The Narratives of Freelancers in the Field of Media Production

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Abstract

Aim: This study aims to understand the freelancers' stories as they express their experiences to inspire future freelancers in media production.
Methods: The researcher used the qualitative technique and the descriptive method of investigation to learn more about the informants' stories to collect data.
Results: The informants narrated their stories for being a freelancer in media production for more than 10 years and it gives them the audacity to continue and develop the skills that they have.
Conclusion: The researcher concluded that the informants have different success and struggle stories while pursuing their career and these experiences make them dedicated to their passion.

Keywords: Freelancer, Freelancing, Media Production

INTRODUCTION

The media production industry in the Philippines has a huge roster of talents depending on the skills needed in a project. Since most projects in the media production industry are not permanent and are dependent on the production timeline or how the people will embrace the project, especially in entertainment, companies will hire talents as project-based employees. These project-based talents are, basically, freelancers in the industry and hold a strict schedule or timetable. These freelancers experience many struggles and achievements as they pursue their dream career in the media production industry.

However, given the current economic context in the Philippines, most people decide to forget their passion and choose a dead-end job to provide for their family. According to M. Cepeda (2016), in April 2016, the unemployment rate in the Philippines declined to 6.1% from 6.4% a year ago, but the underemployment rate climbed to 18.4% from 17.8%. Based on the article of Hayes, A. (2022), "unemployment is a state where a person is eager to find job but cannot obtain one," while underemployment according to J. Chen (2021), is a measure of work operation and manpower in the economy that gaze the status of labor force in terms of experience, skills and availability of work. People under underemployment are considered highly skilled but working in low-skill and low-paying jobs and part-time employees who would prefer to be full-time, (Chen, 2021).

Careers may vary in the chosen field that the student selected, specifically in the courses they majored in. Most of the chosen courses in college train the students to expand their knowledge and equip them with the skills needed in the real world to become productive professionals who will make significant contributions in the industry or company they are in, which, in turn, will lead to success in their careers.

According to Slavin, (2018), "Media actually refers to any kind of communication whose purpose is to inform, educate and entertain a wide audience." The tri-media is one of the major topics in media production that focuses on radio, print, and television, which are the sources of information and entertainment around the world. Media production also consists of creating audio-visual products. The aspects involved in this area are producing audio and video content that are used in commercials, movies, online or in other realms, (study.com). According to Calimon (2016), universities and colleges in the country have included the area of communication as a major course.

Most educational institutions with Communication departments offer courses in such areas as journalism, filmmaking, advertising, multi-media arts, and more. Based on statistics from Commission on Higher Education (2014) in Calimon's (2016) paper, the number of Mass Communication and documentation graduates rose from 4,070 in 2006 to 6,153 in 2014. Media Production in the Philippines is the source of information through television, radio, and newspapers. Most media outlets in the Philippines are privately owned, and some are run by the government.

According to Pablo (2018), in 2018, the Philippines had been called the Social Media Capital of the world for having millions of Filipino social media users who spend their time online at least four (4) hours a day. Because of the competitiveness of social media, companies extend and reach out to their clients by releasing advertisements and campaigns that will surely hook and inform their consumers. Even though digital advertisements are in trend, tri-media cannot be obsolete instantly because there are still viewers and audiences that are not dependent on social media. Since media is getting bigger as a medium of information and entertainment, different companies and businesses are looking for people who are experts in the field that they need to deliver.

Employment status in the media may vary based on the specific industry. According to an article by Calimon (2016), reported and published in Philippine Daily Inquirer last May 1, 2014, most of the media workers are called "talents" or contractual workers. In the usual company or industry, contractors are classified as trainees, apprentices, helpers, casuals, piece craters, agency-hired, or project employees. Contractual workers are hired and fired after five months of a work contract. Aside from contractual status, freelancing is also one of the employment conditions in media production. Merriam Webster (2018) defines a freelancer as a person who acts independently without being affiliated with or authorized by an organization. It is also defined as a person who pursues a profession without a long-term commitment with any employer. A freelancer is a self-employed worker who selects his clients and has the freedom to choose the time and days that he wants to work (Merriam Webster, 2018).

Since media production is a big industry, companies that tend to hire employees but are unable to retain them permanently manage to categorize them in a project-based status. Subsequently, companies find it impractical to purchase equipment for a specific need just to respond to the requirements of their client. Thus, companies hire freelancers who have the skills and equipment that can provide for their client's needs. Most companies hire freelancers to implement their content needs for a single compensation and without any obligations to pay mandatory benefits, monthly salary, and allowances.

Jalan (2018) stated that a freelancer has an advantage of having the freedom to choose their clients and projects, a flexible time and location, an opportunity to earn more money, an exposure to multi-faceted projects, a chance to experiment on their craft, and the best is an opportunity to become a better human being. Freelancers might receive higher salaries than regular workers because they have the opportunity to work with multiple clients as long as they can balance and deliver their clients' needs and deadlines, based on GCFGlobal.org (2018),

"In many jobs, you're often assigned tasks or projects without having much say in the matter. As a freelancer, you're able to choose your own projects".

Establishing a career as a freelancer is not easy especially without a portfolio / reel that will support accomplished works. Most successful freelancers were hired through referrals with their previous clients and colleagues. According to Wong, (2014), "once you're established as a freelancer, you'll receive an email or a call from a prospective client who has heard of you through word of mouth, but for the most part, you're the one who has to do the legwork to get those jobs".

Still, being a freelancer also has its disadvantages. According to Kane, S., (2018), a freelance worker can be isolated because he or she will be working on his or her own with very limited interaction with management and other employees.

The researcher personally experienced in Freelancing that it lacks major employment benefits such as health insurance, paid vacation, sick leaves and other common perks enjoyed by those in the traditional employment set-up, and this statement was supported by the Article of Madison, J., (2016), "One of the biggest drawbacks of being is a freelancer is that you won't get any employer benefits, such as health insurance, paid sick days or paid vacation time. So whenever you take time off or stay in bed because you are sick, there is no income. You will have to use your savings in order to make up for the loss of income. Especially at the beginning of your business venture, this can be quite risky". In March 15, 2020, was the first day of lockdown in the Philippines due to coronavirus pandemic. In the article of Abad, P., (2020), "freelancers in film and advertising weigh in on the effects of the lockdown on their livelihood". "The most affected in this pandemic are the Day workers or daily-wage earners in Adland – no shoot, no pay. It is similar to those on-call workers or zero hour contracts, if there's no work for them, they don't get anything," (Abad, 2020).

Freelancers don't have proper office hours, which is also a disadvantage since clients might call the freelancer anytime and anywhere. Freelancers in the Philippines do not receive any written contract or agreement provided by the company or client in terms of salary and project timeline. Most agreements are verbal or with the use of communication technology, especially for projects with short timetables.

The Philippine government has yet to have a law in place protecting freelancers' rights from their clients. Most of the policies available may classify freelancing as a self-employed status. Unlike freelancers who claim their talent fees complete and without deductions, the taxes and mandatory benefits of employed workers are automatically deducted from their monthly salary. It is the option of the freelancers to pay their benefits and other health insurances to

secure their personal and family needs. Yet, they are still considered workers in the Philippines, and they are required to pay taxes as well. Some freelance workers might not pay their monthly or quarterly taxes because there is no specific period of time for the release of their talent fees.

Working in the Philippines, employees are secured and protected by the legislation and regulations according to their type of employment. This may help each worker to be guided and well-informed on their rights as an employee which is stated in the Labor Code of the Philippines. With the help of the Department of Labor and Employment, private workers and other employment status stated in the Labor of Code are much protected and secured with the law. Unlike freelancers, the law that specifically protects them from companies or employers is still in the process of becoming a law in the House of Representatives and Senate of the Philippines. The Senate Bill no. 351 by Senator Bam Aquino IV (2016) and the counterpart House Bill no. 5369 by Rep. Christopher De Venecia (2019) both aims to have a written contract for the protection of the freelancers specially after delivering the requirements and rendering the services, freelancers were not able to receive any payments from their client which is one of the main reasons why most freelancers can't pay their taxes and benefits on time. Because of the pandemic, the number of freelancers in the Philippines increased to make a living. According to the article of Cervantes, F. (2021), House Bill 8817 or the proposed Freelance Workers Protection Act was passed last March 25, 2021, without negative votes and no abstentions in the House of the Representatives. "The Freelance Workers Protection Act provides a down payment or hazard pay granted to freelancers at least 25 percent of the total payment for the period of work deployment unless there is a more favorable fee agreed in the contract," (F. Cervantes, 2021). In August 2021, Sen. Joel Villanueva pushed for fast approval of House Bill 8817 to prevent freelancers from abuse and exploitation cases, (C. Chau, 2021) but no update until this moment.

Like roadblocks in a career, we cannot calculate when mistakes are coming. Most career mistakes are particularly common during the early years or starting out in their career. But some people technically experienced those errors during the midpoints of their career. Usually those mistakes carried beneficial results to make their path in a better situation. According to Tsaousides, (2018), "Failure allows us to learn from our mistakes, to assess what worked and what didn't, and to regroup our efforts after recovery from the failure".

A person cannot attain their goals and gain success unless they discipline themselves to practice and learn more about the craft that they are pursuing. They cannot also accomplish recognitions and awards without allowing themselves to face and accept challenges that may help them grow in their career. But the career successes of workers were the ones who were motivated by the people around them. They were influenced by those people based on the habits and behavior that they were showing every single day that they were together. Based on the study of Uwimpuhwe (2019) and quoted, "the organization's success or failure depends on the performance of its employees; therefore, the company's human resources are important since they are the key to the productivity, prosperity and performance of its workforce. Managing and administering the employees with good treatment, understanding and recognizing their output directly or indirectly has an impact with their performance and as result performance of the company. Unmotivated staff under no circumstance will turn out declining performance", (Nduro, 2012).

To continue a successful career, people need to embrace change and a willingness to grow not just in their comfort zone but also to adjust in many aspects as well. Exploring more in their passion, study latest information in the industry and understand your colleagues and future clients. An article from Brown University, (2017) stated, "If you want to learn something very important, maybe overlearning is a good way," Watanabe said. "If you do over-learning, you may be able to increase the chance that what you learn will not be gone."

With this paper, the researcher desires to hear the freelancers' concerns to continue their passion while making a living and to express their experiences to inspire future freelancers in media production. The government must protect freelancers from their clients to compensate them responsibly and treat them as their assets as well. The researcher experienced difficulties in investigating the experiences of freelancers in media production because of literature gap. Therefore, the study was pursued.

This study examined the experiences of freelancers in the field of media production through their narratives. Specifically, it aimed to answer the these questions: (1) What are the socio-demographic profile of the informants in terms of their age, position in media production, number of years as a freelancer in media production and their stories as freelancers; (2) What are the viewpoints of the informants on being a freelancer in terms of (a) its definition, and (b) the nature of their job; (3) What are the experiences and insights of the informants in their current career in terms of (a) Struggles and difficulties (b) Gains and benefits; and lastly, (4) what are the next steps of the informants in their career development.

As basis of this study, the researcher applied the Narrative Paradigm of Walter Fisher as the theoretical framework of the study. This theory was developed in

1984 by Walter Fisher, a professor at the University of Southern California in the department of Annenberg School of Communication. According to Griffin (2003), Fisher quickly came to the conclusion that all kinds of communication that appeal to our reason should be understood as stories formed by history, society, and character.

The origin of the narration paradigm according to Griffin (2003), Fisher defines narration as "symbolic actions – words and / or deeds – that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create or interpret them." Narration is a kind of communication that is grounded in time and location. In terms of character, movie, and action, it touches all parts of our lives and the lives of others. This phrase also encompasses any verbal or nonverbal attempt to persuade someone to believe or act in a specific manner. Even though a message appears abstract and lacks visuals, it is narration because it is integrated into the speaker's continuing tale with a beginning, middle, and finish, and it enables listeners to interpret its meaning and judge its worth for their own lives. (Griffin, 2003).

Fisher uses the term paradigm to refer to a conceptual framework. It isn't inherent in events; it's attached at the workbench of the mind. A paradigm is a universal model which calls for people to view events through a common interpretive lens (Griffin, 2003). Narrative Rationality is a way to evaluate the work of stories based on the twin standards of narrative coherence and narrative fidelity (Griffin, 2003).

There are two standards on how a person will accept a story according to their narrative rationality: (1) Narrative Coherence: is the principle of narrative paradigm that the listener understands and is convinced by the consistency and unity of the narrator's story. The factors that may influence the effectiveness of the delivery of the story are: the structure of the narrative, the resemblance between stories, and the credibility of the characters. (Griffin, 2003)

(2) Narrative Fidelity: is the principle of the narrative paradigm that defines the sincerity and consistency of the narrator's story. It is the coherence of the listener, if he is swayed or persuaded by the narrator to accept the story or not. State at communicationtheory.org, there are questions to be considered if the coherence of fidelity is attained by the narrator:
• Are the events mentioned in the book true?
• Has the truth been skewed in the narrator's?
• What thinking processes did you use when narrating?
• How does the story's argument influence the listener's decision-making?
• How is the significance of the tale conveyed? The Narrative Paradigm of Fisher is a communication that judges the story's credibility and reliability by listeners. It is the consistency and unity of the story of the narrator.

In helping the researcher identify the different stories of the informants, the chosen theory is the Narrative Paradigm by Fisher. With this theory, it has supported the topic to understand and figure out the life occurrences of a person in narrating and describing their stories, which is the purpose of the Narrative Paradigm. Through the narrative rationality twin standards, the researcher evaluated the worth of the informants' stories. This study had an in-depth interview with the selected informants and recorded their stories about their experiences and challenges of being a freelancer in media production. The researcher also aims to identify on how the informants faced the different struggles in their current profession.

The researcher constructed a conceptual framework using the linear Communication Model and Berlo's expansion model of Shannon and Weaver Model of Communication. As the sender, each informant described and narrated the nature of their job, struggles & difficulties that they experienced, and the things that they gained & the benefits that they had as a freelancer in media production industry to the researcher (as the receiver). While the informants were narrating their stories, the researcher was taking notes and evaluating the narratives with the help of Narrative Coherence and Narrative Fidelity. Below the Narrative Rationality in the framework, the researcher identified the factors that influenced the story of the freelancers to the researcher. The investigator identified that the Narrative Coherence are the arrangement, consistency and the accuracy of the freelancer's stories while the Narrative Fidelity, the following factors affect the researcher: understand the story, appreciate the story, and evaluate the story. Using the elements of Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) by Pearce and Cronen (1980): the stories told and stories lived. Stories told are the creative narratives to analyze, explain and interpret the stories lived while the stories lived are the actions that performed with the help of other people. The factors of Narrative Coherence are the stories told of the freelancers were consistent and with unity, and the Narrative Fidelity had been associated with the informants' stories lived on the researcher.

Figure 1. **Conceptual Framework**
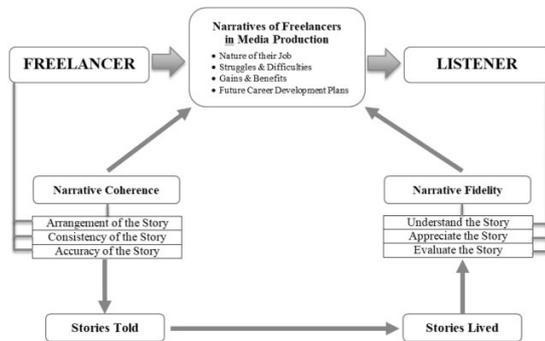
II. METHODS

Research Design

This research focused on the narratives of the freelancers in the field of media production. In conducting this study, the researcher adopted the qualitative approach. McLeod (2017) defined qualitative research as a multimethod in focus, involving an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the informants. This descriptive study aims to observe and understand the stories of the freelancers in media production industry in gathering data. Leedy and Ormrod (as cited in Kim & Boyd, 2015) describe descriptive research as "a sort of study that includes either characterizing the features of an observed occurrence or examining probable correlations between two or more events."

Tradition of Inquiry

In achieving the purpose of this study, the researcher used the Phenomenology design of qualitative research to answer the main problem of the study. This style of research seeks to analyze, understand and interpret the experiences of the informants.

Phenomenology experiences of the informants (Research Methodology and Dissertation as stated in statisticsolutions.com, 2018). Using the Phenomenology research design, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview with the informants gathers data by identifying the phenomena and understanding the lived experiences of the informants (Research Methodology and Dissertation as stated in statisticsolutions.com, 2018). Using the Phenomenology research design, the researcher conducted an in-depth interview with the informants to gather narratives on their experiences as a freelancer in media production. With this method, the researcher understood clearly the circumstances, issues, success, and achievements of being a freelance worker in the media production industry. In supporting this study, an in-depth interview was used by the researcher to gather the viewpoints of the informants as a freelancer in media production

Data Generation Method

To be able to gather data, the researcher looked for qualified informants who qualified using a specific set of criteria. In selecting the informants, the researcher listed down the names of the freelancers that she worked with and who fit the criteria. The researcher also browsed the Internet to clarify the years, the projects, and the recognitions of the freelancers before she contacted them. Upon searching and contacting the available and willing freelancers for an interview, the researcher gathered five (5) informants and scheduled an interview based on their availability and preferred location.

After the in-depth interviews, the researcher transcribed the recordings and matched the notes taken during the interviews to check for the consistency and accuracy of the story of each informant. Since the interview recordings and the transcripts were continuously recorded, the researcher drafted the interviews based on the key informants' answers for each question.

Using the in-depth interview, the narratives of each informant about their experiences and viewpoints as a freelancer in media production were delivered and expressed. The said method was explored by the researcher and helped her in answering the problems of the study. According to Steber (2017), "In-depth interviews are a qualitative data collection method that involves direct, one-on-one engagement with individual participants."

Description of Informants

To develop a credible and purposive study, the researcher selected five (5) suitable key informants that who answered directly in the given questions during the in-depth interview. The informants were selected based on the following criteria: (1) Full-time freelancers in the media production industry, (2) consistently working in media production industry for more than 5 years, and (3) were nominees and/or recipient of awards in known local or international media festivals.

The 5 selected freelance in media production served as the sources of information, (2) two actors, two (2) Cinematographer and one (1) Production designer. All informants were recognized because of the nominations and awards by different media festivals for performing outstandingly in their crafts.

The profile of the informants was determined and shown on Matrix 1:

MATRIX 1: **The Profile of the Informants***

INFORMANT'S NAME	GENDER	AGE	DEPARTMENT / POSITION IN MEDIA PRODUCTION	NO. OF YEARS IN MEDIA PRODUCTION	NO. OF YEARS AS FREELANCER
Dino	M	33	Actor	12 years	12 years
Romnick	M	46	Actor	38 years	16 years
Sol	F	35	Director of Photography	11 years	11 years
Mackie	M	34	Director of Photography	14 years	14 years
Popo	M	34	Production Designer	12 years	12 years

*2019 Data

MATRIX 1.2: **The Informants' Yearly Nominations & Awards***

INFORMANTS	YEAR	FILM FESTIVAL	PROJECT / AWARD	RESULT
DINO	2015	Cinema One Originals Digital Film Festival	Baka Siguro Yata (2015) Best Actor	Won
	2021	Gawad Urian Awards	Midnight in a Perfect World (2020) Best Supporting Actor	Nominee
	2016	Star Awards for Movies	Baka, Siguro, Yata (2015) New Movie Actor of the Year	Nominee
ROMNICK	1979	FAMAS Awards	Pinagbuklod ng Pag-ibig (1978) Best Child Actor	Nominee
	1985	FAMAS Awards	Pieta: Ikalawang Aklat (1984) Best Child Actor	Nominee
	1993	FAMAS Awards	Sa Aking Puso: The Marcos 'Bong' Manalang Story (1992) Best Actor	Nominee
	1995	Gawad Urian Awards	Johnny Tinoso and the Proud Beauty (1993) Best Suporting Actor	Nominee
	1998	Gawad Urian Awards	Damong Ligaw (1997) Best Actor	Nominee
	1998	Young Critics Circle, Philippines	Damong Ligaw (1997) Best Performance by Male or Female, Adult or Child, Individual or Ensemble in Leading or Supporting Role	Nominee
	1999	Gawad Urian Awards	Miguel/Michelle (1998) Best Actor	Nominee
	1999	FAMAS Awards	Miguel/Michelle (1998) Best Actor	Nominee
	1999	Asian TV Awards	GMA Telemovie "Bakla" Best Actor (Drama)	Winner
	2008	Gawad Urian Awards	Prinsesa (2007) Best Actor	Nominee
	2008	Golden Screen Awards, Philippines	Prinsesa (2007) Best Performance by an Actor in a Lead Role (Drama)	Nominee
	2015	FAMAS Awards	Hustisya (2014)	Nominee
	2019	Gawad Urian Awards	Kung Paano Hinintay ang Dapithapon (2018)	Nominee
SOL	2007	Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival	Tagapagligtas (2007) Best Short Film	Nominee
	2010	Gawad Urian Awards	Ang Panggagahasa Kay Fe (2009)	Nominee
	2016	Gawad Urian Awards	Bambanti (2015) Best Cinematography Shared with Joseph Delos Reyes (cinematography)	Nominee
	2016	Star Awards for Movies	Bambanti (2015) Best Cinematography	
	2016	Young Critics Circles, Philippines	Bambanti (2015) Best Achievement in Cinematography and Visual Design Shared with Joseph Delos Reyes (cinematography) Aped Santos (production design)	Nominee
MACKIE	2010	Star Awards for Movies	Mangatyanan (2009) Digital Movie Cinematographer of the Year	Nominee
	2011	Young Critics Circle, Philippines	Shake Rattle and Roll 12 (2010) Best Achievement in Cinematography and Visual Design Shared with: Benjamin Padero (production designer)	Nominee
	2011	Star Awards for Movies	Shake Rattle and Roll 12 Movie Cinematographer of the Year	Nominee
	2013	Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival	Sana Dati (2013) Best Cinematographer – Directors Showcase	Won
	2015	Star Awards for Movie	Dementia (2014) Indie Movie Cinematographer of the Year	Nominee
	2015	Gawad Urian Awards	Dementia (2014) Best Cinematography	Nominee
	2015	Metro Manila Film Festival	#WalangForever (2015) Best Cinematography	Nomiee
	2018	Star Awards for Movies	Bliss (2017) Indie Movie Cinematographer of the Year	Nominee
	2018	Cinema One Originals Digital Film Festival	Hospicio (2018) Best Cinematography	Nominee
	2019	Star Awards for Movies	Distance (2018) Indie Movie Cinematographer of the Year	Nominee
	2021	Star Awards for Movies	Unforgettable (2019) Movie Cinematographer of the Year	Nominee
POPO	2014	Star Awards for Movies	Ang Huling Cha-Cha ni Anita (2013) Indie Movie Production Designer of the Year	Nominee
	2015	Star Awards for Movies	1st ko si 3rd (2014) Indie Movie Production Designer of the Year Shared with: Jeck Cogama	Nominee
	2015	Star	Dementia (2014)	Nominee

		Awards for Movies	Indie Movie Production Designer of the Year	
	2015	Gawad Urian Awards	Dementia (2014) Best Production Design	Won
	2016	CineFilipino Film Festival	Star Na Si Van Damme Stallone (2016) Best Production Design – Jury Prize	Nominee
	2018	Star Awards for Movies	Respeto (2017) Indie Movie Best Production Designer of the Year	Nominee
	2018	Gawad Urian Awards	Respeto (2017) Best Production Design	Nominee
	2018	FAP Awards, Philippines	Respeto (2017) Best Production Design	Nominee
	2018	FAMAS Awards	Respeto (2017) Outstanding Achievement in Production Design	Nominee
	2018	Cinema One Originals Digital Film Festival	Mamu: And a Mother Too (2018) Best Production Design	Nominee
	2019	Cinema One Originals Digital Film Festival	Tia Madre (2019) Best Production Design	Nominee
	2020	Metro Manila Film Festival	The Missing (2020) Best Production Design	Nominee

*Source: imdb.com, web.archive.org

Informed Consent Forms were not available when the in-depth interviews were conducted. The informants were informed about the research paper and willingly shared their personal thoughts and experiences about freelancing in media production industry.

Instrumentation

The in-depth interviews were recorded in audio formats. Using a voice recorder, the researcher documented the interviews of the key informants. An interview guide which contains the profile of the informants was produced by the researcher which also includes the years they spent in media production and their projects that received recognitions and awards. During the interview, the researcher noted and highlighted the important details mentioned by the informants to check the accuracy of their answers. Afterwards, the researcher transcribed and summarized the audio recordings and created a list based on the answers of the key informants to the given questions.

Ethical Consideration

This study respects the narratives and different experiences of the selected key informants for being a freelance worker in media production. The researcher humbly requested the key informant's willingness in conducting the interview through phone call and personal conversation. To check the availability of their schedule and the place that they preferred to have the interview, the researcher sent personal text messages to them. The appropriate

attitude of the researcher and the informant was also observed before and during the entire interview. The professionalism of each party was observed, and the standards of interview guidelines were also followed. All information shared by the informants were recorded and incorporated in the study. Yet, there are some topics mentioned during the interview that needed to be taken off the record and edited out for confidentiality purposes. However, the researcher provided refreshments during the interviews and tokens for the key informants after conducting the meeting. The researcher also complied with the guidelines for anti-plagiarism which were observed in completing this research paper

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results and findings of the research were presented by describing the informants' profiles and answers, the questions that were based on an interview guide. Five (5) freelancers in media production were the selected informants in an in-depth interview, to gather from their answers the description of their experiences, feelings, beliefs, perceptions, and stories of their struggles and success in the field they are currently working in. With all data gathered, the researcher analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of being a freelancer in media production and the next steps of each freelance informant in their career.

1. Profile of the Informants

The study's population is composed of five (5) freelancers that are working in different departments in media production industry. At this juncture, the profiles of the informants were presented at the Descriptions of the informants in Methods section.

2. Informants' Viewpoint for Being A Freelancer in Terms of (a) Its Definition; (b) The Nature of Their Job

In the statement of GCFGlobal.org (2018), "In many jobs, you're often given tasks or projects without having much say in the matter. As a freelancer, you're able to select your own ventures". The common understanding of the informants about freelancing is affiliated in any production houses or managers who will dictate the projects that they need to accept. As the boss of their own schedule is an advantage on their end.

The freedom of organizing their own calendar between projects and personal plans is a privilege and accepting projects based on their availability and convenience is also a benefit for the informants and it is supported by Jalan, K. (2018) which stated that

a freelancer has an advantage of having the right to choose their clients and jobs, a flexible time and location, a possibility to earn more money, an exposure to multi-faceted projects, a chance to experiment on their craft, and the best is an opportunity to become a better human being.

In the aspect of **people**, they have different explanations, an informant stated that the people they're working with in film industry were more collaborative than with the advertising people because these people are mostly working by the books or creatively following the approved storyboards while in film, they were more open to creative suggestions. An informant also narrated that production units are different from other teams; some were always in rush, irrationally annoyed, serious, and lively, which he believes that it is basically common because of the practices developed inside the team.

An informant opened up about **schedule/workload** of being a freelancer in TV production; most production houses have tight budget in producing a project. Therefore, to push a video project, they basically run and finish the tapings and shootings up to 24 hours. It is cheaper to pay overtime than to book another day of shooting. The informant concerns about the health of the crew and staff since most of the crew like the camera department (technical crew) and art department (set men) are the most affected. They were booking multiple shootings/tapings just to earn more talent fees since they were a day-to-day payees, in short, a no-work, no pay freelancers.

As for the **rates/talent fees**, the informants have a similar viewpoints; it is based on the value or worth of their skills and talents that they will contribute to the project. Their standard rate is basically measures on the scope, duration, and the people involved in the project.

3. Informants' Experiences and Insights in their Current Career in terms of (a) Struggles & Difficulties; (b) Gains & Benefits

According to Wong, (2014), "once you're well-known freelancer, you'll receive an email or a call from a prospective client who has heard of you through word of mouth, but for the most part, you're the one who has to do the legwork to get those jobs". The informants responded that the most common roadblocks in their career were when they were starting out in pursuing their career and passion. Due to lack of connections and network in the industry, no mentor that will declare to them that they are already qualified, nobody is hiring them, and fear of not being accepted or being non-effective in the industry are the reasons of the

informants that they considered roadblocks in their career.

One disadvantage of being a freelancer is not having employer benefits such as paid leaves, health care, insurance and allowances, based on the Article of Madison, (2016), "One of the biggest drawbacks of being is a freelancer is that you won't get any employer benefits, such as health insurance, paid sick days or paid vacation time. So whenever you take time off or stay in bed because you are sick, there is no income. You will have to use your savings in order to make up for the loss of income. Especially at the beginning of your business venture, this can be quite risky".

Mistakes could be a better method in exploring better paths, and the informants permitted themselves to experience unexpected knowledge and mistakes to see their personal creativeness and limits. According to Tsaousides (2018), "Failure allows us to learn from our mistakes, to assess what worked and what didn't, and to regroup our efforts after recovery from the failure".

The informants told the researcher that they were responsible in the actions that they will show. Being successful in their career are the reflections of their hardships and willingness to learn more in their field. Awards and trophies in their field can be a point in their career but the end result is the current situation of their life. Competitive advantages of the informants are different in many ways, they have their own skills and mindsets in doing their passion. Receiving awards and recognitions for the informants are just extra points in their career because they were just doing their passion and job but still, media festivals appreciates their craft. The informants will improve and develop their skills by their willingness in learning new things, techniques and methods. They will also try new genres and varieties in their current field. Based on the study of Uwimpuhwe (2019) and quoted, "the organization's success or failure depends on the performance of its employees; therefore, the company's human resources are important since they are the key to the productivity, prosperity and performance of its workforce. Managing and administering the employees with good treatment, understanding and recognizing their output directly or indirectly has an impact with their performance and as result performance of the company. Unmotivated staff under no circumstance will turn out declining performance", (Nduro, 2012).

4. Next Steps of the Informants in their Career Development

Some of the informants will extend their career to other area of their industry not just to test or observe their other abilities, but because they are willing to try and experience more in their lives. Allowing themselves to see other aspects in their field

and that may challenge themselves in trying out new techniques in their chosen career. Some of the informants also wanted to improve their skills and talents by attending workshops and mentorships that will help them fulfill the mastery of their craft. An article from Brown University, (2017) stated, "If you want to learn something very important, maybe overlearning is a good way," Watanabe said. "If you do over-learning, you may be able to increase the chance that what you learn will not be gone."

IV. CONCLUSIONS

After the careful analysis and interpretation of the informant's response to the objectives, the researcher concluded that: (1) the selected informants were working in different departments of media production industry for more than 10 years as freelancers. The informants have received several nominations and awards from various media/film festivals recognizing their talents and skills contributed in the industry.

In answering the second objective (2) the informants explained freelancing from their personal understanding and similarly defined it without a bond from any production houses or managers that will dictate projects. The selected informants have also defined freelancing as having the freedom to organize and manage their own calendar between personal and professional schedules.

As to the nature of their job as a freelancer in media production, the informants' explained their viewpoints in several aspects. Since media production is a broad industry which consists of TV, print, radio, and internet, the selected informants were working as freelancers in video formats. The informants stated their personal experiences and different explanations in terms of the industry's culture: people, workload/schedule and rate/talent fee. The informants have different perspectives when it comes to working with people. The results indicate that best practices, background, and industry play a big role in team collaboration. In terms of schedule/workload, the informants are critical and frequently double check their calendars before accepting another project to prevent conflict between professional and personal commitment. Informants have a similar perspective in terms of talent fees, which are greatly dependent on each personal standard rate, scope of the projects, timespan, and value of each project.

The informants answered the third objective as (3) to the basic struggle of being a freelancer where all informants faced difficulty in securing employee benefits including paid leave, health care, allowances, and insurance. Despite the hardship and sacrifice of being a freelancer, all informants were able to share personal and professional gains and benefits. These include gaining more reliable networks, grasping on different opportunities that lead to awards and recognition; learning new skills, and becoming strong and resilient.

As to the last objective, (4) all informants convey that improving and developing their current skills and profession is their main goal. Continuous improvement and moving forward to the next level of their perspective career is their key objective to reach their goal. The researcher observed that allowing to discover new techniques and the willingness to learn more about the career from colleagues and experts in the field, helped the informants improve their skills and talents. Appreciating criticism and positive comments helped the informants grow and mature in their chosen career. Having workshops and trying out new skillsets is also an advantage in developing and discovering new abilities.

The conceptual framework illustrates the connection between the informant's narrative coherence and the listener's narrative fidelity. Each informant described and narrated the nature of their job, struggles & difficulties, and gains & the benefits. Each story from the respective informant are evaluated by the listener (researcher) and guided by narrative fidelity. The investigator identified that the Narrative Coherence are the arrangement, consistency and the accuracy of the freelancer's stories while the Narrative Fidelity, the following factors affect the researcher: understand the story, appreciate the story, and evaluate the story.

Using the elements of Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM). The stories told are the creative narratives to analyze, explain and interpret the stories lived while the stories lived are the actions that performed. The factors of Narrative Coherence are the stories told of the freelancers were consistent and with unity, and the Narrative Fidelity had been associated with the informants stories lived on the researcher. With the use of Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM), the researcher was able to propose three (3) recommendations based on the conclusions drawn:

(1) Freelancers and future freelancers should continue pursuing their passion in their career. All paths have roadblocks and eventually those hardships will soon be recognized and awarded. Freelancers should also allow themselves to accept criticism in a positive manner. Freelancer should join with different workshops and seminars to enhance their skills and improve their technique for new procedures and methods. Freelancers should build their network and create wide connections for different opportunities in their respective field. Lastly, freelancers should take time to learn the advantages and disadvantages of being a freelancer to better manage their talent fees, workloads, and securities in life.

(2) Media Production Houses / Companies that hire freelancers should be transparent and willing to help the freelancers know their rights, especially to those who are new in the industry. Organization should orient freelancers concerning the company's policies and regulations.

(3) Media production organizations should organize workshops and seminars for freelancers to improve their skills and performance. This initiative will help freelancers be recognized by other media productions and companies that will help them to have projects, and it will also be an advantage to extend their network / connections in the industry.

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