability doesn't necessarily mean longevity. However like inconsistent change in income, tendency to change job could be an indicator of lack of stability in job which motivated workers to change job. Study found that 70 percent of online workers often changed job after six months due to lack of work and low and inconsistent wage (Ross et al., 2010 as cited in Wantanasombut & Therakowithkajorn, 2018, p. 18). This, however, slightly differed from the result found in this study as only five respondents has been working on the platforms less than six months while other ten all have been working on the platforms for longer than six months and up to one year.

It could be seen that the majority of the respondents has been working for quite a while. Most of them also had a long-term plan of working as food delivery platform driver; many had said more than two years. However it should be noted that there was a different between respondents who worked on platform as part-timer and full-timer; the respondents who worked as part-timers all said that they planned to work both jobs for a long time with no plan of quitting at all but the respondents who worked as full-time drivers all emphasized on their plan of quitting the job after saving up enough money. It seemed that respondents who worked full-time on the platforms all acknowledged and were worried over the instability of their job.

It seemed that instability was linked directly to workers' financial dependence on platform work. The more dependent workers were on their platform work, the more instability they felt especially in financial aspect. Study by Schor also brought up similar point as the study found that the more dependent workers were on the platforms for their income, the more precarious their platform works were which

included instability in their income as well (Schor et al., 2017). The main reason for this was that they felt like there was no guarantee for their income each month and therefore their income could change drastically from high to low. Therefore it was difficult for them to feel secure or feel that they could rely on the income from their platform work.

This contrasted starkly with the attitude from workers who did not rely on income from platform as their main source of income; for example, Panya, a part-time GrabFood driver stated that he could see many of his colleagues at GrabFood who work full-time worried over the drop of order or influx of new driver because it could directly affect their income. But he himself was not worry since he already had stable income from his job as government employee and actually planned to work on platform for a long time.

It can be concluded that workers in platform work had to experience fluctuation in their income each month whether high or low since there was no fixed minimum rate for their salary and the nature of platform work was similar to a gig job. Furthermore, there were many factors that could affect their monthly income such as weather, day off, amount of workers in the area. These factors could cause that income to fluctuate either high or low. The fluctuation, in workers' perspective, indicated instability in the income they got which worried them especially for workers who relied on their income from platform work as their main source of income. This concern also emphasized further by respondents' long-term plan to quit their platform job and either find traditional job or start their own business.

4.2.3 Companies and/or platform owners benefiting without providing for their workers

It had been mentioned in literature review how precarious work has been increasing since 1970s due to global marketization which led to increase competition in the market. Free market competition pressured companies to cut the cost in order to maximize the profit. This resulted in many companies outsourcing workforce and increase of temporary workers as can be seen in expansion of “flexible labour arrangement” in United States and Europe in 1970s and onward worldwide (Betti, 2018). Moreover changes in government's regulations such as uncooperative stance toward labor union and favor toward businesses owners also contributed to this phenomenal (Kotz, 2018) as the states wanted to promote economic growth which they believed was the path for “progress” and “development” (Gamble, 2006 as cited in Hewison & Kalleberg, 2013). With this belief, the “flexible labour arrangement” was also normalized by government in Asia countries as well as in the western countries.

Platform work has especially been criticized in this aspect since its characteristics encapsulated the very definition of precarious work including short-term contract, self-employment, lack of regulation, little to no employee benefits, and lack of job security. Lack of job security is clearly evident in platform work as illustrated in the two previous sections especially with lack of guarantee for minimum monthly income and lack of long-term employee benefits such as compensation for termination of contract or pension which made respondents felt insecure and viewed their platform job as unstable. Due to this, many had criticized that platforms used these characteristics of precarious work to their advantage and maximized their profits by providing workers with the least amount of benefits and job security. There was a worry that platforms were free-riding off of their workers and traditional business model; for example, in case of financing for social security, platforms did not have to cover that for their workers and it raised question on whether or not “digital platforms free riding on the traditional economy” (Behrendt et al., 2019).

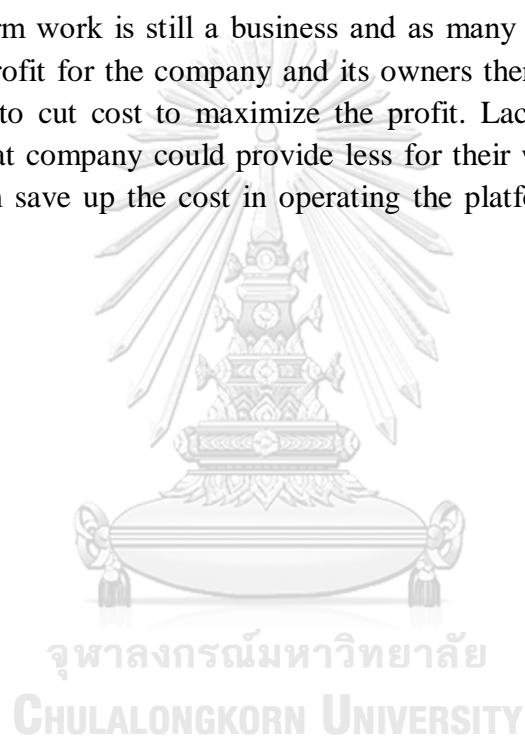
According to the interviews with the respondents, it seemed that they did not give much consideration to this aspect of their platform works and did not view it like they were being taking an advantage of. However, Respondent 2 did voice out that he thought the platform (Grab Food, in his case) did not have to pay much for any cost since they were only the middleman “It’s a win-win for them. It’s like they gain all the profits for free”.

Furthermore, it was clear that various benefits that provided by companies for their employees were not provided in platform work as information provided by respondents showed that workers took measure to ensure their security and stability by themselves including getting accident insurance, paying for social security fund continuously from their previous employment, and saving up for when they eventually quit their platform job as they acknowledge that they wouldn’t be getting pension or compensation money from their platforms no matter how long they worked for them. It seemed that platform work transferred some responsibility and cost onto worker.

Moreover, some measure of job security such as social security fund was a mandatory requirement that workers and companies in traditional business had to comply while platform companies did not but instead relying on workers to either pay for it as continuation from their previous employment or seek out another measure to secure that work security and stability themselves. This also implied that not only that platform work pushed responsibility and cost onto their workers but also free riding on the regulations required in traditional businesses. These types of problems were similar across platforms as presented in various sources; for example, Uber drivers had to deal with heavy maintenance cost themselves which sometimes even excess their income from the platform (Lamberti, 2019).

However, food delivery platforms in this study did bear some semblance of traditional business in the aspect of employee benefits. As showed in the previous section regarding whether or not workers had to be responsible for any risk at work and bear the any cost that come with work themselves, it appeared that online food delivery platforms did provide some of the employee benefits that was similar to that of traditional business for their workers including accident insurance, bonus, and discount for maintenance cost payment. But it was clear that the benefits provided by the platform could not be compared to employee benefits in traditional business since it was still lacking in many aspects such as paid leave, paid vacation, retirement fund, or even pay raise.

In the end, platform work is still a business and as many had said before; business' goal is to make profit for the company and its owners therefore it is undeniable that they would have to cut cost to maximize the profit. Lack of traditional employee benefits means that company could provide less for their workers which would also directly help them save up the cost in operating the platform and the business as a whole.



CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

Conclusion: How Impacts of Platform Work Affects Workers' Stability and Job Precarity

From the study, it was found that platform work benefitted workers the most in the aspect of work opportunity since it provided a more accessible work opportunity compared to traditional job; platform work offered easy application process and few requirements for the applicants. All the respondents voiced out their preference for the uncomplicated application process. Many also admitted that education requirement had prevented them from applying for job that offered high amount of income before. However platform work helped providing them opportunities to earn the similar amount of income.

Furthermore, the accessible work opportunity could also be found in its flexible nature of work which especially beneficial toward people who choose platform work as their part-time job in order to generate their secondary income. It can be seen from the respondents in this study that platform work flexible work schedule allowed people who already employed by other full-time job to work on platform as their second job. Which according to them, would not be possible otherwise due to the constraint of their full-time job. It could be seen that some of the obstacles found in traditional work which prevented workers from getting job or reaching their desire income were eliminated by characteristics and nature of platform works.

Apart from work opportunity, platform work was able to enable workers to generate more income. According to the study, majority of respondents saw the rise in their income since they started working as food delivery platform drivers. Their income increased passed their previous employment income or in case of part-timer, helped add to their current income and increased them as well. Furthermore, their income increased from the average monthly income, according to the statistic from NESDC, to the amount exceeded official goal.

However despite the positive impact in the aspects of income generating, the questions of stability and precarity workers had to face were still apparent. The major concern felt by workers was the instability of their income. This concern was due to the major fact that platform work provided no long-term contract from customers or the platform itself since customer only interact with workers through platform for one time task. Also as platforms only provided place for interaction, they were under no obligation to offer workers long-term contract or had any obligation to behave like employer in traditional business model. Therefore there was no guarantee monthly wage for worker and no fixed minimum wage for them either. With no guarantee, workers' income could fluctuate widely; they could earn much higher than average income but the earning could also drop drastically as well. Lack of guarantee and

fixed minimum wage caused workers to feel uneasy and constantly question the stability of their income. Furthermore, workers were also aware of how dependent their income was on various factors. They have experienced how factors such as bad weather, traffic jam, vehicle problem, or even slow internet connection could directly affect their income. More importantly, workers have also experienced the increase competition caused by influx of new workers which directly resulted in decrease in customer orders per driver and affected their income as well.

Moreover there were risks that workers had to shoulder themselves such as risk of accident and health problem. These were risks that were not covered by the platforms or customers who were their supposed 'employer'. Despite platforms' attempt to provide accident insurance, it was not guaranteed that it would help cover much expense for workers in case the accident did happen. There was no guarantee for long-term problem of health issue workers risk getting from their work either since platform work did not provide health care, employee benefits, or pension like those in traditional employment. These risks also made workers felt reluctant to stay for long in this type of employment.

The instability in income and the instability workers had felt and experienced regarding lack of long-term contract and welfare were the indicators of precarity. It was clear that the platform job was precarious as it offered no job security and remained unpredictable even for those who have been working on it for a long time; those who worked on platforms for longer than year still experienced the inconsistent change in their income and acknowledged the precarious position of their job.

It appeared that the more dependent workers were on their income from the platform, the less secure they were regarding their job and stability of their income. When comparing the part-timers and the full-timers, it was clear that people who worked on platforms as their part-time job viewed their platform job as something that helped them generate their secondary income and only helped making their monthly income more secure and stable. They did not experience sense of instability and precariousness of the job. On the other hand, people who worked full-time on the platform viewed their platform job as precarious work that they couldn't permanently depend on due to fluctuated income and lack of any guarantee for income and employee benefits.

However despite the precarity in platform job, it appeared that the precarity might not be unique or highly different in the platform job as compared to traditional job. Workers in this study came from various employment backgrounds such as factory worker, motorbike taxi driver, department store clerk, government employee, porter, and baggage handler. While many had said that their previous job had the advantage of fixed salary which secured their income per month, however their income also appeared to be fluctuating widely as well. Especially in the case of factory worker,

motorbike taxi driver, and porter, their income depended on various factors such as overtime payment, tip from customers, and the amount of customers they had each day. The unpredictability of their income and the drop in their income caused by various factors were also what drove them to leave their previous employment and sought out work on online platforms in the first place.

Furthermore, previous jobs that majority of workers used to have also run the risks of precarity as well. Factory works run risk of being laid off especially as one got older, according to one the respondents. Porter, baggage handler, and store clerk could also be laid off as well depending on the company profits and growth. Respondent who used to work as baggage handler at the airport said that due to economic slowdown, the company was not making as much profit and tried to cut down workers' overtime payment, decreasing their income a lot which forced many to quit the job themselves. Moreover, traditional employment workers previously had did offer employee benefits such as life insurance, paid leave, social security fund, and bonus which was the benefits and security platform work could not provide. However it should be noted that platform work at least in the food delivery sector also tried to offer similar benefit such as insurance, bonus for driver who delivered passed certain amount of order, payment for maintenance cost. And according to many respondents in this study, they also kept on paying for their social security fund despite working on the platform job and not obligated to any longer.

Furthermore the increase of workers' personal saving due to their platform work income should also be taken into consideration. Majority of workers in this study saw the increase in their personal saving and few used the saving to pay off debt and release themselves from bad financial situation. Increase in their saving also played important part in workers long-term plan for their future such as having their own business or retiring to the countryside as the money helped made the plan more concrete and achievable. More importantly increased income helped workers mitigate the tight financial situation they had each month due the fact that their income was not enough or almost not enough to pay for all the expense. It could be said that increased income helped elevated their financial situation of living from paycheck to paycheck.

As stated, platform work offered work opportunity and good chance to generate more income. However its precariousness, risks, and instability were also undeniable. It might be more productive to look at the positive and the negative sides in the way that one of the respondents Parin had described "We need to ask ourselves, what do we look for in work nowadays? Are we looking for financial stability or job stability?". It could be seen that working on the platforms did elevate workers' financial situation to certain extent and offer certain stability to their financial situation as well as could be seen from their saving. Workers were able to secure their financial situation in certain way by having increased saving, paying off debt, and not relying on other people

money as some used to do when their income was not enough to pay for the expense of the month.

As stated in the abovementioned, financial stability and job stability could be linked to one another and affected each other. However they were not exactly the same thing. Therefore while admitting that platform work could have positive impact of workers' financial situation and stability, it was also crucial to remember the precariousness the job contained. Lack of job security and guarantee for minimum salary and welfare made workers vulnerable which workers themselves had admitted of being worried and concerned.

It seemed that platform work was able to offer better opportunities at income generating as compared to traditional type of work. However, as shown in the abovementioned, workers themselves viewed the job as lacking in job security. Many of them, as can be seen from the respondents in this study, were struggling to find the balance between the opportunity platform work could offer and the security they sought after in a job. It appeared that workers had to weight between what they thought was the most important to them at the moment and prioritized it first. Which for many, seemed to be the work opportunities they could find within the space of platform work. They focused first on earning their income and elevating the strain of their financial situation. Most of them accepted that there was lack of job security in their line of work but choosing first to put the concern aside.

Moreover, most workers also already had planned to mitigate the risk that came from lack of job security. Many had chosen to work for a while to earn money before quitting for more secure employment; nobody saw themselves working platform job for life. It could be said that workers simply tried to balance between the benefit they would gain from this work opportunity and job security by allocating their top priority which was generating income first. If the opportunity with this workspace became limited or if they have lessened the urgency of this first priority, workers would move on in the future to another type of work and their other priorities such as job security and stability.

But it was important to note that lack of security in job or precarity was also found in workers' previous employment as well as showed by respondents in this study. Even with traditional job, they were still facing the risk of easily losing their job and sudden cut in their salary. The level and severity of job precarity might be different but it seemed as if workers had only just traded one precarity for another.

This supported the argument that precarity in job was a common phenomenon which was expanding widely in various economic sectors and not unique only to platform work (Garben, 2019) which should also be taken into consideration . Jobs such as factory work and company's employee were subjected to organizational changes

including wage cut, downsizing, and restructuring which made the employment fell under one of the categories of precarious work (Hewison & Kalleberg, 2013). These changes in jobs that previously considered as relatively stable such as factory job or full-time company employee indicated the continuing trend of transformation which changed what once considered stable and 'formal' sector into informal sector. Moreover, the service sector which was the large part of global economy including Thailand and consequently where many respondents also came from, had also increasingly relied on temporary workers and workers with short-term contracts, making employment more insecure as well (Hewison & Kalleberg, 2013).

As shown in the abovementioned, in the aspect of precarity in particular, it is could be seen that the distinction between platform work and traditional work was getting harder and harder to distinguish. This indicated problem in large scale for economic and labor sector. This was why thing that was considered as negative impact of platform work should be discussed in a way that was not total rejection and not in a standpoint that such negativity was only unique to only platform work. But it should also consider the wider context of current economic and employment situation and focused on exploring and discussing of how to lessen and rid of the negative impact on workers. By doing so, it would help address the problem of job precarity that was becoming global phenomenon. And in the long run, it could potentially elevate workers' protection, rights, and benefits for the better.

Moreover, as stated that platform work could offer better opportunities in regard of income generating for workers, positive impacts of platform work should also be discussed and explore in order for us to figure out the best way for workers to reap benefits from the platform. Furthermore, it seemed as if workers in platform work might have to choose between high payment job that could offer them financial stability and job that could offer them job security and stable, steady payment. However what important was that they should not have to choose at all; a job should contain both financial stability and job security. Therefore this was why positive and negative impacts of platform work should be discussed and explore in order for us to be able to maximize its benefits and minimize its drawback.

As shown before, at least in food delivery sector, it could be seen that few platforms had attempted to offered employee benefits and welfare similar to traditional employment although the attempt was at a minimum effort. However it was a positive sign and good starting model of how platforms could protect and help their workers mitigate job precarity. Further step and study should be taken on how to keep the higher than average payment workers got from their platform work and at the same time, improve job security and welfare platforms could offer their workers. This would require a study and discussion further than workers protection but also the discussion of platform work business model itself as well. But lastly and most

importantly, it was crucial to discuss and study platform economy in its layered impacts both good and bad without placing it on either side of the dichotomy of inherently good and inherently bad.

Recommendations

As stated before, apart from identifying and contributing information to the debate regarding positive and negative impact of platform work, this study also aimed to contribute in finding the way to improve platform work in order to make it more beneficial to workers and if possible, society at large. Therefore the sections below were focused on discussing the way that the negative impact and issues as identified in the previous chapter could be lessened and what to focus on in future studies and researches in order to explore the topic further and contribute more meaningfully to the body of knowledge.

Recommendation 1: Platforms should prioritize their workers as much as their customers and set up effective channels for their workers to voice out their complaints and opinions on work policy.

It seemed that the most common problem among workers on platforms in this study was that workers had to take a lot of responsibility for their customers such as being responsible for payment in case of sudden cancellation or any inconvenience that rendered the delivery impossible. Most workers had to be responsible for the payment despite platforms' policy that the companies would pay for them in case of sudden cancellation. This was due to the fact that there was only one way for workers to claim compensation fees which was to go to the company's headquarter with food as evidence. This method proved to be inconvenient for workers and rather inefficient.

To lessen this problem, for a start, platform companies could establish new methods for workers to claim their compensation fees in case of cancellation either by having them take pictures of food and send it to the headquarter or setting up help centers in various locations for workers to go to instead of having them come to the headquarter in the inner city area themselves.

But more importantly, it was even more crucial for platforms to set up a better and effective communication channel with their workers. As previously shown that customer service although helped mediate problems between workers and customers, would prioritize customers first, making more responsibility fall on workers' shoulders even when they themselves also faced problems beyond their control and responsibility. Furthermore, it appeared that customers had an effective way of voicing out their complaints and opinions or just better communication with the platform in general compared to workers; seeing that customers had a rating system to evaluate workers' performance and customer service that prioritized them first. While for the workers, it seemed that they did not even have an effective way to communicate with their

own platform and voice out their complaint or opinion on policy that affected their work directly as can be seen from example cases of Foodpanda drivers ineffective complaints regarding their hourly fee cut and lack of channel for workers to negotiate and response to company's policy.

Workers should have an effective channel of communication to voice out their problems to the company. The company could set up different help center for workers separately from customer service and set up system for workers to regularly comment on problems they've faced or what could be improved by company and company's policy to make their work better and more efficient. Moreover, workers should be encouraged communicate effectively with each other as well. By communicating among themselves, they could make their voices stronger and gain more bargaining power. This could encourage company to be more responsive to workers and might help truly solve problem from bottom up.

Recommendation 2: Platforms should differentiate between full-time workers and casual, part-time workers and make their regulations accordingly

From the data in this study, the differences between part-timer and full-timer were clear. Full-time workers experienced precarity in their work than those who worked part-time, most noticeably in financial aspect as they relied on platform work for their mandatory income. However it was also noticeable in other aspects such as work life, work pressure, stress, and risks as well. Full-time workers had to deal with higher pressure to work and take more orders. Not to mention higher physical risks from being on the road for longer amount of time and overworking themselves as illustrated by example cases of full-timers in this study which showed that some of them even worked seven days a week without taking a break and some worked from morning to late at night. Compared to part-timers, part-time workers on platforms felt less pressure and had more secure financial stability due to their steady full-time job and clearly reaping the beneficial side from platform work while experiencing less negativity.

From these cases, the two types of workers were clearly different in various ways and yet the platforms still treated them with the same rules and regulations. In platforms' eyes both of them were similar to freelancer. While it was true that both types of workers were not fit in the standard form of employment especially those who were part-timers but for full-time workers, their work and relationship with the platforms bear more resemblances to that of traditional employer and employee relationship. As already mentioned, many problems that full-time platform workers faced might not be as severe or even applicable for part-timers. Therefore it would be appropriate for platforms to treat them accordingly to their different conditions.

By differentiate workers between part-timers and full-timers, platforms would be able to deal with workers' problems and manage them more effectively. Especially regarding the issue of precarity, as it appeared that the more dependent workers were on their platform work, the more precarious their work and life were. To tackle this issue, it was clear that the focus should be on full-time workers first. Platforms could start by setting a different set of regulations for full-time workers in order to mitigate this problem specifically. The main problem on precarity was the lack of guarantee for minimum monthly as safety net for full-timers to fall back on which was due to their independent status which functioned like that of part-timers when their conditions were different in many ways. For this, platforms should at least set minimum monthly wage for those who were full-time workers and have been working with the platform for certain amount of time.

Furthermore, the risk of overworking especially for full-time workers was quite concerning. The pressure to earn enough income could drive them to work more than they could handle as could be seen in some cases where workers worked seven days a week and more than eight hours a day. Although some platforms had tried to prevent this risk by limited the maximum hours of work one could work per day but the providing of minimum monthly wage and the regulation for maximum days one could work in a month could also help lessen the problem even more. And in a long term, it would also help lessen risk in health problem as well.

Apart from these suggestions, it was important for the platforms to remember that their workers were highly different and one set of rules and regulations wouldn't do to cover and successfully manage them all. Platforms in general were already highly dynamic and adaptive to local community and situation as could be seen from how they adapted to local laws and how they operated by constantly adapting to needs and trends of their customers. Platforms could adapt this dynamic approach for their internal management as well.

Recommendation 3: Government and/or policymaker should take this as a starting point to call attention to all non-standard form of employment

Although there was a connection between precarity and platform work, platform work was still only a part of growing precarity in non-standard form of employment which included many more types of employments such as temporary staffs, contract workers, freelancers, and others. This phenomenon of precarious work has been growing in various sectors even before the boom of platform work. However, seeing that platform work has been expanding rapidly worldwide, the local government and/or policymakers should take this as an opportunity to start tackling the problems that come with non-standard form of employment.

Moreover, in order to tackle the problems, policymakers should have a better understanding of the ever-growing and ever-changing non-standard form of employment. Policymakers should collaborate with platforms to learn about the condition of work and problems workers had to face in this type of employment. The knowledge would help them better plan their policy accordingly and could also be applied to other types of non-standard employment. Furthermore, the knowledge could help policymakers understand the phenomenon of precarious work at large and eventually could lead to policy that is more inclusive and not just limited to workers in traditional employment in various areas such as minimum wage, social security, and employee protection.

Recommendation 4: Policymakers should develop technological literacy within workforce

Technology played an important role in platform work and was increasingly important in various sectors as well. The analysis showed that workforce in platform work needed to have at least basic understanding and proficient enough with basic technology such as application in order to be able to work. Although it seemed simple enough but it couldn't be said that everyone had this basic understanding and was able to navigate through this new form of work. This indicated the importance of technological literacy in the digital era especially within workforces. And this applied to far more than just platform work. Platform work was just one of the examples that indicated that workforces needed to be able to navigate through digital space with enough technological proficiency. Therefore there might be more work opportunities that were made exclusive by lack of technological proficiency. In order to include more workforces into the field with more opportunities, policymakers should consider the policy that would help workforces develop their technological literacy.

Further Researches

First and foremost, this study focused on the impact of platform work on workers in the aspect of income generating therefore for future research, the topic of income and income generating should be explored further. I recommended that future research on the topic of income generating and platform economy should focus especially on the argument of whether or not platform work could truly elevate workers' income and financial status. Moreover, future research could also extend further to study the relationship between platform economy and income inequality by studying how income from platform work could significantly impacts workers status financially and socially and the implication it has on income inequality at large. More importantly, the sample group for future study should cover large amount of workers and from wider range of locations for more accurate result.

Further research should also be done regarding the differences between full-time platform workers and part-time platform workers. I suggested in recommendation that platforms should differentiate between full-time and part-time workers as it was clear that two types of workers were facing a quite different situations. To better plan company policy regarding workers or to better approach workers in platform economy sector in general, the different between two types of workers should be studied in depth; what problem were they facing, what did they want to improve in their job, their opinion regarding work, their comparative salary, and much more.

Another research that should be done in the future would be that with focus on exploring and conceptualizing work in the new landscape of digital era. As stated in recommendation that new form of work which was not limited to just platform work has been growing and expanding in the digital era, creating several new types of work and growth in precarity. It was important to understand how work changed; shifting from traditional employment to non-standard form of employment. Workers were the most affected by this shift but it seemed that both government and private sectors still were not equipped enough to help them mitigate and handle these changes. Therefore better understanding and well-rounded perspective would help with policy planning and decision making of all parties involved.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Questions for Respondents from Lineman, GrabFood, and Foodpanda

Interview Location: Bangkok Metropolitan Region

General information

1. Age:
2. Birth province (if you moved to Bangkok later in life, could you please explain the reason)
3. Education level:
4. Current job (apart from delivery service, if any)
5. Working day per week
6. Working hour per day
7. Monthly wage
8. How long have you been working on this platform?

Income and Income generating in Platform Work

9. List of platforms you're working on (if any)
10. How did you find out about platform work?
11. How do you apply for this platform? Do you think platform work is easier to access and apply for? And do you think it is more inclusive for people?
12. How much is your income from platform work per month and per day?
13. Is your income from platform essential to your monthly living expense? Or is it supplementary?
14. Is this job a part-time or full time work and why?
15. Do you platform work is better for earning money? Compare to your previous job and/or another job you currently have
16. Is your income from this work stable or not?
17. Do you think there are a lot of competitions in this line of work? Does that affect your earning and/or threaten your income stability?

18. How much is the cost you pay each month for working; for example, gas money, maintenance cost, etc?
19. Do you ever face any problem or accident at work and do you pay for the cost yourself?
20. Do you think the money you gain worth your labor?
21. What is your opinion on commission fee? Do you think the commission rate issued by platform is fair for you and other workers or not?
22. Do you see any increase in your monthly income since you start working on platform?
23. (If you do earn more) Do you use your income for anything you did not get a chance to before? Such as affording indulgence in entertainment, sport, shopping, etc. or help pay for other expenses?
24. Does income you earn from platform work increase your saving? Or affect your long term finance plan?

Previous employment

25. What was your previous employment?
26. Why did you decide to start working on platform?
27. What is the appeal of this job compare to your previous job?
28. What is the difference between current platform job and previous one? In any aspect such as working condition, salary, environment, colleague, etc.?
29. Do you think the risk you have to bear in previous job is lower or higher in comparison to the current platform job? Such as risk in accident, unstable income, having to take responsibility and pay for the cost in case some goes wrong at work?
30. How was your financial situation when you were working on your previous job? Was the salary sufficient and stable enough?

Plan for future employment and opinions on platform work

40. How long do you plan to continue working on this platform and why?
41. What is your plan for the future and do you see it involving platform work still?
42. What is your opinion on legality of platform work in Thailand? Do you want it to be legalized and would it benefit you if it were to be legalized?

43. Have you ever encounter anyone who is against your job as worker on platform? What is your opinion of them?

44. Do you think platform work is beneficial towards all workers?

45. What is your opinion on impact of platform on workers? Is it a good impact or negative impact or neutral especially in the aspect of income? Or do you think workers are being taken advantage of?

46. Do you think working on platform have huge impact on your life?

47. Do you see longevity in platform economy? As in future of platform work as a stable employment that will continue to provide jobs for people in the future? Or do you view it as just a fad business model?



Appendix B

Respondents' General Information

Respondent	Pseudonym	Platform	Age	Current Employment	Previous Employment
Respondent 1	Panya	GrabFood	36	Government employee	Government employee
Respondent 2	Karn	GrabFood	38	Government employee	Government employee
Respondent 3	Somchai	GrabFood	32	Draftsman	Draftsman
Respondent 4	Kaew	GrabFood	35	Full-time Grab driver	Hotel chef
Respondent 5	Parin	GrabFood	24	Full-time Grab driver	Firefighter
Respondent 6	Prasert	Lineman	28	Full-time Line Man driver	Merchandise stocker
Respondent 7	Chatri	Lineman	28	Car Handyman	Car handyman
Respondent 8	Niran	Lineman	34	Full-time Line Man driver	Motorbike taxi driver
Respondent 9	Veera	Lineman	33	Full-time Line Man driver	Motorbike taxi driver
Respondent 10	Pong	Lineman	34	Full-time Line Man driver	Temporary staff
Respondent 11	Ruj	Foodpanda	27	Full-time Foodpanda driver	Baggage handler
Respondent 12	Sukda	Foodpanda	32	S&P Restaurant employee	S&P Restaurant employee
Respondent 13	Komson	Foodpanda	25	Kerry Express employee	Assistant manager at 7/11 convenience store
Respondent 14	Sukrit	Foodpanda	26	Full-time Foodpanda driver	Factory worker
Respondent 15	Pol	Foodpanda	28	Full-time Foodpanda driver	Porter

Respondents' Salary Data

Respondent	Total monthly salary	Salary from platform	Salary from full-time work	Salary from previous work (in case of full-time driver)
Respondent 1	30,000	15,000	15,000	-
Respondent 2	25,000	10,000	15,000	-
Respondent 3	30,000	9,000 – 10,000	18,000	-
Respondent 4	29,000	29,000	-	10,000 (tips not included)
Respondent 5	20,000 – 30,000	20,000 – 30,000	-	15,000
Respondent 6	20,000 – 25,000	20,000 – 25,000	-	14,000
Respondent 7	25,000	10,000 – 15,000	16,000	-
Respondent 8	30,000	30,000	-	15,000 - 20,000
Respondent 9	25,000 – 30,000	25,000 – 30,000	-	15,000 - 20,000
Respondent 10	15,000	15,000	-	12,000
Respondent 11	30,000 – 35,000	30,000 – 35,000	-	14,000
Respondent 12	20,000	6,000 - 8,000	-	14,000
Respondent 13	23,000	7,000	16,000	-
Respondent 14	22,000	22,000	-	14,000 (overtime not included)
Respondent 15	25,000 – 30,000	25,000 – 30,000	-	17,000

Note: the currency is Thai Baht

Sex: Male (14), Female (1)

Marital Status: Married (5), Single (9), Divorced (1)

Respondents with children to support: 5

Education Level: Bachelor degree (4), Senior High School (4), Vocational degree/High vocational degree (5), Junior High School (2)

Migrated from other provinces: 7, **Bangkok-born:** 8

Appendix C

Respondents List and Interview Dates

Respondent 1. Interviewed: 15 September 2019

Respondent 2. Interviewed: 16 September 2019

Respondent 3. Interviewed: 17 September 2019

Respondent 4. Interviewed: 23 September 2019

Respondent 5. Interviewed: 28 September 2019

Respondent 6. Interviewed: 16 September 2019

Respondent 7. Interviewed: 17 September 2019

Respondent 8. Interviewed: 20 September 2019

Respondent 9. Interviewed: 20 September 2019

Respondent 10. Interviewed: 21 September 2019

Respondent 11. Interviewed: 21 September 2019

Respondent 12. Interviewed: 22 September 2019

Respondent 13. Interviewed: 22 September 2019

Respondent 14. Interviewed: 27 September 2019

Respondent 15. Interviewed: 30 September 2019

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