

REIMAGINING CAREER GUIDANCE IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: ALIGNING NATIONAL POLICIES WITH THE REALITIES OF THE GLOBAL DIGITAL ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the divergence between traditional career guidance models in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and the dynamics of the digital economy, conceptualized as a distinct outcome of specific socio-economic conditions. The study examines the drivers of youth “digital emigration,” analyzes the underlying structural interests of global digital platforms, and explores how these factors redefine contemporary career trajectories. The objective is to theoretically framework digital labor as an adaptive strategy for mitigating domestic systemic anomalies, while simultaneously delineating the structural differences between conventional and digital employment. Furthermore, the paper analyzes the working conditions of digital workers operating within Bosnia and Herzegovina, who concurrently navigate a pronounced deficit in institutional support. Utilizing multiple regression analysis, this study evaluates the impact of the independent variables “Average Monthly Net Wage in BiH” and “Above Basic Digital Skills” on the dependent variable “Hourly Wage of Digital Workers,” thereby empirically validating the formulated research hypotheses. The paper concludes that the career development of digital workers is decoupled from the conditions of the domestic traditional economy, macro-dependant instead on the global economic landscape and the proficiency of their digital skills.

Keywords: Career Guidance, Digital Economy, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Digital Enclosure, Social Justice

1. INTRODUCTION

Within this new economic order, traditional concepts of linear career development and institutionally mediated employment are rapidly giving way to flexible, yet highly precarious, forms of remote work (Standing, 2011). While developed economies integrate these changes through proactive digital transformation strategies, post-socialist and post-conflict societies on the geopolitical periphery of Europe, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH), face a unique socio-technical paradox. While national policies and institutional models of career guidance in BH remain firmly rooted in a rigid, industrial paradigm, a significant portion of the young and highly skilled workforce is undergoing processes of autonomous integration into global value chains, creating a phenomenon defined in the literature as “digital emigration” (Graham et al., 2017). The contemporary discourse on human resource development and macroeconomic stability is increasingly articulated through the prism of the Fourth

Industrial Revolution, within which technological advancements radically reconfigure the global division of labor (Schwab, 2016). Traditional postulates of industrial economies, relying on stable labor relations and predictable institutional frameworks within national borders, are rapidly retreating before the expansion of platform-based business models. In such an environment, the concept of a career loses its historical characteristics of static nature and linear progression, transforming into highly dynamic, fluid, and individualized socio-technical trajectories (Bridstock, 2019). For developed Western democracies, these processes represent an avenue for planned digital transition and the implementation of innovative lifelong learning strategies, based on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning - EQF (European Commission, 2020). Conversely, for transition countries and post-conflict societies, the digital space becomes an alternative, parallel, and often unregulated market operating beyond the reach of state control mechanisms and social protection (Heeks, 2017). In this context, Bosnia and Herzegovina stands out as a specific area of pronounced socio-economic contrasts and structural anomalies. While the domestic institutional system, including the education sector and public employment services, suffers from chronic inertia and rigidity, the youth population autonomously finds channels for economic integration at the global level (World Bank, 2021). Official data and international indexes recognize BH and the Western Balkans region as one of the leading zones per capita regarding participation in the global online workforce (Stephany et al., 2021). This phenomenon of mass engagement on foreign platforms does not represent mere technical progress or a reflection of high digital literacy, but rather a reflection of deep social circumstances (Graham et al., 2017). However, this spontaneous integration into global economic flows takes place within a complete institutional vacuum, which constitutes the central research problem of this paper. Current legislative and strategic frameworks in BH treat digital labor in a fragmented manner—primarily through the lens of taxation and foreign currency inflows—while the labor-legal status, social security, and systemic support for these workers are entirely neglected. Career guidance, as a public policy intended to direct, empower, and protect human capital, remains focused in BiH on traditional mediation within the domestic labor market. Aligning national strategies with the demands of digital transformation is crucial for labor market sustainability, which is further confirmed by regional studies focused on innovative economic policies in the Western Balkans. According to the findings of Stojanović, investing in innovative activities and digital technologies represents a fundamental prerequisite for raising the competitiveness of Western Balkan countries in the global market. Through the application of a multi-criteria SMART approach (CRITIC and CRADIS methods), the authors demonstrate that pronounced disparities regarding innovative characteristics exist within this region, which necessitates a redefinition of national strategies and a shift toward stabilizing decision-making models in developing economies (Stojanović et al., 2022).

The scientific contribution of this paper lies in its endeavor to deconstruct the sharp disconnection between static national policies and the dynamic digital reality in which workers from BH operate on a daily basis. Instead of a reactive approach limited to the administrative registration of the unemployed, this paper advocates for a proactive transformation of public policies toward developing digital agility, legal literacy, and protecting the dignity of labor within the global economy (Wood et al., 2019). Following the introductory considerations, the paper provides a critical review of global literature on the platform economy, with a special emphasis on changes in the structure of occupations and skills. The central part of the paper is dedicated to the methodological framework, which combines desk research and available statistical indicators on trends within the digital labor market in BH. The conclusion of the paper summarizes the key theses and defines directions for future empirical research in this field.

2.THEORETICAL RECONFIGURATION OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT: TRADITIONAL VERSUS PLATFORM PARADIGM

2.1. PERVIOUS RESEARCH

The global labor market is undergoing a profound transformation driven by the expansion of the digital economy and the proliferation of labor platforms, which redefines traditional concepts of employment and career development (Srnicek, 2017). The beginnings of the digital economy's development date back to the 1990s and the emergence of the internet, which laid the foundation for its subsequent growth (Bukht & Heeks, 2017). The tethering of workers to the physical location of the production process has drastically decreased over the years. Wherever a need for new jobs emerged alongside a significant presence of digital connectivity, many individuals turned to the outsourcing of digitally mediated labor as a way to overcome certain limitations of their local labor markets (Taylor & Bain, 2017). The digital economy, driven by the rise of platform capitalism and artificial intelligence, has fundamentally redefined the nature of work, blurring traditional boundaries between the workplace and the home, as well as between the status of an employee and an entrepreneur (Srnicek, 2017). Elaborating on the same concept, Deloitte identifies four main areas of rapidly expanding digital transformation: the future of work, customer experience, the digital supply network, and the Internet of Things (2021). In the contemporary digital era, the concept of a career ceases to be a linear process within a single stable organization and transforms into the so-called "boundaryless career." Workers no longer advance through the hierarchical ladders of a single firm; instead, they manage a "portfolio career," balancing multiple distinct projects, clients, and platforms simultaneously (Bridstock, 2019). This observation aligns with Arthur's assertions, according to which the boundaryless career is characterized by mobility and flexibility (Arthur & Rousseau, 2001). The main characteristic of a career in the digital age is its foundation in technological advancement (Ha et al., 2026). Numerous platforms utilize complex algorithms for worker ranking, performance evaluation, or the hiring process. In various literature sources, the term "algorithmic management" can be found. This process implies replacing human managers with invisible software code, which often results in reduced transparency and the degradation of workers' bargaining power (Wood et al., 2019; Gandini, 2019). In such an environment, career guidance and skills development must transform radically. Traditional "hard" knowledge quickly becomes obsolete, while digital agility, the ability to manage an online reputation, and continuous learning (lifelong learning) come to the forefront (Aumeboonsuke & Caplanova, 2026). However, this transformation can cause a multitude of issues, such as income instability or a lack of social protection, which Standing (2011) defines as the emergence of a new class of workers, the so-called "precariat." Thus, it is a class that faces great freedoms, but unlike the secure (albeit partly low-paid and monotonous) jobs of the proletariat, the precariat must struggle with a whole range of new uncertainties, disadvantages, and the reduction of rights (Standing, 2014). In many transition societies, national digitalization strategies are often focused exclusively on technical infrastructure, while human capital and career guidance are left on the margins. Policies that disregard the specifics of digital labor risk creating a deep gap; on one hand, a "knowledge society" is promoted, while on the other, the growth of unprotected precarious work is tacitly permitted (Woodcock, 2021). National career guidance policies worldwide face the challenge of adapting regulatory frameworks that have been built for decades on the assumption of standard employment relations. Today, the main conflict in policy-making lies in the tension between the need for flexibility demanded by global platforms and the state's obligation to ensure social protection and labor rights in accordance with the International Labour Organization's decent work agenda (Graham

et al., 2017). Explaining the issues of labor policies in the digital era, Graham specifically highlights the so-called “digital exit strategy,” which represents an individual’s conscious choice to bypass systemic barriers, corruption, and nepotism in the domestic environment by redirecting their career toward global digital platforms (Anwar & Graham, 2021). This strategy allows workers to achieve economic independence and merit-based advancement without physically leaving their own country, although it simultaneously exposes them to new forms of algorithmic insecurity (Graham et al., 2017; Wood et al., 2019). Understanding these dynamics is crucial for establishing any local career guidance framework that strives for social justice and the protection of labor dignity.

2.2. THEORETICAL RECONFIGURATION OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT: TRADITIONAL VERSUS PLATFORM CAREER

To deconstruct the structural labor market gap in BH, it is essential to contrast the traditional and emergent models of career development. Classic 20th-century models rely on a stable, predictable, and geographically bounded domestic labor market (Super, 1957). Within this paradigm, a career is a linear and vertical process within formal organizations, grounded in institutional security (permanent contracts, collective bargaining, pension systems). Public policies and employment services function reactively, serving as mere administrative intermediaries in a static local market. Conversely, global platform capitalism introduces the concepts of “boundaryless” and “portfolio” careers, erasing geographical constraints and tethering to a single employer (Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Bridstock, 2019). Socio-technical platforms (Upwork, Fiverr, Toptal) assume the role of labor allocators, while entirely externalizing business risks onto the worker (Srnicsek, 2017). Career development becomes a permanent process of individual project and online reputation management (Gandini, 2016), subjected to asymmetric “algorithmic management” (Wood et al., 2019). In reality, the proclaimed autonomy and flexibility are inextricably linked to a high degree of precariousness, income instability, and the erosion of labor rights (Standing, 2011). These global asymmetries are specifically refracted through regional and gender inequalities. The largest gender pay gap is recorded precisely in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where women earn only 38.9% of men’s wages. Concurrently, across almost all observed occupational groups, platform workers from European Union countries such as Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria, and Romania achieve significantly higher hourly rates compared to their counterparts from BH.

Table 1. Comparative analysis of traditional and digital platform career development

Dimension of Comparison	Traditional Career Development	Digital Platform Career Development
Career Paradigm	Organizational / Hierarchical	Boundaryless
Nature of Career Path	Linear, vertical, spatially bounded	Non-linear, fluid, cross-border, networked
Primary Management Actor	Human Resources (HR)	Algorithmic management
Degree and Nature of Autonomy	Limited by formal contract and working hours	Nominally high (“Gig freedom” and flexibility)
Regulatory Status of Worker	Standard employment relationship (Labor contract)	Legal vacuum / Precarious status
Performance Evaluation Mechanism	Transparent internal corporate appraisal	Non-transparent algorithmic reputation systems
Social and Labor Security	Integrated (Sick leave, years of service, pension funds)	Total insecurity / Complete vulnerability
Main Motivational Factor	Striving for stability	Digital exit strategy Meritocracy
Main Forms of Vulnerability	Mobbing, political clientelism, nepotism	Digital enclosure / Algorithmic bias
Required Career Competencies	Specialized formal and technical knowledge	Digital agility, self-branding, lifelong learning

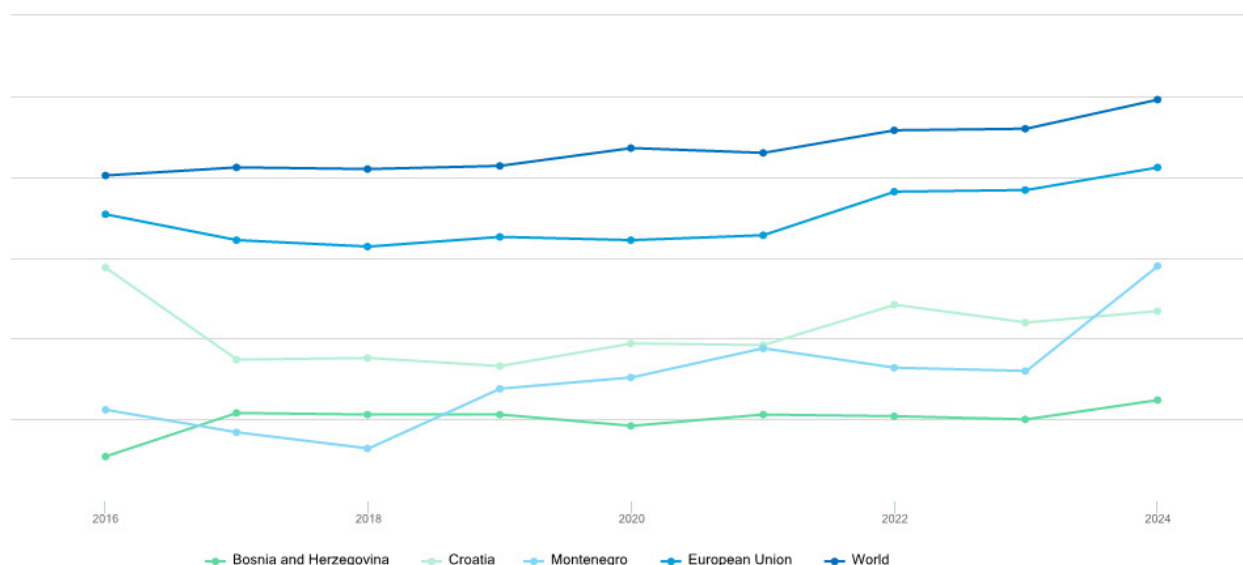
Source: Author’s own work

As shown in Table 1, the transformation of the career paradigm from traditional to digital platform brings a radical turn in the structure of power and control. While the traditional model in Bosnia and Herzegovina suffers from local anomalies such as nepotism, the transition to a platform model creates the appearance of an absolute meritocracy. However, this transition simultaneously introduces workers to a state of systemic vulnerability under the influence of algorithmic management, where the lack of national policies and adequate career guidance leaves the digital workforce without basic labor-legal protection.

3. CAREER ANALYSIS OF DIGITAL WORKERS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

The contemporary labor market in Bosnia and Herzegovina is characterized by a profound structural dualism, manifested through a sharp mismatch between rigid, locally grounded traditional forms of employment and the fluid expansion of the global digital economy. While traditional career models progressively lose economic competitiveness and innovative potential, digital career development is articulated as an informal strategy of economic resistance and merit-based advancement for the youth population. Within this nascent digital segment, the workforce in Bosnia and Herzegovina is essentially divided into three key categories: classic freelancers, who independently secure foreign clients via project-based platforms; online workers, who establish longer-term contractual relations with a single foreign company with fixed monthly incomes (Oruč & Kurta, 2023); and location-based platform workers, such as drivers and delivery couriers, whose labor is digitally mediated by algorithms but physically executed within the local market (Center for Public Policy Research, 2022). In contrast to the dynamism of this digital sphere, the country's traditional sector which primarily encompasses public administration, traditional retail, manufacturing, and construction remains deeply burdened by systemic dysfunctions that generate high rates of unemployment and economic inactivity (BHAS, 2025). To better understand the state of careers within the digital economy, the indicator "High-technology exports (% of manufactured exports)" can be observed within the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The value of this indicator for BH is traditionally among the lowest in Europe hovering below 5% which demonstrates that the domestic traditional industry fails to generate a sufficient number of high-technology and well-paid digital jobs. Concurrently, this indicator stands at 25% globally and at 21% within the European Union. This very inability of the domestic system to provide avenues for advanced career development drives young and educated individuals into the gig economy and freelance work for foreign markets. Consequently, the low macroeconomic values of this indicator in Bosnia and Herzegovina directly stimulate the growth of remote digital workers, who develop their careers entirely independent of the technological underdevelopment characterizing the domestic economy. The following chart provides a comparative overview of this indicator for Bosnia and Herzegovina and its neighboring countries.

Chart 1. High-technology exports (% of manufactured exports), Bosnia and Herzegovina and other countries



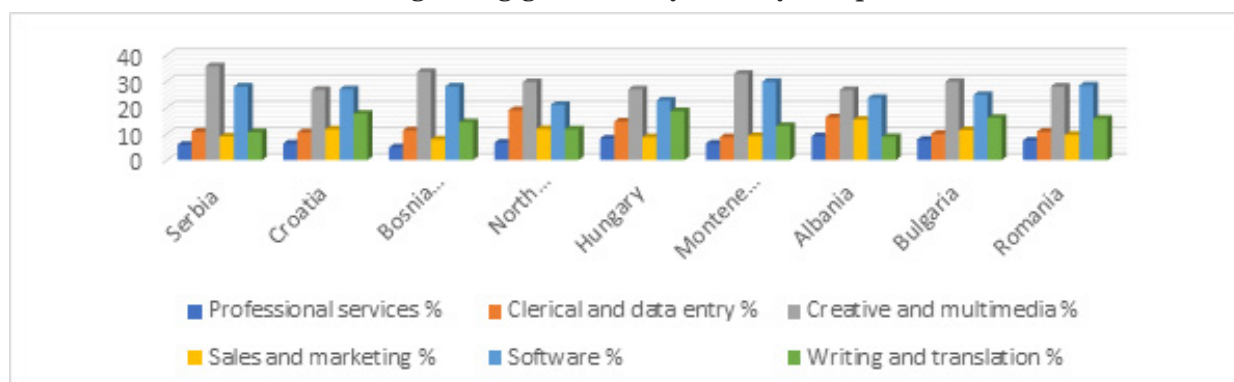
Source: <https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=2&series=TX.VAL.TECH.MF.ZS&country=BIH,HRV,MNE,SRB,EUU,WLD>, downloaded 15.05.2026.

Workers in Bosnia and Herzegovina are massively developing new career imaginaries, escaping local frameworks into the sphere of the global digital world. In contemporary literature, this specific form of economic mobility is defined as digital emigration, whereby the working-age population, instead of physically crossing the geographical borders of the state, emigrates into the online space (Oruč & Kurta, 2021). These individuals remain spatially located in their home country, directly contributing to local consumption, while exporting their services in software development, graphic design, digital marketing, and translation to wealthy Western markets through global labor platforms. According to regional empirical research conducted by the Gigmetar platform, Bosnia and Herzegovina has positioned itself as one of the leading countries in the Southeast Europe region regarding the number of digital workers per capita. The key driver of this structural transition is algorithmic meritocracy, given that traditional barriers lose relevance on global platforms, and clients select collaborators solely based on publicly available portfolios, technical skills, and digital ratings. Beyond a sense of fairness, this engagement yields direct material benefits, as reports indicate that the average hourly rate in the digital economy multiple times exceeds the equivalent hourly wage in the domestic traditional market, thereby generating a significant economic premium.

Aligning national policies with the reality of the digital economy in BH is exceptionally slow, leaving workers in a legal and institutional vacuum. The country faces a pronounced deficit in regulations regarding digital rights, which directly jeopardizes online workers and slows down the development and competitiveness of the domestic digital market (Zečević et al., 2024). Entity-level income tax laws (such as the Law on Income Tax of the FBH) recognize these workers exclusively through their tax obligations—specifically a 10% tax and a 4% health insurance contribution. However, this income is treated as “casual independent activity,” which legally deprives them of the right to actual health insurance coverage, pension years, paid sick leave, or maternity leave. In addition to domestic institutional vulnerability, digital workers are simultaneously exposed to the asymmetric power of global platforms and non-transparent algorithmic management. An algorithmic modification or a unilateral profile suspension means an overnight loss of entire career capital without any right to legal remedy. Thus, transitioning to digital careers simultane-

ously offers an avenue for meritocratic salvation while opening up unprecedented forms of precarization and existential insecurity (Gigmetar, 2022). This career is predominantly realized on global platforms such as Guru, Freelancer, and Upwork, with the latter hosting as many as 56.01% of digital workers. While more developed, conventional markets with greater local business opportunities (such as Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Croatia) register an average of 61 gig workers per 100,000 inhabitants, Bosnia and Herzegovina records a significantly higher concentration of 100.6 gig workers per 100,000 inhabitants (Gigmetar, 2026). Nevertheless, Gigmetar data indicate that during 2025, there was a contraction in the digital labor supply in BH, specifically at a rate of 6.1%. Despite this, BH continuously maintains a comparative advantage in regional career development, particularly in the fields of creative services and multimedia, administrative services, and software development. The following chart illustrates the regional representation of specific sectors, with percentage breakdowns for all observed countries.

Chart 2. Regional gig workers by country and profession



Source: Author's own work

Older data suggest that during 2023, Bosnia and Herzegovina recorded stable indicators in the domain of digital skills development, with an internet usage rate of 83% fully following the average of the Western Balkan countries. Also, in 2021, ICT graduates accounted for more than 5% of all graduated students, while that percentage in 2019 was 4.6% (EU DESI).

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SPECIFICATION OF THE REGRESSION MODEL

In order to empirically demonstrate the gap between institutional support and the economic reality of workers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this paper applies a multiple linear regression model based on annual time series for the period from 2022 to 2025. The focus of this model is not only on establishing a correlation, but on mathematically testing the thesis that digital career development in BiH occurs autonomously and completely isolated from national economic trends and official educational policies. The objective is to test the following hypotheses:

H_0 : Workers' digital skills influence the hourly wage of digital workers;

H_1 : Digital career development and the labor price of digital workers in BiH occur autonomously and completely isolated from the movements of the average monthly net wage in BiH as a key indicator of national economic trends.

The specification of the multiple linear regression model follows the standard econometric methodology of time series analysis (Wooldridge, 2020). The application of this formula allows for the isolation of the individual impacts of independent factors on digital career development in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

Y – dependent variable,

X – independent variable;

β_0 - the model constant (Intercept) which represents the theoretical starting point;

β_1 - measures the change in Y with respect to X_1 , holding other factors fixed;

β_2 - measures the change in Y with respect to X_2 , holding other factors fixed;

ε – random disturbance, error.

The dependent variable in the regression model is the „Hourly price of digital workers“ expressed in US dollars, and the data is taken from the official regional reports of the Gigmetar platform. This variable shows the financial attractiveness of the global online market, which serves as a mechanism for autonomous career development and meritocratic advancement for workers. The first independent variable is „Above basic digital skills“, as one of the indicators of the DESI (Digital Economy and Society Index). Established by the European Commission in 2014, DESI measures four major indicators as a percentage of the total index in a given country: digitally skilled population and highly skilled digital professionals, secure and sustainable digital infrastructures, digital transformation of businesses, and digitalisation of public services. The “Above basic digital skills” indicator reflects the population’s digital literacy that exceeds the basic level. The data for this variable is sourced from the DESI reports for the Western Balkans, published by the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC). Its primary role is to test whether the digital skills possessed by workers in Bosnia and Herzegovina in any way track, generate, or direct earnings. The second independent variable is the „Average monthly net wage in BH“ (expressed in BAM), with data retrieved from the official annual releases and bulletins of the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHAS). This variable measures the economic standard within the country’s traditional sector, demonstrating the extent to which unattractive wages incentivize the workforce to abandon conventional business models and enter the digital economy.

Given that the data are expressed in different units, the first step is to reduce the data to the same, standardized value (Z-score), because in this way the influence of different units is removed and comparability and interpretation are facilitated. The Z-score calculation is achieved using the formula (Mrkaić Ateljević, 2025):

$$Z = \frac{X - \mu}{\sigma} \quad (2)$$

X = value for the indicator/year,

μ = average value of the entire series – arithmetic mean,

σ = standard deviation

For the purpose of standardization, the arithmetic mean was first calculated in Excel using the statistical formula (Gravetter, 2017, p. 76):

$$\mu = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n x_i \quad (3)$$

x_i = individual value (observation)

n = number of observations

The sample standard deviation (S) is calculated using the following formula (Gravetter, 2017, p. 113):

$$S = \sqrt{\frac{SS}{n-1}}, SS = \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \mu)^2 \quad (4)$$

Table 2. Input data before standardization

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025
Hourly rates in US\$	17.4	19.3	21.7	20.9
Above basic digital skills %	5	5.4	6.9	6.9
Average salary BAM	1100	1263	1381	1570

Source: www.bhas.org , <https://gigmetar.repeople.rs/> , https://desi.rcc.int/docs_archive, downloaded 18.05.2026.

After obtaining the standardized values, a regression analysis was performed, the results of which are shown in the following figure.

Table 3. Results of correlation and regression analysis of the relationship

Regression Statistics								
Multiple R	0.917097869							
R Square	0.841068501							
Adjusted R Square	0.523205502							
Standard Error	0.690503076							
Observations	4							
ANOVA								
	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F			
Regression	2	2.523205502	1.261603	2.646009	0.398662137			
Residual	1	0.476794498	0.476794					
Total	3	3						
	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	P-value	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%
Intercept	0.15198427	0.38201383	0.39785	0.758943	-4.701961662	5.005930203	-4.70196166	5.0059302
X -Above basic digital s	1.494209255	1.60753531	0.929503	0.523249	-18.93146352	21.91988203	-18.9314635	21.919882
X- Average salary	-0.453538323	1.446484815	-0.31355	0.806572	-18.83287053	17.92579389	-18.8328705	17.925794

Source: Author's own work

$$Y = 0.152 + 1.494 X_1 - 0.453 X_2 \quad (5)$$

The obtained econometric results of the multiple regression analysis provide a critical empirical insight into the structural specificities through which digital career development is channeled in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The regression analysis reveals a high multiple correlation coefficient (Multiple R = 0.91), indicating an exceptionally strong linear relationship between the observed independent variables and the dependent variable. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R Square = 0.84) confirms that the model successfully explains 84% of the variations in the observed trends. A one-unit increase in the *Above basic digital skills* variable leads to an increase in the *Hourly wage of digital workers* by approximately 1.49 units, ceteris paribus. Conversely, a one-unit increase in the *Average monthly net wage* leads to a decrease in the *Hourly wage of digital workers* by about 0.45 units. This negative slope coefficient $\beta_2 = -0.45$ indicates an inverse (negative) relationship between the *Average net wage* in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the *Hourly wage of digital workers*. This result directly demonstrates the existence of a deep gap between the domestic economic reality and the digital sector. The cause of this negative coefficient is neither an internal shift in the labor force nor a decline in interest in digital jobs within BH. While wages in the domestic (traditional) market grew under the pressure of local inflation and administrative minimum wage adjustments, the hourly wage of digital workers declined due to the global recession in the IT sector and rising competition on global platforms. The digital worker in BH is isolated from the domestic economy they share the fate of the global digital market while simultaneously bearing the costs of local inflation.

5. CONCLUSION

The empirical analysis conducted in this study provides critical insights into the factors generating labor value within the digital sphere, thereby offering a robust scientific foundation for evaluating the formulated research hypotheses. The multiple regression results indicate that the average monthly net wage in Bosnia and Herzegovina exerts no statistically significant impact on the determination of digital workers' hourly rates. This finding directly and fully validates the research hypothesis H₁, demonstrating that digital career development and labor pricing within this sector operate autonomously and in isolation from traditional national macroeconomic trajectories. The primary driver of this structural decoupling lies in the absolute orientation of digital workers toward the global labor market. The professional advancement of this demographic is independent of conventional progression phases within the domestic economic framework; instead, it is primarily channeled through international platform ecosystems.

Conversely, the analysis established a statistically significant impact of the advanced digital competencies variable on the dependent variable, thereby successfully verifying the research hypothesis H₀, which posits that workers' digital skills directly determine their hourly wage. Their labor pricing dynamics and transition into higher income brackets are strictly contingent upon building a globally competitive portfolio, acquiring international client reviews, and rigidly adapting to the standards of developed Western economies.

The statistical model's failure to identify a stable linear relationship between domestic macroeconomic parameters and platform reality scientifically substantiates that internet-based career development occurs within a complete regulatory and institutional vacuum. The deficit of systemic support and adequate legal frameworks in Bosnia and Herzegovina directly induces a process of "digital enclosure," leaving the labor force in a state of high precarity—a finding that aligns with existing scientific literature. Workers deploying the strategy of "digital emigration" attain a semblance of meritocratic salvation; however, their subsequent career trajectory remains structurally vulnerable due to unresolved foundational social rights, such as healthcare and pension-disability insurance.

Ultimately, the empirical findings confirm that digital career development in Bosnia and Herzegovina does not replicate traditional economic cycles. Instead, it constitutes an autonomous substitute conditioned by the stagnation of the domestic labor market. Within this context, depressed wages in the traditional sector act as a primary push factor, steering workers with advanced digital proficiencies toward the more lucrative online space.

Nevertheless, interpreting these conclusions requires careful consideration of the study's methodological limitations. The primary constraint of this research stems from the small sample size, dictated by a chronic deficit of official statistical data regarding the gig economy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which precludes a broader generalization of these economic conclusions at the macro-level.

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