

**Freelancers and Talent Management: Advantages and disadvantages of  
freelancing to help create a freelance policy leading to decent work**

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### **Abstract**

Freelancers are of great importance in our modern economy. Over the past years, the number of freelancers has only been increasing (Barlage et. al., 2019). Companies are becoming more dependent on freelancers' talents, in different fields of work. Considering the advantages of freelancing, many individuals decide to take the path of freelancing in these dynamic times, but are also exposed to disadvantages that can not be ignored, such as lacking decent work (Akhmetshin et. al., 2018). Through interviews conducted with a group of Egyptian freelancers and HR managers, this study has shown that freelancers are lacking important aspects to have decent work. Therefore, HR should play a role in providing them with the right of having decent work and help create policies in order to assure this right for freelancers. This is vital as freelancers are playing an important role in today's world by serving their talents to companies but are not receiving their basic rights of having decent work.

*Key words:* Freelancers, advantages of freelancing, disadvantages of freelancing, talent, HR, decent work.

## Introduction

The numbers of freelancers are increasing rapidly in all kinds of industries and are becoming more and more important in the modern economy (Barlage et. al., 2019). In the current dynamic economy, many individuals are more inclined to be self-employed and decide on becoming freelancers. From their perspective, this can have many advantages that suit them as an individual, such as having the opportunity to work for any company all over the world, having a free schedule, or having the free choice of activity (Akhmetshin et. al., 2018). They use their talents in order to work for their own self and share their expertise with organizations that need them.

However, the study of Kitching & Smallbone (2012) has shown that researchers neglect freelancing as a form of small business activity. As Kitching and Smallbone mention, “Freelancers are, therefore, hidden within official statistics on businesses and workers. EU sources treat freelancers as part of a broader category of ‘economically dependent workers’ ” (p. 75) This is an issue because according to a report by professor Burke (2012) freelancers are responsible for the risks and costs of the labor downtime of themselves and below expected productivity within projects. They are responsible for all the risks and costs of economic inactivity between each and every project. Furthermore, they work for clients with a contract for services and it is their own responsibility to pay taxes for themselves and to afford their own national insurance, throughout their life (Kitching & Smallbone, 2012).

This leads us to the disadvantages of being a freelancer. One of the main issues of becoming a freelancer is the lack of decent work (Ens et. al., 2018). The eighth development goal set by the United Nations is *Decent Work and Economic Growth*. All individuals that work, strive for having decent work. Research has been done in order to find the relation between HR and experiencing decent work

throughout their working life. It has shown that (Alzola, 2017). It has shown that employers that protect the freedom of association and collective bargaining of their employees, as well as not exploiting them, encourage practices free of discrimination, and adopt diversity and inclusion are likely to enhance their performance over the long run. On top of that it shows equal concern and respect for employees and is important for business and the society as a whole (Alzola, 2017).

HR policies have been created and implemented by most organizations so that employees indeed have decent work. Nevertheless, freelancers are not included in any of the HR policies and their demands are not being addressed. In an interview with a global talent management executive it was mentioned that many human resource teams and professionals are not addressing the changes needed by freelancers and will need to be catching up with them in the future (Horney, 2016).

Currently, organizations rely heavily on freelancers' talents and include them in different fields at work. However, HR is usually not involved in this part of the workforce. In order to address this part of the workforce, the responsibility is passed on to individual managers and procurement (Younger, 2019). Therefore, in order to manage these freelancers, one of the main issues is that managers and procurement are required to have the skills to manage them. Burke (2012) mentions that freelancers are currently key drivers for economic performance and emphasizes that there is an urgency for leaders of industry to have an adequate source of expert and skilled freelancers in order to boost performance in the modern economy.

This leads us to question, if HR professionals and teams are responsible for talent management of employees in an organization and providing them with decent work, and simultaneously, organizations rely often on freelancers and their talents in order to improve their organization's performance, why are freelancers not included

in any of the policies of organizations? Is there a possibility that HR can also be responsible for managing freelancers' talents like they are responsible for managing their employees' talents? Therefore, we want to know whether the advantages and disadvantages of being a freelancer can help HR to give attention to freelancers' talents and help them to have more decent work. This brings us to the research question of this paper, *“How can the advantages and disadvantages of being a freelancer help HR to develop policies for freelancers using their talent to lead to decent work?”*

This paper first discusses the concept of freelancers along with its advantages and disadvantages. Second, the relation between inclusive talent management systems and decent work will be discussed. Finally, based on several interviews with different stakeholders, it will be established whether a freelance inclusive talent management system can help freelancers have a decent job and how.

## Theoretical Framework

### Freelancers and their importance

Burke and Cowling (2012) mentioned that earlier studies have highlighted freelancers' roles as being mainly non-unionised low-priced alternatives for employees. However, they further say “newer evidence positions freelancers as differentiated to employees, and typically being complements rather than substitutes, in project-based, and uncertain, risky business environments associated with the innovation driven entrepreneurial economy” (p.1). Van den Born and Van Witteloostuijn (2013) define freelancers as a new type of worker who “contracts out her or his skills to various organizations”, which is the definition that will be used throughout this paper. Burke (2011) categorizes the labor-force into a two-by-two matrix illustrated in Figure 1, showing that freelancers are ‘self-employed workers’.

**Figure 1:**

#### *Labor Force Functional Categories*

	<b>Manager</b>	<b>Worker</b>
<b>Employed</b>	<i>Executive</i>	<i>Employee</i>
<b>Self-Employed</b>	<i>Entrepreneur</i>	<i>Freelancer</i>

Research by Burke and Cowling (2015), based on empirical observation of the different ways in which organizations use and acknowledge the importance of freelancers, emphasizes that freelancers play an essential and valuable role in today's innovation-driven economy, also mentioning, “Contrary to popular belief they are pervasive throughout all segments of the labor market, and across all occupational and

skill levels. Equally, it is a form of contractual engagement that is widely adopted throughout all business sectors and across all size classes of firms.” (p. 12)

According to Younger et. al. (2015) there are five main reasons why companies are increasing the use of freelancers. Freelancers leverage the enlarged availability of expertise, they minimize costs, they prevent the increase of permanent employees, they speed up processes of work that need to be completed and they bring in new ideas by challenging expectations of external ideas. Therefore, freelancers have the ability to allow organizations to make use of better specializations of work in innovation for less cost than using the organizations' employees and spending time to develop the certain specialization for the employees. Additionally, research shows that freelancers assist a diverse economic function in order to maintain and support employment through driving innovation and serving companies to the difficulties that arise from uncertainty and risk (Burke, 2012). Freelancers allow organizations to make use of external resources in order to make use of unique talent and various skills that are not found internally or that might be costly to hire with contracts as employees. Freelancers also allow the reduction of market uncertainties that will in return decrease the risk related with the growth of the organization. The different literature shows that freelancing is an extensive and diverse system of organization for freelancers as well as for organizations that have employed them - freelancers are therefore significantly valuable to companies currently.

### **Advantages and disadvantages of being a freelancer**

Even though many individuals decide to take the path of freelancing based on freelancing advantages, there are also some disadvantages in taking the freelance path

that cannot be ignored. Different research has shown the advantages and disadvantages of being a freelancer.

*Advantages of being a freelancer:*

In general, the literature review by Akhmetshin et. al. (2018) has shown that a freelancer has the ability to work for any organization around the whole world. The employee (which is the freelancer) does not depend on his/her employer and is responsible for his/her own salary. Additionally, freelancers have flexible schedules and choose them themselves. Being a freelancer allows for saving money and time, as they do not have to reach a certain destination to work, they work from home or any place they want to work from (Kazi et. al., 2014). Furthermore, freelancers experience more freedom and are not led by another individual. Moreover, they have free choice of activity (Storey, 2005). A research done by Meager (2015) on the difference of job satisfaction between employees and freelancers has shown that freelancing provides a higher job quality than working as a normal employee. Factors that were included to measure this were task quality, skill requirements, generic skills, work effort and job satisfaction shown in table 1. However, it was also found that although freelancers get less training, they need to work harder and are also dissatisfied due to the lack of job security (Kitching & smallbone, 2012).

*Disadvantages of being a freelancer:*

A literature study on industrial relations categorizes freelancers as part of an unregulated secondary labor market where most of the workers would be better off if they were to be employed by an organization with a contract. (Jacobs et. al., 2019). One of the main disadvantages is job insecurity and that often, freelancers do not get paid on time by the organization that hired them.. On top of that, being a freelancer can lead to being unemployed for a while, not knowing when they will be employed



again (Akhmetshin, 2018). This means that freelancers are highly exposed to career insecurity (Fersch, 2012). They do not receive pensions, sick or paid leave, bonuses, health insurances etc. meaning that they do not get any unemployment benefits. On top of that it has been found that freelancers are in need of sources of trust including housing and pooling of incomes in a family (Fersch, 2012). Income wise, employees at organizations are better off than freelancers (Strebkov and Shevchuk, 2010). Furthermore, employees in organizations have the opportunity to access the organizations resources; conversely, “for freelancers the access to these resources might be less evident as they are working independent from an organizational context” (Jacobs et. al. 2019, p. 2). Besides, freelancers are required to promote themselves and their services for organizations and build a customer base (Akhmetshin, 2018), depending on the freelancer’s personality this can be seen an advantage as well as a disadvantage.

According to Amin (2015), being a freelancer has equal advantages and disadvantages and the freelancer has to decide if they are prepared to take the risk that comes with being a freelancer. According to Jimenez (2012), freelancing is professional freedom, however it also means that one will be instabile and at risk of failure. Thus, it is of great importance to find out in what way the advantages can be increased and disadvantages can be reduced for freelancers in order for them to live a secured and stable life.

### **HR, decent work and freelancers**

Through increasing freelancer advantages and decreasing freelancer disadvantages, a decent work ‘life’ can be created for freelancers. The eighth goal by the United Nations is *Decent Work and Economic Growth*. The International Labour Organization (2015) defines decent work as “dignity, equality, a fair income, and safe

working conditions. Decent work puts people at the center of development. It gives women, men and youth a voice in what they do, the rights to protect them from exploitation and a future that is inclusive and sustainable”. Twelve targets have been set by the UN in order to reach this goal. To be more specific, some of these targets are connected to *Decent Work* and are relevant to this study. The first target related to decent work is to promote policies in order to help the creation of jobs and to develop enterprises. The second related target is that the UN wants to ‘achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men... and equal pay for work of equal value’ (Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth – SDG tracker, 2018). The third related target is to protect rights of labor and encourage environments for working safely.

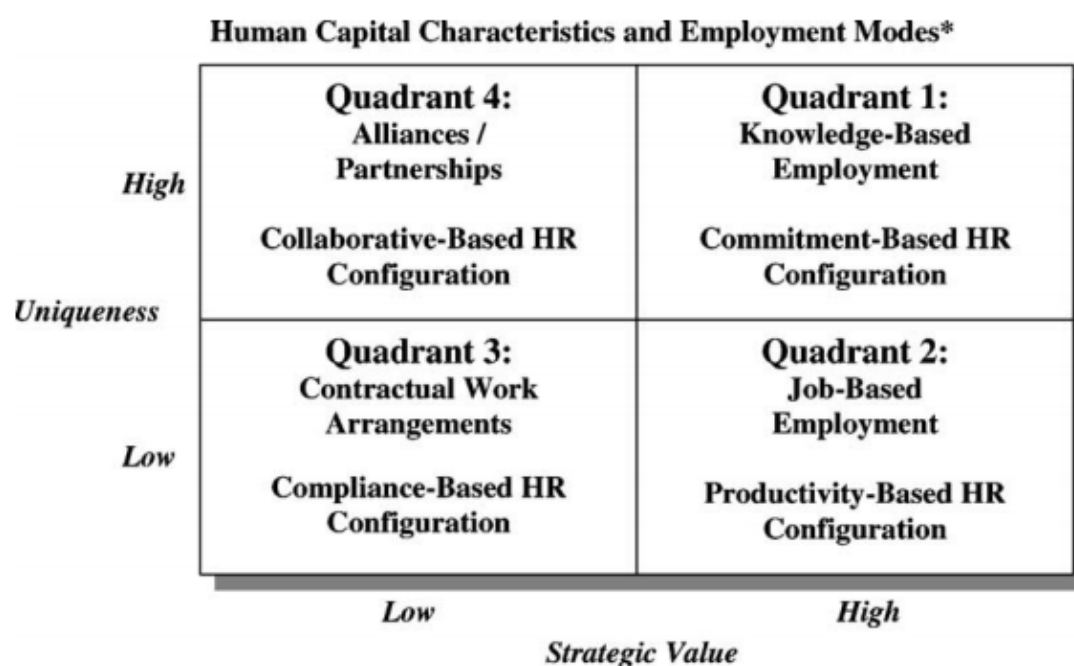
A close link can be seen between these targets and the role and responsibilities of HR departments. According to Gibb et. al. (2018) HR departments in many organizations, especially in western countries, have already implemented policies and use HR practices in order to have employees experience a decent work ‘life’. When employers were interviewed, they frequently believed that along with HR managers they offer their employees decent work by helping them achieve high work performance, engaging the employees, and through strategic HRM. They do this in order to be acknowledged as ethical employers, to improve performance and in order to attract talented employees (Gibb et. al., 2018). However, these policies and practices do not include freelancers, even though freelancers are becoming more important stakeholders to organizations currently (Kitching & Smallbone, 2012). For this reason, this paper looks into the role of HR in including freelancers in their management systems.

### **HR, Freelancers and Talent Management Systems**

Freelancers are usually known and chosen by organizations for the talent they have in a certain area of expertise. This shows that freelancers are chosen for the unique human capital characteristics they have, leading to the *Human Capital Characteristics and Employment Modes* model by Lepak and Snell (1999).

**Figure 2:**

*Human Capital Characteristics and Employment Modes*



According to Lepak and Snell (2002), quadrant one is the most essential to an organization. Due to their high uniqueness and strategic value, people in quadrant 1 have the ability to add value to the organization and its strategic objectives, “those people who use their heads more than their hands to produce value” (Horibe, 1999, p. 11). Therefore, organizations usually depend on knowledge-based employees using their skills and competencies and emphasize internal development for their core employees (Lepak & Snell, 2002). Consequently, a relationship is evident between freelancers’ characteristics, HR roles, and talent management.

Freelancers are very closely related to employees in quadrant 1 if they were to be internal workers, as they are characterized by their unique talent and add value to

an organization when they are hired (Barlage, 2019). Organizations make use of freelancers as external employees that provide them with their skills and competencies to achieve organizations objectives. According to Burke (2012) “They liberate businesses from the limits of their internal resource base and enable the use of exceptional talent that would otherwise not be economically feasible to hire on employee contracts ” (p. 5) The opportunity of businesses to draw on talents of freelancers allows productivity, capability, reduced risk and competitiveness. Thus it is important to manage the talents of freelancers as they are characterized by having unique talent.

Therefore, this study looks at how HR can create an inclusive talent management system for freelancers, using their opinions on the advantages and disadvantages of freelancing in order to provide them with decent work. Also as mentioned by Younger (2019), “This will provide organization leaders at every level with broad and deep talent insight and the ability to map business needs against the internal employees and the external freelancers that together make up the organization’s flexible blended workforce”.

## Methods

### Research Design

An exploratory qualitative study has been conducted through semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted to firstly, collect experiences of freelancers on how they experience advantages and disadvantages of being a freelancer. Secondly, to understand what freelancers are lacking to have decent work. Third, to collect experiences of HR managers on providing decent work for their employees. Then finally, to understand their perception on the importance of talents of freelancers and the importance of providing them with decent work. As mentioned in the previous section, researchers neglect freelancing as a form of small business activity (Kitching & Smallbone, 2012). For this reason, the research question reads as follows: *“How can the advantages and disadvantages of being a freelancer help HR to develop policies for freelancers using their talent to lead to decent work?”* This research also wants to find out if it is possible for HR to include freelancers in their talent management system. An exploratory study is used in order to investigate an issue which is not clearly defined in order to understand why this can be an issue, to clarify concepts, and form hypotheses (Sue & Ritter, 2012). Therefore, the explorative qualitative approach is well suited for this research.

### Sample

This study will be addressing two different organizations in Cairo, Egypt: A start up and an international organization. The smaller firm is referred to with the fictional name StartCo and the international company is referred to with the fictional name IntCo. Ten semi-structured interviews have been conducted. The sample counts eight young freelancers (ranging from age 22 to 29) from different fields and two HR managers; the HR manager from StartCo and the HR manager from IntCo. All

respondents have been working in Cairo, Egypt.

The reasons why two organizations have been used in this research was in order to compare and contrast the perspectives of two different HR actors from two different types of organizations and evaluate them to obtain more valid data. In order to increase the reliability of this research eight different freelancers have been interviewed of different ages, different genders, and are diverse in the area of their freelancing. Additionally, one HR manager from each organization has been interviewed. Both the HR managers play a role in managing their employees' talents in the organization. The tables below show the respondents included in this research, including their identifiers, fields of freelancing, age and gender.

#### *HR managers*

Identifier	Company type	Age	Male / Female
HR1	Start up	43	Female
HR2	International company	28	Male

#### *Freelancers*

Identifier	Field of freelancing	Age	Male / Female
F1	Videographer, Photographer, Editor	26	Female
F2	Video Editor	22	Female
F3	Front-end Web Developer	27	Male

F4	Graphic Designer	25	Female
F5	Software Engineer	29	Male
F6	PR Influencer	26	Female
F7	Product Designer	28	Male
F8	Creative Flash Film Director	27	Male

In order to conduct this research, a set of criteria had to be fulfilled. The organizations used in the research had to be organizations that depend often on freelancers to obtain their organizational goals. The freelancers needed to have experience for at least three years in freelancing in order to be able to give clear answers to the interview questions with their perspectives. The HR managers had to have experience in talent management, and helping their employees in having decent work.

### **Instruments**

Two interview guides for freelancers and the HR managers were created to structure the interviews. Open-ended questions were used in the interview as this lead to unexpected, however, relevant information (Horton et. al., 2004). The researcher has conducted the interviews for this research. The interviews of the freelancers looked at their perspectives on the advantages and disadvantages of being a freelancer. On top of that, it has also been questioned how they perceive decent work for themselves, and who they think is responsible for providing decent jobs and to what extent. An example of one of the questions in the questionnaire for the freelancers is: *“What is the most aspect you enjoy as a freelancer and what is the*

*most aspect you suffer from as a freelancer?” Another example question is: “Can you mention what you are lacking to have a decent job?”*

The interviews of the HR managers look at their perspective on what decent work is, how to provide decent work for employees, and how they make use of talent management for their employees. An example of one of the questions for the HR managers is: “What process/system do you use to provide decent work for your employees?” Another example is: *“How do you use talent management in your organization to link it with decent work for employees?”*

### **Procedure**

The interviews have been conducted by a student of the *Global Management of Social Issues Master course Human Resource Development at Tilburg University*. Telephone calls were used in order to contact the interviewees. The duration of the interviews were approximately one hour per interviewee. All interviews were conducted via online-meetings due to the COVID-19 circumstances. At the beginning, the interviewer briefly explained the topic of the interview questions, asked for permission to record the interview and assured that all data will be treated confidentially and reported anonymously. Before the interviews were conducted, the researcher participated in an interview training to practice running a smooth interview. Additionally, in order to increase psychometric qualities of the study, member checks were used during the interviews. Furthermore, an informed consent document has been sent to the interviewees in order to inform them about the research process, to gain permission from the interviewees for their participation in the research, and to receive their permission in using their data and the information they provide for research purposes (Faden & Beauchamp, 1986).

### **Analysis**



The researcher carried out a structural data analysis. To analyze the data all the interviews have been translated and transcribed (and included in the data package). The transcripts have been labeled with identifiers for each respondent to be used for further analysis. According to the main guidelines for qualitative analysis by Richie and Lewis (2003) for coding, initial themes and concepts have been collected in order to create a coding table including first order categories, second order themes and aggregate dimensions for both HR managers and freelancers. The data has been synthesized and categorized into the coding table on the basis of quotes used from the interviews conducted. Furthermore, for each separate aggregate dimension, the same colours have been used to reflect first order categories with second order themes. Finally, the coding table has been used to analyze and discuss the findings and identify areas for future research.

## Results

The results section discusses the findings on the advantages of freelancers in comparison to disadvantages of working in a company, the disadvantages of freelancing in comparison to advantages of working in a company, what the interviewees' view is on what a decent job is and what they are lacking in order to have a decent job, the opinion of the interviewees on who they think the responsibility falls on for providing a decent job and finally their views on mutual benefits between freelancers and a company when working together.

The interviews were all conducted in Cairo, Egypt, included eight freelancers and two HR managers. The reason why the majority of interviews were conducted with freelancers is due to the focus of freelancers' perspectives in this research, and trying to help provide them with more decent jobs.

### **Advantages of Freelancing & Disadvantages of Full-time job**

The analysis showed that the answers of the interviewees reflected that the advantages of freelancing and disadvantages of a full-time job complemented each other. The different answers of the different interviewees were grouped into two sections; Advantages of freelancing driven by the individual freelancer and advantages provided by the employer (whether a client or a company) for the freelancer.

#### *Advantages of freelancing driven by individual freelancer*

Both freelancers' and the HR manager's opinions on the advantages of freelancing is that it provides freedom for the freelancer. The freelancers concentrated on the freedom of how they can manage their time as long as they finish their work on the agreed timing, mentioning "*I can take a break at any time as long as I received my deposit and handed in the work project, without any issues arising*" (F3). The HR managers also had quite a similar opinion, mentioning the freedom of how to spend

their time, *“why should I waste a lot of resources, going from a place to another and so on, when I can do the thing when I am sitting in my place”* (HR1). Interviewers also talked often about self-control, they said, *“I am my own leader. There is no one controlling me”* (F2) and, *“In the end, set your own conditions and your client is then forced to wait for you”* (F3). When talking about the disadvantages of working for a company the interviewees emphasized that when working for an employer they have limited autonomy and they feel a sense of authority. They often got back to the point that they do not have the freedom of choosing what to do, for example one freelancer said, *“So of course when you’re a freelancer you are free to choose when you want to do your work and can organize your own day.”* (F6). From the HR manager’s perspective, it was different as they mentioned the lack of control and authority they have from an organizational perspective. One of the HR interviewees said, *“We are strict to labour law. When it comes to payments, we are actually stuck to a certain salary survey, which is done in Egypt”* (HR1).

Another important point mentioned by the freelancers was the idea that when working as a freelancer, one can work on their own self-development. When working for an employer, there is limited self-development, and it is more of a routine they are following. According to one of the freelancers, when freelancing *“You earn something then you can learn something else, you can grow, you can add stuff, and so on”* (F2). On the other hand, when working for an employer they said, *“You are working in the same place, everything is the same”* (F2). Another interviewee explicitly said, *“There is no self-development. So you just reach to a certain point and that’s it”* (F2). Another factor that was raised while going through the interview was intrinsic motivation. Freelancers often mentioned that when freelancing, one is more intrinsically motivated while working, one freelancer mentioned *“We can also talk about that freelancing is*

*enjoyable*” (F2). Furthermore, freelancers also started talking about receiving higher income, as they are providing the work that a certain client wants. In one interview a freelancer said, “*So now the cost of an hour of me freelancing is more than the double of my full-time job*” (F3).

*Advantages provided by employer for freelancers:*

When talking with the freelancers, they also mentioned that freelancing helped them create a larger network, it was mentioned that, “*The circle of people you know expands So you get even more work*” (F2). Another point that was brought up when talking about networking was the fact that clients or employers start recommending you to others, which also in return increases the freelancer’s network. In one of the interviews of one of the freelancers it was mentioned that, “*Communication always makes a difference, especially when you do a good project with a company and it succeeds or with people who asked for the project, they recommend you to other people who want the same kind of project, and that is the ‘Happy Scenario’ for any freelancer; the same project, the same cost, but with less effort*” (F3). Another freelancer said, “*I would end up getting a lot of doors because you know I finish the job with one person they recommend me to the next person*” (F1).

The HR managers mentioned an aspect that was not really brought up by the freelancers, which was that currently opportunities are arising for freelancers especially after the COVID pandemic. One of the HR managers said, “*So some, or a lot of people because of COVID lost in the HR departments, lost their jobs and actually some companies they are going for freelancers.*” (HR1). This shows that companies are currently more in need of freelancers than before.

**Disadvantages of Freelancing & Advantages of Full-time job**

After conducting the interviews with all the interviewees, the different responses showed that the disadvantages of freelancing and the advantages of having a fulltime job could be categorized into two kinds of needs for the freelancer; Basic needs in order to be able to live a normal life such as having an income or a stable life, and psychological needs such as support and direction. These needs reflect the views of freelancers on how to be satisfied with their lives.

### *Basic Needs*

In almost all of the interviews with the freelancers, when the question was asked what the disadvantages are of freelancing, the lack of stability was mentioned the most. A freelancer mentioned that, *“You can be working for a while on projects, another time there might not be any projects”* (F2), and another one said, *“Sometimes clients suddenly say they want to stop work now. There is no stability”* (F4). One of the HR managers said *“Most of the freelancers, they are not paid a fixed amount of money”* (HR1). In contrast, when asked about the advantages of working in a company, the most aspect that was mentioned was having a stable life. Some freelancers focused on the aspect of financial stability saying, *“and there will always be a salary at the end of the month”* (F7). Other freelancers focused on the aspect of social stability, mentioning that in a company *“someone is stable in their social life and stable working hours and the stable amount of money as a salary”* (F4). They also mentioned being insured, according to one of the freelancers, *“Whatever happens you're insured if they fire you, you get a severance check you know of any disagreement happens you can take your employer to court”* (F1).

When interviewing the HR managers, they focused on stability in relations to insurance. One of the HR managers mentioned, *“Within the market range, actually, we're providing them with social, medical and life insurance. And actually, when it*

*comes to the future and thinking about their families and their future, we're actually having the option of adding their family. They can add their family to the life insurance"* (HR1). This shows that they realize that there is a need for freelancers to be insured to have a more stable life, and therefore, they want to include them in their future insurance policy.

While talking about the disadvantages of freelancing with the interviewees, it has been often mentioned that freelancers' rights are not guaranteed, with an emphasis on salary from both freelancers and the HR managers' perspectives. A freelancer mentioned that, *"There is no guarantee regarding the money at all, and also that you receive it fully"* (F2). When asked about advantages of working at a company it was often mentioned that the employee's rights are guaranteed, *"Your rights are usually protected. If there is an issue you go to the work office, you have your contract everything is on paper. The government is protecting your rights"* (F2).

### *Psychological Needs*

When talking about protected rights in the interviews, a few freelancers mentioned that they were often exploited by their client when working for them. An example of this is that the client asks the freelancer to do extra work in order to pay them the agreed amount. According to one of the freelancers, *"as a freelancer, you have to do the edits, even if they are a lot, even if it is more than what we agreed on, in order to receive your money"* (F2). This shows that from the freelancer's perspective, the client does not follow the agreement on the amount of work and exploits the freelancer's effort in order to pay them the agreed amount at the end of the project. Freelancers also mentioned that no one would stand up for their rights when such situations happen. Conversely, when asked about the advantages of working at a company it was mentioned that support and direction are usually provided. From the

freelancer's perspective, *"If you fall, got burned, you will find someone that will help you stand again, whether it's the HR or someone else like your manager"* (F3).

The HR managers also mentioned the aspect of support and direction, however, from an organizational perspective. One HR manager said, *"he's getting the trainings and he's doing a good job, definitely you will get promoted and you will get better incentive schemes, everything."* When asking about how a company helps their employees, the HR manager also mentioned, *"we are we are giving them a career path"* (HR1).

The last aspect mentioned by freelancers while interviewing them was the point of losing creativity when needing to think of different ideas for every project. One freelancer said, *"I need to use my creativity and gain new ideas so if I'm not in the mood I won't be able to do it I have to do it in the time I will get new ideas when I am in the mood"* (F8). Additionally, when asking the HR managers, they mentioned that they compare a lot between freelancers which show that there is a high level of competition between different freelancers, *"me choosing the criteria of those recruiters and I prefer those freelancers to work with them other than the others"* (HR1).

### **Aspects freelancers are missing to have a decent job**

When going further in the analysis of the interviews, answers of interviewees showed that the aspects freelancers are missing in order to have a decent job could be categorized into material needs and psychological needs. The answers also showed that what they were missing reflected their opinion on what they thought disadvantages of freelancing were and in contrast what advantages were of having a full time job.

#### *Material Needs*

Both freelancers and the HR managers were asked what they consider a decent job. Additionally, freelancers were asked what they are missing to have a decent job. A main point mentioned by the HR managers when asking on how they provide a decent job were incentives. According to one of the HR managers, decent jobs *“is mainly about giving the employee the normal or the acceptable working conditions when it comes to decent working hours, decent payment, when it comes to their salaries, when it comes to any sort of benefits”* (HR1). In contrast, freelancers mentioned they are missing external incentives in order to have a decent job. A freelancer said in their interview, *“You still need external incentive in order to do a good job. You can’t just be intrinsically motivated”* (F1). It was also mentioned by the freelancers that they are lacking safety conditions and said, *“the lack of safety conditions is much larger, because you do not have someone to go to. Freelancing in Egypt is mostly not done with a contract. Some places do have contracts”* (F3).

#### *Psychological Needs*

Both freelancers and HR managers thought it was important to fulfill the worker’s psychological needs. The main points mentioned by both freelancers and HR managers were appreciation and health. One freelancer said, *“The first thing I will need is appreciation from the people that work with me. This appreciation should be personally and emotionally but also money-wise. Some companies you work with are really bad and do not appreciate it, but others really appreciate what you do, the effort you spent, that makes a huge difference to me”* (F6). According to one of the HR managers, providing jobs is *“actually a healthy, as well, environment to work for”* (HR1). Furthermore, freelancers mentioned motivation and respect, saying that a decent job is to *“be respected by your employers, have people respect your mental health and respect the time, effort and energy you put in”* (F1).



When freelancers were talking about what they are missing to have a decent job they mentioned the will to be committed, mental health, and not being exploited. One of the main aspects mentioned in the definition is the right of being protected from exploitation. In the interviews, freelancers mention often that they are being exploited by their clients/company that hired them. One freelancer said, *“Also the part about the rights to be protected from exploitation is not there. There is no secured future, and it is not stable”* (F2), another freelancer emphasized that *“the lack of safety conditions is much larger, because you do not have someone to go to. Freelancing in Egypt is mostly not done with a contract. Some places do have contracts”* (F3). These factors mentioned are related to the definition of decent work that has been provided by the ILO and mentioned earlier. Therefore, these are central aspects that need to be solved in order for freelancers to feel they have a decent job.

### **Who is responsible for providing decent jobs for freelancers**

The different opinions of the freelancers all show that all freelancers agree that part of the responsibility definitely falls on the individual freelancer and also on the employer (whether it is a client or company). On top of that, some freelancers also mentioned that the responsibility partially falls on legal authority. These results show that freelancers believe that there should be some regulations provided by the employer and sometimes even by the country that guarantee the rights of freelancers in order to have decent jobs.

#### *Individual / Freelancer*

Freelancers were asked for their opinion on who they think is responsible for providing decent jobs and to what extent. All the freelancers interviewed agreed that the responsibility partially falls on the individual freelancer and partially on the employer. Many of the freelancers agreed that they are between thirty to fifty percent

responsible to provide a decent job for themselves, *“I have to be responsible by always working well and being on the top so I receive a lot of projects, so 50%”* F2. This shows that they all agree that quite a large percent depends on their own. However, one freelancer did say that he thinks the responsibility falls 100% on the freelancer. However, he did argue *“So the freelancer should set a system from the beginning with the client and make agreements”* (F7).

#### *Employer / Company*

On one hand, some freelancers thought that the responsibility falls to a large percent on the employer. One freelancer said, *“For the client 60%. For the individual 40%... First, the client is the one who decides what the income is, not me. The equality, he also decides on how to treat people. And the safe working conditions”* (F6). On the other hand, some freelancers thought it only falls a small percent on the employer.

#### *Legal Authority / Government*

Some of the freelancers also mentioned that the government should also partially be responsible for providing decent jobs for freelancers. A freelancer mentioned that, *“there has to be a law that if the person I am working with did not give me my money that I can raise a case and take him to court”* (F2). When the freelancer was asked to explain their percentages, they reasoned, *“...and the company 20%, because if the government is doing its job, the company will fear to not give the freelancer their rights”* (F2). However, in this case, the freelancer believes that if the government takes the right action, the employer would have to be responsible for the provision of a decent job for freelancers.

#### **Mutual Benefits**

For both freelancers and HR managers, their opinions were asked on how there can be a mutual benefit between freelancers and the company or employer that hires them. The answers of this section gave a vision on how to use the unique talents of freelancers in order to benefit the employer or company and in return provide benefits for freelancers, which currently do not exist, such as including them in the talent management system. These were based on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, knowledge sharing, HR role and talent management.

#### *Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation*

Freelancers and HR managers mentioned in their interviews that when extrinsic motivation is present from the company (whether it's a manager or HR), this results in intrinsic motivation from the freelancer. One of the freelancers said, "*So they can give me my money on time and I will give them their work on time*" (F2), and another freelancer explicitly said freelancers "*need external incentive in order to do a good job*" (F1). The HR also agreed and mentioned, "*I'm adding to my employee so it's a win-win situation. He or she will get the experience, the knowledge, and for me I'm just paying him a little bit amount of money more and actually I'm having a key player which will be supporting in most of the let's say the tasks and duties, so it's a win-win situation*" (HR2).

#### *Knowledge sharing*

Knowledge sharing was something often mentioned while talking to the interviewees. According to one of the freelancers, "*you can have employees that I can help or have sessions together where we can share our area of expertise so that we both learn from each other and HR can be responsible for this*" (F2). On the other hand, as mentioned in the previous section, one of the HR managers mentioned giving knowledge to the employee, in this case meaning the freelancer, will lead to having a

key player which is a win-win situation. This shows that freelancers and HR managers believe that when they share their knowledge together, that they will reach the best outcome for both the company and the freelancer.

#### *HR role & Talent management*

Another important question asked to the freelancers was their opinion on how HR can play a role in using freelancers' talent to reach mutual benefit for the company and freelancer. Additionally, the HR managers were asked how they think they can use talent management in order to provide mutual benefits for freelancers and their company. Both freelancers' and the HR managers' answers were related to transparency, communication and talent management. One of the freelancers said HR can *“use my talent to create a decent job for me in the sense that I can be open with them about what I have to offer and they can be open with me but they have to offer and then we meet in the middle. (...) Going to be learning my talents to a company they need to offer me what their company has.”* (F1). She further explained *“they can just be very clear and transparent with the people they are employing (...) Why don't we just cut the middle ground and, you know, cut the awkward complications that get in the way and just be honest with each other?”* (F1)

In contrast, when the HR managers were asked about how to use talent management for freelancers, one said, *“I think if they, like, dealt with them, that it's sort of a secured relationship, a longer relationship between the freelancer and the organization. I think they would be performing better”* (HR1). They further said, *“I'm giving them more time, more info, so they are performing better, so they are saving for me time, they're saving money, they're saving for me or they are giving me quality which will lead to having better calibers, lower turnover, in in and definitely all of those things would reflect on the business”* (HR1). This shows that both the freelancer

and the HR managers agreed that HR can have an important role in including freelancers in their talent management system in order to provide them with a decent job and in return receiving high quality work, leading to mutual benefits between the freelancer and company. Additionally, one of the HR managers had already mentioned that they have had a case where the HR helped the freelancer by providing him benefits that are usually not provided to freelancers, saying, “*Actually the features that we're using now for the finance we gave to him and let him make use of our Cairo apartment, because he's from Alex, which is another government. Uh, we gave him a phone line. We're giving him, we gave him benefits for using the Medical aid service of the company and stuff.*” (HR2). This shows that there is a possibility for HR managers in companies to take into consideration the needs of freelancers and include them in policies to fulfill them.

## Discussion

This research aimed to answer the question “*How can the advantages and disadvantages of being a freelancer help HR to develop policies for freelancers using their talent to lead to decent work?*” Firstly, interviews were conducted with eight freelancers and two HR managers in Cairo in order to investigate their views on what the advantages and disadvantages are of freelancing and in contrast the advantages and disadvantages of a fulltime job. Second, they were asked their opinions on what freelancers are lacking to have a decent job, who is responsible for providing decent jobs, and how mutual benefits between the freelancer and employer can help HR develop a policy or system that can help freelancers have a decent job. Finally, when looking at the results, clear links were found between the different aspects of the interviews.

When taking an overall look at the interviews and the respondents’ answers, it showed that the different parts linked to each other. Firstly, the interviews showed a strong opinion regarding the advantages and disadvantages of being a freelancer in contrast with advantages and disadvantages of having a full-time job from their perspective. As all interviewees have worked both in a normal full-time job and as freelancers, their opinions reflected what they think is important to have in both jobs.

Second, when asking them their opinions on what a decent job is and what they are lacking in order to have a decent job, they reflected on the disadvantages of being a freelancer and at the same time the advantages of having a full time job. This is how the results of the interviewees showed that from their perspective there is a link in what they are lacking to have a decent job and what their opinion is on the advantages and disadvantages of freelancing.

Finally, when they were asked on who they think is responsible for providing decent jobs and what they think the mutual benefits are of freelancers and companies working together, their answers showed that in order for both freelancers and companies or employers to be satisfied, regulations need to be set by the company and it's HR in order to protect the rights of freelancers, such as including them in their policy system in order for them to have a decent job and simultaneously using their talent in freelancing in order to provide them with decent work.

When the responses on the advantages of freelancing were analyzed along with the disadvantages of working in a fulltime job, responses of the interviewees were quite similar and fell under two categories, which were *advantages of freelancing driven by the individual freelancer* and *advantages provided by the employer for freelancers*. These categories contained different elements explaining why many individuals have started considering freelancing as a job or side job. This is also shown by a study done by a group of Egyptian students, "Coworking spaces as startups have seen wide expansions worldwide in conjunction with the evolution of the shared economy, start-ups, and entrepreneurial projects and the labor market trends of freelancers and part-time employees" (Maher et. al., 2020, p. 216). In Egypt where the study has been conducted, average salaries are quite low (Loewe, 2004) and therefore as mentioned by the respondents, they have chosen to freelance as it gives them a higher income. However, in order to not suffer from the lack of financial stability, they have all chosen to freelance as a side job and still have a full-time job, as freelancing on it's own is not safe and as they mentioned is insecure. This shows that freelancers cannot make a living out of freelancing only, which complement the the research done by Burke (2012), that indicated freelancers are responsible for the risks and costs of the labor downtime of themselves.

When the responses on the disadvantages of freelancing were evaluated together with the advantages of a fulltime job, two other categories were created. The first one is *basic needs* and the other one is *psychological needs*. As the freelancers have experienced working both as freelancers and in full-time jobs, they were able to give their opinions based on real life experience. This reflected what they experienced while both freelancing and working in a fulltime job. Their responses showed that advantages that were present in their fulltime time job were missing in their job as freelancers. However, the advantages they were missing as freelancers are directly linked to what they felt they were missing as freelancers in order to have a decent job. This shows that indeed freelancers' main issue is that the freelancing job does not provide them with decent work and that they are in need of it.

While freely speaking about what they were lacking in order to have a decent job, they were mentioning *material needs* and *psychological needs* as well. Another study done in Egypt and Beirut confirms the responses' answers, "80% of freelance workers work 12 or more hours, 45% work 15 or more hours per day and 22% work 18 or more hours per day" (Jureidini, 2014, p. 24). *Material needs* were quite close to *basic needs*, such as having a good salary that they can live off. Furthermore, both sections included the category psychological needs, which put an emphasis on this kind of need for the freelancer, as they have mentioned such aspects in both parts of the interview. Burke (2011 and 2012) show that freelancers support organizations to be flexible, agile and manage risk by adjusting their labor force to encounter the ambiguity characteristic in a dynamic business environment. However, is this possible when some of their basic needs have not been fulfilled?



Moreover, a study done in Egypt and Beirut showed, “Those who were “freelancing” had previously been on contract, but for one reason or another (such as abuse, poor conditions, overwork, low wages, lack of payment, etc.) had left their employers” (Jureidini, 2014, p. 22). However, this option of leaving their employers is risky as they cannot depend fully on freelancing to sustain a living as mentioned before. This takes us back to the study by Fersch (2012) mentioning that freelancers are highly exposed to career insecurity. This suggests that serious attention should be directed towards freelancers’ needs to decrease the high amount of disadvantages experienced leading them to involuntarily work as full-timers as well as freelancers.

When evaluating their responses a clear link was seen between their opinion on the advantages and disadvantages of freelancing and advantages and disadvantages of working in a fulltime job, and their opinion on who is responsible for providing freelancers with decent jobs. It was stated clearly from the perspective of freelancers that the responsibility falls partially on the freelancers themselves, partially on the employer or company they are working for, and sometimes partially on legal authorities. When looking at this, we can see that the previous responses categorized in *advantages controlled by the individual freelancer* and *advantages provided by the employer* fall under the different sections of on who the responsibility falls in order to provide freelancers with decent work, namely, the individual freelancer and the employer. This shows that the majority of freelancers need an external party or multiple external parties to contribute to providing decent work for them, as they believe it is not possible for them to provide it for themselves. This is quite contradictory because as Younger (2019) mentions, businesses are highly dependent on freelancers’ unique talents, but in return, freelancers are not receiving the right of having decent working conditions.

On top of that, the categories *basic needs* and *psychological needs* show that the freelancer have certain needs that need to be fulfilled and that can possibly be provided by the employer. One example of this is stability, these are one of the basic needs that the freelancer is lacking to have a decent job and that needs to be provided to a certain extent by the employer. Looking back at the *Labor Force Functional Categories* model by Burke (2011), both freelancers and employees fall under the worker category. In companies, usually the HR is responsible for creating decent jobs for the employees. Therefore, reflecting on the responses of the interviewees, this study suggests that HR can start including freelancers in their future plans and policies in order to provide them with decent work.

When the responses of the interviewees were evaluated on how they think freelancers and employers can mutually benefit from each other, three categories were created based on their opinions and responses, *intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, knowledge sharing, HR role and talent management*. This is in alignment with a study by Barlage (2019), “This all suggests that hiring organizations that invest in the relation with their freelancers will benefit from increased influx of knowledge sharing from their freelancers” (p. 5). Interviewees opinions on the role of HR and talent management show that because freelancers are known for their talent, and because they are lacking important aspects to have a decent job, and because they also agree that responsibility falls partially on the freelancer and partially on the employers, it has been suggested that HR can use the talents of the freelancers they hire in order to include them in the company’s policy to provide them with decent jobs. However, to reach this, the interviewees agreed that there is a mutual benefit, when they are motivated to work and provide the employer with high quality work using their unique talent, in return HR can include them in the company’s policy system to

provide them with benefits that will help freelancers have a more decent job. This builds on the research done by Younger (2019), “This will provide organization leaders at every level with broad and deep talent insight and the ability to map business needs against the internal employees and the external freelancers that together make up the organization’s flexible blended workforce”.

### **Practical implications**

The theoretical contribution of this study is that companies and their HR professionals can create policies that improve the freelancers’ decency of work. As mentioned previously by one of the respondents, nobody stands up for the rights of freelancers, showing that there is power imbalance. Such policies can reduce this power imbalance by including vital needs such as medical insurance, social insurance, and stability through having long-term contracts. Similar to employee contracts, they can agree with freelancers to hire them when they are needed instead of finding new freelancers and freelancers needing to find new clients. By this, the long-term relationship mentioned in the study of Barlage et. al., 2019 can be fulfilled. Furthermore, on a more aggregate level, governments can include regulations in order to protect the rights of freelancers in having decent work, which is one of the sustainable development goals, as they are starting to make up a part of the labor force.

On top of that, one of the HR managers had mentioned that they have arranged with the company manager to provide one of their freelancers with benefits that they provide to employees such as including the freelancer in medical aid, providing a mobile and laptop, etc. The HR mentioned that he felt it was important to give the freelancer this right as they are making use of his talent and simultaneously costs are being saved because of his work. This shows that HR can indeed play a role in

helping freelancers gain benefits that they currently do not have. This can be done through having a policy as mentioned that includes freelancers rights on contracts. Thereby, leading to the satisfaction of the freelancer, as the freelancer's basic needs have been fulfilled in order to have decent work.

Another suggestion is that a freelancer can be hired by a company, however, can be swapped with freelancers in other companies. Thereby, the freelancer works for a company X when a project is needed and is included in their talent management system, and simultaneously can work for another company Y when company X does not have any projects at a certain time. This makes the freelancer benefit from having his rights as a worker, and find work at most of the times and at the same time the company does not have to reach out or start finding a different freelancer every time.

### **Limitations and Future Research Direction**

This study has provided in-depth insight on how HR can develop a policy for freelancers to provide them with decent jobs. However, there were some limitations while doing this study.

First, this research was conducted at an unstable time, namely COVID-19. The unstable (economic) situation can lead to affected results and opinions that reflect results based on the COVID-19 situation. For future research, this study should be repeated at a more stable time. However, this is difficult to ensure as we are currently living in a dynamically shifting economy.

Second, the HR managers could have been asked whether they feel a sense of responsibility in providing freelancers working for their company with decent jobs. This question could have shown whether HR actors are interested or care about such an issue and can give insights and opinions on what kind of policies or rules can be included to ensure freelancers are provided with decent jobs.

Third, this research took into account the freelancers' perspective more than the HR managers. HR is central in the research questions, thus, for future research the focus should have been equally on the perspective of freelancers and the perspective of the HR actors as it is important to use multiple stakeholder perspectives.

Finally, although the sample of the interviewees were all conducted in one country and both male and female perspectives were included equally 4 male freelancers, 4 female freelancers, 1 male HR manager and 1 female HR manager were interviewed, as well as having them all from the same age group, the sample size was little and could have been larger in order to reflect more accurate results.

Therefore, further research can be conducted in order to find out the needs of freelancers in order to have decent work. Interviews can be conducted on the country level to find out what freelancers in Egypt are lacking to have a decent job. Using these interviews, policies can be created in companies or even on the country level to ensure freelancers' needs are being fulfilled so they can guarantee their rights of having a decent job. Subsequently, HR professionals should have official contracts in companies for freelancers identifying the freelancers duties to the company and the company's duties to the freelancer, also ensuring decent work for freelancers. Furthermore, HR professionals can use the idea of mutual benefits to make use of freelancers' unique talents to provide them with benefits and incentives leading to decent work, and include them also in the company's policy system.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of this study show that this research is important due to the growing trend of freelancers in our current dynamically shifting economy. Companies are starting to focus more on freelancers, as they want to be more cost efficient. Currently, we are seeing more and more freelancers around us, and many researches have confirmed the growing number of freelancers. For this reason, there is a need for freelancers' rights to be recognized, and they should at least have the right to receive the conditions of a decent job, as they are also workers and part of the labor force. This will also in return have them work harder and provide quality work, which will consequently improve the economy as a whole.

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## Appendix

**Table 1**

*Job Satisfaction: self-employed and employees compared (net of controls)*

Variable	Construction of variable	Self-employed vs. employees: coefficient & significance
<b>Satisfaction with...</b>		
Pay	7-pt scales from completely dissatisfied to completely satisfied	0.216**
Job security		-0.116*
Use of abilities		0.389**
Use of initiative		0.547**
Hours of work		0.167**
The work itself		0.391**
Amount of work		0.185**
Variety in the job		0.290**
Overall satisfaction		0.399**

\*\*=p<0.01, \*=p<0.05 +=P<0.10

## Interview Guide

*For Freelancers:*

### General Questions

1. Is freelancing the only job you have currently? Or do you have another job?
2. Have you had a different job than freelancing before becoming a freelancer?
  - a. Can you compare your job as a freelancer with other jobs you had?
  - b. Is there a difference in their advantages and disadvantages? (Please elaborate)

### Advantages and Disadvantages of being a freelancer

3. What are the advantages of being a freelancer?
  - a. How do you benefit from it?
  - b. What is the most aspect you enjoy as a freelancer?
4. What are the disadvantages of being a freelancer?
  - a. How does this harm you?
  - b. What is the most aspect you suffer from as a freelancer?

### Decent Jobs

5. In your opinion, what would you consider as a decent job?

For the next upcoming questions, I would like to ask you to consider this definition in the answering of your questions. **ILO Definition of Decent Work:** *Dignity, equality, a fair income, and safe working conditions. It gives men, women and youth a voice in what they do, the rights to protect them from exploitation, and a future that is inclusive and sustainable.*

6. Can you mention what you are lacking to have a decent job?
7. Who do you think is responsible for providing decent work? For example, yourself or other people?
  - a. Can you give a percentage for the amount of responsibility that falls on you and/or the other people (who should be providing decent work)?
  - b. Please motivate you percentages.

### Freelancer's opinion on role of HR in decent work

8. What can HR do to create more decent jobs?
  - a. Do you think that HR can use your talent to create a more decent job for you?
  - b. How can you mutually benefit from each other?

*For HR (manager):*

#### Decent work and role of HR

1. What do you as HR consider decent work for employees?

For the next upcoming questions, I would like to ask you to consider this definition in the answering of your questions. **ILO Definition of Decent Work:** *Dignity, equality, a fair income, and safe working conditions. It gives men, women and youth a voice in what they do, the rights to protect them from exploitation, and a future that is inclusive and sustainable.*

2. Do you as HR do something for your employees to provide them with decent work?
  - a. What do you do as HR do provide decent work for your employees?

#### Talent Management

3. Do you have a talent management system for employees?
4. How important do you consider talent management?
5. Do you use talent management differently for different employees?
  - a. If yes, how and why?
6. What do you do for employees that have unique talents?
  - a. What support do you provide for them?

#### Relation of decent work and talent management

7. Do you think that talent management contributes to decent work?
  - a. In what sense? Or How?

#### HR's role with freelancers and their talents

8. Do you have any role when it comes to freelancers?
9. Do you think freelancers are important?
10. How do you think you as an HR can make use of freelancers' talents?
11. How do you currently manage the talents of your freelancers?
  - a. Is there a way to optimize this?

b. Do you think this will benefit your organization?



## Coding Table

[Colours group first order categories with second order themes for each aggregate dimension]

Freelancers			HR Managers	
First Order Categories	Second Order Themes	Aggregate Dimensions	Second Order Themes	First Order Categories
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F2: “you get your salary and it’s fixed”</li> <li>• F7: “and there well always be a salary at the end of the month”</li> <li>• F4: “someone is stable in their social life and stable working hours and the stable amount of money as a salary”</li> <li>• F2: “When we talk about the benefits of a full-time job, you have insurance, some companies can provide you with a car for example in work, sometimes they can give you a visa, benefits you receive on your bank account.”</li> <li>• F1: “Whatever happens you're insured if they fire you, you get a severance check you know of any disagreement happens you can take your employer to court”</li> <li>• F1: “So when I worked in marketing, there was a position called account manager, the designer does not talk to the client, the one that communicates with the client is the account manager.”</li> <li>• F3: “If you fall, got burned, you will find someone that will help you stand again, whether it’s the HR or someone else like your manager.”</li> <li>• F8: She was very flexible and always provided the help and support we as employees needed in order to bring out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Stability</li> <li>• Social Stability</li> <li>• Insurance</li> <li>• Support/direction</li> </ul>	<p><b>Advantages of Full-time job / Working for an employer</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Stability</li> <li>• Insurance</li> <li>• Support/direction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR1: “But within the market range, actually, we're providing them with social, medical and life insurance. And actually, when it comes to the future and thinking about their families and their future, we're actually having the option of adding their family. They can add their family to the life insurance”</li> <li>• HR1: “So most of the, the, the companies in Egypt are doing a private medical insurance. So what I'm talking about is the private medical insurance. They can add their family members and we are paying like a good percent of the coverage”</li> <li>• HR1: “also we are we are giving them a career path.”</li> <li>• HR1: “Yeah, for sure. When he's doing what he wants, that his passion and he's getting the trainings and he's doing a good job, definitely you will get promoted and you will get better incentive schemes, everything.”</li> </ul>

<p>the best work”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F1: “Whatever happens you're insured if they fire you, you get a severance check”</li> <li>• F2: “Your rights are usually protected. If there is an issue you go to the work office, you have your contract everything is on paper. The government is protecting you rights”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rights guaranteed</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rights guaranteed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR2: “I think that everyone deserves a decent job, decent conditions for working. He doesn't need to be talented as long as I agreed that he would join the company.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F2: “If you have an appointment, you won't be able to go. If you want to do something at any time you won't be able to do it.”</li> <li>• F8: “Manager's can just be bossy and say why are you not at your office now.”</li> <li>• F2: “There is no self-development. So you just reach to a certain point and that's it.”</li> <li>• F1: “not easy for you to get other opportunities because obviously your employer wants to keep you so they, they kind of won't brag about you or your skills”</li> <li>• F4: “There is no one observing me, I'm the one who controls myself.”</li> <li>• F2: “You are working in the same place, everything is the same”</li> <li>• F4: “The time you are working, you have a time if you are - so basically I have to arrive at a certain time I have to leave at a certain time.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited Autonomy</li> <li>• Limited self development</li> <li>• Sense of authority</li> <li>• Routine</li> </ul>	<p><b>Dis- advantage s of Full- time job / working for an employer</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited autonomy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR1: “We are strict to labour law. When it comes to payments, we are actually stuck to a certain salary survey, which is done in Egypt.”</li> <li>• HR1: “Maybe after a couple of years, I'm having let's say a family condition, or whatever the personal condition that wouldn't make me able to on a daily basis go to a certain employer, so I'm working as a freelancer now.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F2: “If you want to work at home, you want to spend more time with you family.”</li> <li>• F3: “I can take a break at any time as long as I received my deposit and handed in the work project,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Freedom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR1: “And actually, the candidate withdrew the offer, and I don't know, it could be tonnes of reasons.”</li> <li>• HR1: “So it's not about developing or, or helping the talents to have future”</li> </ul>

<p>without any issues arising”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F2: “I am my own leader. There is no one controlling me.”</li> <li>• F8: “You are the boss of yourself”</li> <li>• F3: “In the end set your own conditions and your client is then forced to wait for you”</li> <li>• F6: “every industry has its advantages and has its network. The network is very important. They can gain advantages from my network, and I can gain advantages from their network also</li> <li>• F2: “The circle of people you know expands ( دائرة الناس في حياتك بتوسع ). So you get even more work.”</li> <li>• F3: “Communication always makes a difference, especially when you do a good project with a company and it succeeds or with people who asked for the project, they recommend you to other people who want the same kind of project, and that is the “Happy Scenario” for any freelancer; the same project, the same cost, but with less effort.”</li> <li>• F1: “I would end up getting a lot of doors because you know I finish the job with one person they recommend me to the next person.”</li> <li>• F2: “So when there is a certain freelance job in your field, they direct you to the people who need you.”</li> <li>• F2: “you earn something then you can learn something else, you can grow, you can add stuff, and so on”</li> <li>• F2: “You can use a lot of the time to learn new things and learn uhm... so you’re time is not only spent on work but also on learning.”</li> <li>• F3: “So now the cost of an</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-controlled</li> <li>• Networking</li> <li>• Recommendations</li> <li>• Intrinsic Motivation</li> </ul>	<h2>Advantages of Freelancing</h2>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Arising) Opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR1: “because actually why should I waste a lot of resources, going from a place to another and so on, when I can do the thing when I am sitting in my place.”</li> <li>• HR1: “So some, or a lot of people because of COVID lost in the HR departments, lost their jobs and actually some companies they are going for freelancers.”</li> <li>• “Maybe I need to raise my income, so I am working besides my job as a freelancer. So it could happen to me any time.”</li> </ul>
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<p>hour of me freelancing is more than the double of my full-time job”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F6: “In freelancing I can receive work with a large bulk of money which can be really nice.”</li> <li>• F3: “If you concentrate well on freelancing, and exploit it well, and create a good name for yourself you can build your own company, and take projects and execute them.”</li> <li>• F2: “You earn something then you can learn something else, you can grow, you can add stuff, and so on.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher income</li> <li>• Self-development</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F2: “You can be working for a while on projects, another time there might not be any projects”.</li> <li>• F4: “Sometimes clients suddenly say they want to stop work now there is no stable, for example economy, the corona pandemic came and everyone stopped working as a social media, the amount of the money at this time stopped.”</li> <li>• F2: “There is no guarantee regarding the money at all and also that you receive it fully”</li> <li>• F3: “You can pressure yourself and not sleep, in order to deliver something that you are not even earning much money for”</li> <li>• F7: “So people can exploit that especially with beginners, with people who don’t have the experience.”</li> <li>• F2: “so no one will stand up for your rights.”</li> <li>• F3: “Another issue is that a client can be very unclear in what he is requesting. He is asking for a, b and c and I will pay him for a, b and c. Then suddenly he wants d, e and f up to z... So I ask him will you pay me for that, and the client says no, what I’m asking is simple stuff.”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Stability</li> <li>• Salary not guaranteed</li> <li>• Exploitation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Dis- advantage s of Freelancin g</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Stability</li> <li>• Competition</li> <li>• Exploitation?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR1: “Why? Because actually, it’s a sort of less payment for them, and saving money for the employer. Because most of the freelancers they are not paid a fixed amount of money”</li> <li>• HR1: “It’s not, it’s not a secured or healthy environment, definitely,”</li> <li>• HR1: “So I am definitely all the time choosing the criteria of those recruiters and I prefer those freelancers to work with them other then the others, the other two”</li> <li>• HR1: “So, now they are needed because I’m paying less because I’m laying off people and even if I didn’t lay off people, I’m dealing with the recruitment as sort of freelancers.”</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F4: “Doing the branding I’m getting a very huge project but to take branding identity and a different creative point to the 5 projects for example, it’s very hard so sometimes i refuse work so this is making unstable for me my money and a social life”</li> <li>• F8: “I need to use my creativity and gain new ideas so if I’m not in the mood I won’t be able to do it I have to do it in the time I will get new ideas when I am in the mood”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Losing creativity</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F1: “means be respected by your employers have people respect your mental health, and respect the time, effort and energy you put in.”</li> <li>• F2: “The person I am working with has to respect me.”</li> <li>• F2: “And there also has to be appreciation, which is even more important than the work itself.”</li> <li>• F3: “There is also appreciation from the managerial level in the company, so for every hour of effort you receive appreciation”</li> <li>• F1: “that there's it goes without saying that your health and your stability and your peace of mind or more important than your job”</li> <li>• F4: “You have to give me the good environment and healthy environment to know how to build my self to know how to give you the good job and to know how to think and create.”</li> <li>• F7: “There are also extra layers, like motivation, team building, all this”</li> <li>• F2: “I will be wanting to work. So you guys are caring about me, you are hiring me</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect</li> <li>• Appreciation</li> <li>• Health</li> </ul>	<p><b>Decent Jobs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Monetary) Incentives</li> <li>• Appreciation</li> <li>• Health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR1: “is mainly about giving the employee the normal or the the acceptable working conditions when it comes to decent working hours, decent payment, when it comes to their, their, their salaries, when it comes to any sort of benefits.”</li> <li>• HR1: “I’m getting the, the acceptable or the, the certain amount of each and everything that would help me to live a normal life without being annoyed on a daily basis, going to my work”</li> <li>• HR1: “having a fair relationship with my direct manager or supervisor, definitely I will feel that I’m having a decent work”</li> <li>• HR1: “let's say, eight working hours per labour law, for example, and paid with, with an average salary range”</li> <li>• HR1: “and it’s actually a healthy, as well, environment to work for”</li> </ul>

<p>as a freelancer, and you're only working with me, and are helping me, and appreciate me moneywise, and pay me on time, we approach the time frame together, so we are comforting each other, or you are giving me a decent job as you call it. So I will give you decent work, the money you pay I will return indeed (as work)."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivation</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F2: "Also having a future that is inclusive and sustainable also doesn't happen"</li> <li>• F1: "So that shows you still need external incentive in order to do a good job. You can't just be intrinsically motivated"</li> <li>• F1: "need some outside incentive"</li> <li>• F1: "I definitely lack experience, stamina, and the will to be committed to one thing for so long."</li> <li>• F1: "I really think that they deserve a lot more credit and yeah a lot more fairness and equal opportunity in work."</li> <li>• F3: "the lack of safety conditions is much larger, because you do not have someone to go to. Freelancing in Egypt is mostly not done with a contract. Some places do have contracts"</li> <li>• F1: "They definitely take advantage of the lack of security"</li> <li>• F2: "Also the part about the rights to be protected from exploitation is not there. There is no secured future, and it is not stable"</li> <li>• F3: "Exploitation is the worst thing that exists in freelancing. Especially</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External incentive</li> <li>• Experience</li> <li>• Will to be committed</li> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• Safety conditions</li> <li>• Exploitation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Aspects Missing to have a Decent Job</b></p>		

<p>here, in the middle-east as I told you.”</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● F2: “I have to be responsible by always working well and being on the top so I receive a lot of projects, so 50%, and the government 30% and the company 20%,”</li> <li>● F7: “I think you as a freelancer, fully... So the freelancer should set a system from the beginning with the client”</li> <li>● F2: “and the company 20%, because if the government is doing it’s job, the company will fear to not give the freelancer their rights”</li> <li>● F6: “For the client 60%. For the individual 40%... First, the client is the one who decides what the income is, not me. The equality, he also decides on how to treat people. And the safe working conditions...”</li> <li>● F8: “But the issue here is that there has to be good regulatons in this matter and also the has to be fair investment in the country.”</li> <li>● F2: “because if the government is doing it’s job, the company will fear to not give the freelancer their rights”</li> <li>● F3: “I think that the country has to interfere in this aspect.”</li> <li>● F2: “And there has to be a law that if the person I am working with did not give me my money that I can raise a case and take him to court”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Individual responsibility</li> <li>● Client/company</li> <li>● Government / Legal authority</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responsibility for providing decent job</b></p>		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F2: “So they can give me my money on time and I will give the their work on time.”</li> <li>• F1: “It’s like what you need to be hired I feel like talent and dedication because of just end of the day I feel like your challenge and your dedication is what sets you apart from other employees or their freelancers so it’s definitely an important factor”</li> <li>• F1: “need external incentive in order to do a good job”</li> <li>• F2: “Also, you can have employees that I can help or have sessions together where we can share our area of expertise so that we both learn from each other and HR can be responsible for this.”</li> <li>• F4: “For me, getting the more experience from the other people is very important, as I mentioned before, that working in a full-time job is very easy for me to get the experience, the full experience”</li> <li>• F2: “You will help my self-development, and I will develop the work for you.”</li> <li>• F1: “use my talent to create a decent job for me in the sense that I can be open with them about what I have to offer and they can be open with me but they have to offer and then we meet in the middle. (...) Going to be learning my talents to a company they need to offer me what their company has.”</li> <li>• F2: “So you guys are caring about me, you are hiring me as a freelancer, and you’re only working with me, and are helping me, and appreciate me moneywise, and pay me on time, we approach the time frame together, so we are comforting each other, or you are giving me a decent job as you call it. So I will give you decent work, the money you</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrinsic motivation resulting from extrinsic motivation</li> <li>• Knowledge sharing</li> <li>• Talent Management</li> <li>• HR Role</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mutual benefits</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intrinsic motivation resulting from extrinsic motivation</li> <li>• Knowledge sharing</li> <li>• Talent Management</li> <li>• HR Role</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR1: “If I’m looking for picking a certain course so I will be after taking this course and adding knowledge to myself so I’m going to be paid with a better definitely amount of money.</li> <li>• HR1: “So I’m adding to my employee so it’s a win-win situation. He or she will get the experience, the knowledge, and for me I’m just paying him a little bit amount of money more and actually I’m having a key player which will be supporting in most of the let’s say the tasks and duties, so it’s a win-win situation”</li> <li>• HR1: “I’m giving them more time, more info, so they are performing better, so they are saving for me time, they’re saving money, they’re saving for me or they are giving me quality which will lead to having better calibers, lower turnover, in in and definitely all of those things would reflect on the business”</li> <li>• HR1: “So I set clearly the wants that I really want in this candidate and the points that I don’t want..”</li> <li>• HR1: “I think if they, like, dealt with them, that it’s sort of a secured relationship, a longer relationship between the freelancer and the organization. I think they would be performing better”</li> </ul>
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<p>pay I will return indeed (as work).”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• F6: “the HR should be responsible for the communication. I want to say that HR’s role should be the same as with a fulltime employee. There are responsible for the communication responsible for not allowing negative influence on you work”</li> <li>• F1: “I think that they can just be very clear and transparent with the people they are employing (...)Why don’t we just cut the middle ground and, you know, cut the awkward complications that get in the way and just be honest with each other?”</li> <li>• F4: “If you are not communicating, and not knowing how others work or how they think, it will be very hard to do work together, without communicating, you will not know how he is going to think”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency &amp; Communication</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparency &amp; Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR1: “so it’s mainly about being clear in the beginning and telling them exactly what you’re looking in your criteria.”</li> <li>• HR1: “So, the employee actually is adding knowledge to himself and adding more money so it definitely fits the, the idea of having a decent work. So, if they care about my development, so they are thinking for my future.”</li> </ul>
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