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Research Article

A Multiple Case Study on the Work-Life Journey of Digital Nomads in Davao Region

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Abstract

This qualitative multiple case study aimed to explore the experiences and coping strategies of five digital nomads working in the Davao Region. The participants engaged in various professions including freelancing, online entrepreneurship, digital content creation, remote employment, and online teaching. They were chosen through maximum variation sampling. The experiences and coping strategies of the five cases were examined using in-depth Interviews. Triangulation of the gathered data was done in each case by interviewing their family members and workmates. It was analyzed using thematic analysis resulting in six emergent themes on the experiences of digital nomads: organizing work schedules and routines, memorable work-life moments, digital infrastructure and connectivity, lifestyle benefits, challenges encountered, cultural integration, and networking and community building. The emergent coping strategies included connectivity and continuity, discipline and adaptability, use of digital tools and organizational systems, self-care and work-life balance, sustaining motivation and personal drive, and reliance on social and professional support systems. The five cases shared similarities in maintaining productivity, resilience, and motivation while differing in specific coping approaches based on work type and personal preference.

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1. Introduction

The work-life journey of digital nomads highlights a growing global issue concerning the sustainability of remote and flexible work lifestyles. As noted by Hannonen (2020), the rise of digital nomadism has redefined traditional employment structures by promoting mobility, independence, and technology-driven work practices. Globally, this modern form of work challenges conventional labor systems as digital nomads often face blurred boundaries between personal and professional life, resulting in burnout and work-life imbalance. Reichenberger (2018) emphasized that many remote workers experience unstable employment, unpredictable income, and the absence of benefits such as health insurance and retirement plans, exposing them to financial insecurity. In Asia, the growing number of remote professionals migrating across countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, and Vietnam has led to concerns over visa regulations, taxation, and digital infrastructure (Nash et al., 2018). These regional challenges demonstrate that while digital nomadism fosters global connectivity, it also reveals systemic gaps in labor protection and socio-economic stability across nations.

In the Philippines, the rapid expansion of remote work opportunities has given rise to a new wave of Filipino digital nomads seeking flexibility and freedom outside traditional office settings. However, this shift also presents pressing challenges such as inconsistent internet connectivity, limited access to coworking spaces, and inadequate government policies to support location-independent professionals (Cahapay, 2022). Many Filipino digital nomads struggle to sustain a steady income due to the competitive global gig economy and fluctuating foreign exchange rates. Regionally, in Mindanao and other developing areas, the lack of digital infrastructure and safe travel accommodations further limits opportunities for Filipinos aspiring to embrace this lifestyle. These local concerns highlight the need for stronger digital support systems and protective labor measures to ensure

that remote work remains sustainable for Filipino professionals.

Understanding the work-life journey of digital nomads is essential as it provides insights into the evolving nature of modern work and its implications for well-being, productivity, and social connection. Digital nomadism has been linked to higher job satisfaction and a sense of autonomy, yet its sustainability depends on how individuals manage their work responsibilities alongside constant travel and lifestyle changes (Richards, 2015). Studies on the work-life experiences of digital nomads are important because they address emerging global patterns of flexible employment and reveal the psychological and social challenges of maintaining balance in an unstructured environment. Socially, this study is relevant as it underscores the need for policies, organizational practices, and community initiatives that support mental health, professional development, and inclusion among digital workers—ultimately contributing to a more adaptive and human-centered future of work. This study, therefore, is intended to fill this gap investigating the work-life journey of digital nomads in Davao City. On this note, the multiple case study approach is the most appropriate method to describe the challenges of their experience.

The primary purpose of this study was to explore and analyze the work-life journey of digital nomads in the Davao Region through a multiple case study approach. Specifically, this research sought to understand the challenges, strategies, and experiences of digital nomads as they navigate the complexities of maintaining a sustainable work-life balance in a location-independent lifestyle.

Research Questions

1. What experiences of digital nomads in Davao Region?

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2. How do digital nomads navigate the challenges of their journey?
3. What explains the similarities and differences of each case?

Theoretical Lens

This research was anchored on the Work-life Integration theory by Kelliher and Anderson (2010) and the Self-Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan (2000) to provide a clear understanding of the work-life journey of digital nomads.

Lifestyle Mobilities, as discussed by Sheller and Urry (2006), refers to the voluntary movement of individuals who travel or relocate in pursuit of meaningful life experiences, personal fulfillment, and enhanced quality of life. Unlike forced migration or travel driven by economic

necessity, lifestyle mobilities emphasize the freedom to choose mobility as a way to achieve a desired lifestyle, often blending work, leisure, and cultural exploration. This concept is especially relevant to digital nomads, who embrace location-independent work arrangements not only for flexibility but also to engage in culturally rich, personally rewarding life journeys that traditional work structures may not support.

Deci & Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory (SDT) suggests that individuals achieve self-motivation and fulfillment when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met. This theory is used to analyze how digital nomads navigate career stability, skill development, and social isolation, given their pursuit of freedom and flexibility.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative multiple case study design to examine the lived experiences of digital nomads residing in the Davao Region. A multiple case study was deemed appropriate as it allows for an in-depth exploration of contemporary, real-life bounded systems through the systematic collection of data from multiple sources and enables both within-case and cross-case analysis (Yin, 2018). Compared to a single-case design, the inclusion of multiple cases enhances analytic depth and strengthens confidence in the transferability of findings by identifying recurring patterns and meaningful variations across cases.

2.2. Participants and Case Units

The study involved five purposively selected case units, each representing a distinct form of digital nomadism: Freelancer, Online Entrepreneur, Digital Influencer, Remote Employee, and Online Educator. Guided by the notion of a case as a bounded system (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), maximum variation sampling was applied to capture diverse perspectives and

experiences across different types of online work (Suri, 2011). Participants were selected based on the following criteria: (a) current residence in the Davao Region, (b) at least two years of engagement in online work, and (c) willingness to participate with informed consent. This approach ensured the inclusion of information-rich cases central to the purpose of the inquiry (Patton, 2015). To enhance data credibility, supplementary interviews were conducted with individuals within each participant's professional or social network for triangulation.

2.3. Data Collection

Ethical clearance was obtained from the UIC–Research Ethics Committee, and formal permission to conduct the study was secured from the university administration. Participants were recruited through formal invitations accompanied by informed consent forms. In-depth, semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection method, enabling participants to articulate their experiences,

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perceptions, and reflections in detail. Interviews lasted approximately one hour, were audio-recorded with permission, and were conducted in participant-selected venues to ensure comfort and confidentiality. Probing questions were used to clarify responses, and member checking was undertaken to validate interpretations and transcript accuracy prior to analysis. All data were anonymized, securely stored in encrypted devices, and managed in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

2.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a systematic, multi-stage qualitative process involving transcription, coding, thematic analysis, and cross-case synthesis. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and reviewed multiple times to ensure accuracy (Nowell et al., 2017). Initial coding involved data reduction and categorization to identify significant patterns and meanings (Patton, 2015).

Thematic analysis was then conducted following Braun and Clarke's (2016) framework to generate themes that captured shared and divergent experiences across cases. Finally, cross-case analysis was performed to compare similarities and differences among the five cases, strengthening analytical rigor and theoretical insight (Yin, 2018).

2.5. Trustworthiness of the Study

Trustworthiness was established through the criteria of credibility, confirmability, transferability, and dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 2014). Credibility was enhanced through triangulation, prolonged engagement, and member checking (Shenton, 2024; Yin, 2018). Confirmability was ensured by maintaining an

audit trail, reflexive journaling, and minimizing researcher bias during data interpretation (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).

Transferability was supported by providing thick descriptions of the research context and participant experiences, allowing readers to assess applicability to other settings (Shenton, 2024). Dependability was achieved through transparent documentation of procedures and participant validation of findings, ensuring consistency and methodological coherence (Tobin & Begley, 2018).

2.6. Role of the Researcher

The researcher served as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, responsible for participant recruitment, interviewing, transcription, and interpretation of findings. Reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process. The researcher's background in business, quality assurance in the BPO industry, virtual assistance, and academic teaching provided contextual understanding while necessitating ongoing reflexive awareness to mitigate bias.

2.7. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered strictly to institutional and ethical research standards following approval from the UIC–Research Ethics Committee. Participants' rights to voluntary participation, confidentiality, and withdrawal were upheld throughout the study. Data integrity, responsible reporting, and ethical handling of information were ensured at all stages. Institutional resources and continuous mentorship supported the study's ethical compliance, academic rigor, and transparency.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Cross-Case Analysis

This study examines the personal experiences of digital nomads regarding their remote work and lifestyle practices in Davao City. Five key

informants were selected based on the inclusion criteria established for this research, and their profiles are presented in Table 1.

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Table 1. Profile of the Participant in In-depth Interview

Profile	Freelancer (Case-A)	Online Entrepreneur (Case B)	Digital Influencer (Case C)	Remote Employee (Case D)	Online Educator (Case E)
Age	27 years old	31 years old	25 years old	29 years old	35 years old
Sex	Male	Female	Female	Male	Female
Industry	Freelance Graphic Design and Content Creation	E-Commerce / Digital Business	Social Media and Digital Marketing	Customer Support (BPO/Remote Work)	Online Education (ESL and Business Communication)
Work Experience	5 years	6 years	4 years	5 years	8 years

This study's participants are digital nomads in Davao City, aged 25 to 35, working in fields like freelance graphic design, e-commerce, social media, remote customer support, and online education. They have four to eight years of work experience and balance their jobs with interests such as photography, travel, outdoor activities, and family life. Their different backgrounds and lifestyles influence how they approach remote work, productivity, and life as digital nomads in the city.

3.2. Experiences of Digital Nomads in Davao Region

The cross-case analysis of the five participants revealed six recurring themes that characterize the experiences of digital nomads in Davao: *structuring work schedules and routines, creating memorable work-life moments,*

managing digital infrastructure and connectivity, leveraging the benefits of the Davao lifestyle, navigating challenges and struggles, and fostering cultural integration and community networks. Each theme is supported by four to five core ideas, which serve as condensed statements capturing common patterns and meanings across the cases. These core ideas reflect the participants' strategies, practices, and experiences in balancing professional responsibilities with lifestyle preferences, as summarized in Table 2.

The digital nomads in Davao demonstrate a variety of work practices that enable them to maintain their livelihoods and professional routines despite challenges posed by time zones, connectivity issues, and remote work demands.

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First, participants emphasized organizing work schedules and routines, often adjusting to client needs, international time differences, or lifestyle preferences. Their routines are flexible, yet

structured to ensure productivity, with preparation before classes or content creation being a consistent practice. As

Table 2. *Experiences of Digital Nomads in Davao Region*

Themes (Experiences)			Core Ideas	Cases
Work Routines and Flexibility		Structured daily work patterns (morning/afternoon/evening shifts)		A, B, C, D, E
			Flexible schedules tailored to clients, time zones, or lifestyle	A, D, E
Memorable Moments	Work-Life	Working in unique Davao locations (beach, cafés, festivals, markets)		A, B, C
			Celebrating personal milestones while working remotely	D, E
Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity		Reliable internet in most cafés and co-working spaces		A, B, C, D, E
			Backup connections or mobile data for stability as part of their daily routine	A, D, E
			Logistics application and courier services support digital work	B
Benefits of the Davao Lifestyle		Lower cost of living, savings, and reinvestment opportunities		B, D
			Balance of work with culture, food, and nature	A*
			Creative freedom from diverse urban and natural backdrops	C
			Flexibility to earn while staying close to family	E
Challenges and Struggles		Internet/power interruptions disrupting work		A, C, D, E
			Supply chain issues/courier delays	B

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		Health and lifestyle impacts (night shift, time zone fatigue, isolation)	A, D, E
		Misunderstandings about digital work from others	C
Cultural Davao	Integration in	Davaoeños' discipline, order, and respect shaping work culture	A, D, E
		Local pride and support for homegrown brands and creatives	B, C
Networking and Community Building		Online freelancer/remote worker groups and meetups	A, D
		Entrepreneur and business networking events, bazaars	B
		Collaborations with local businesses and influencer events	C
		Educator forums and teacher gatherings	E

Case C shared:

I prepare for work early in the morning because my clients in the US work at night (P04_CQ1.S1).

Similarly, Case E mentioned:

I start in the afternoon because my students are abroad, with classes at night. Mornings are for preparing lessons and grading (P05_CQ1.S1).

Second, digital nomads celebrate memorable work-life moments while navigating their professional responsibilities. They often work in unique locations across Davao, such as beaches, cafés, festivals, and markets, blending leisure with productivity. This flexibility allows them to enjoy local culture, manage personal milestones, and maintain motivation. Case D emphasized:

I like celebrating birthdays or small achievements while working remotely [...] it keeps me motivated and connected even when clients are busy (P05_CQ2.S1).

Third, they rely on digital infrastructure and connectivity solutions to ensure uninterrupted work. Backup internet connections, mobile data, and co-working spaces are commonly used to mitigate outages. Case D explained:

I have two ISPs and mobile data backup in case the connection goes down (P04_CQ1.S3).

Fourth, they strategically manage their work environment and tools, leveraging applications such as Zoom, Notion, Google Classroom, and social media scheduling platforms to streamline workflow and content delivery. Case A noted:

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I use Buffer and Canva for automatic posting and quick content design (P01_CQ1.S4).

Fifth, engaging with clients and communities is critical. Participants maintain connections through online forums, local meetups, and collaborative projects to foster networking, share knowledge, and enhance professional support. Case E shared:

Mostly connected through online educator forums, pero mag-join pud ko sa local teacher gatherings (P05_CQ1.S5).

Finally, their personal support systems, including family and peers, reinforce their ability to manage remote work effectively. Family members respect unusual schedules and provide emotional and logistical support, while colleagues and online communities offer professional guidance. Case C emphasized:

My family respects my schedule, and my online colleagues are very supportive (P04_CQ1.S7).

Overall, the experiences of digital nomads in Davao reflect resilience, adaptability, and

strategic planning. Through careful scheduling, client-focused service, reliable infrastructure, effective use of digital tools, and strong support systems, they sustain their work while integrating the benefits of the local lifestyle.

3.3. Coping Strategies of Digital Nomads in Davao Region

As for the coping strategies of digital nomads in Davao for every challenge they encountered, as shown in the last column of Table 3, six themes emerged: ensuring connectivity and continuity; discipline, patience, and adaptability; use of digital tools and organization; self-care and work-life balance; motivation and personal drive; and social and professional support systems.

A wide range of responses from the five participants, summarized into core ideas in Column 2 of Table 3, ultimately shaped these themes. Together, they illustrate how each digital nomad managed work demands, maintained personal well-being, and sustained productivity despite the uncertainties of remote work in Davao.

Table 3. Coping Strategies of Digital Nomads in Davao Region

Themes (Coping)	Core Ideas	Challenges Addressed	Cases
Ensuring Connectivity and Continuity	Use of backup internet (mobile data, SIM cards, multiple ISPs)	Internet disruptions, power outages	A, B, C, D, E
	Using co-working spaces or cafés for stable connection	Internet instability, environment change	A, B
	Informing clients/students and rescheduling sessions	Connection loss during work or classes	C, E

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Discipline, Patience, and Adaptability	Strict adherence to deadlines and routines	Night shifts, workload management	A, D
	Patience and calmness when facing online glitches or delays	Technical failures, courier/supply delays	B, E
	Creativity and resilience in turning challenges into opportunities	Career doubts, livestream interruptions	C
Use of Digital Tools and Organization	Project management apps, calendars, trackers	Time management, productivity	A, D
	Scheduling tools, spreadsheets for sales/logistics	Business operations, courier delays	B
	Canva, editing tools, and batching content	Content production demands	C
	Lesson plans and teaching platforms with trackers	Online teaching efficiency	E
Self-Care and Work-Life Balance	Taking breaks to explore city, parks, or meet friends	Isolation, stress, burnout	A, B
	Unplugging from social media, spending time with family	Overwhelmed, online fatigue	C, E
	Sleep discipline and exercise	Night shift stress, health concerns	D
Motivation and Personal Drive	Small rewards and milestones	Sustaining motivation	A, B
	Inspiration from culture, nature, and students' progress	Staying energized and fulfilled	C, E
	Coffee as a coping boost during long shifts	Fatigue from late work hours	D

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Social and Professional Systems	Peer groups for freelancers and entrepreneurs	Professional challenges, loneliness	A, B
	Collaborations with local influencers and businesses	Content growth, networking	C
	Support from virtual teams and remote worker groups	Isolation, remote setup	D
	Teacher forums and educator meet-ups	Teaching strategies, encouragement	E

Digital nomads in Davao cope with internet-related challenges by prioritizing stable connectivity and ensuring continuity of work. All participants adopted strategies to manage issues such as unstable connections and occasional power interruptions, though the specific methods they used varied. Cases A and B relied on mobile data, SIM card backups, or co-working hubs to maintain stable connections. Case D invested in multiple ISPs for reliable service. Cases C and E prepared backup content or lesson plans, informed clients or students about disruptions, and rescheduled live sessions when needed. As Case D emphasized:

I have two ISPs at home and mobile data backup. I also keep a list of 24/7 caf  s just in case (P04_CQ2.S1).

Similarly, Case E shared:

I always have a backup device and data. If the connection gets unstable, I switch quickly (P05_CQ2.S1).

They sustain work through discipline, patience, and adaptability, expressed differently across cases. Cases A and D maintained strict routines and adhered to deadlines despite night shifts and

workload pressures. As one of the participants shared:

I treat my remote work as seriously as an office job, so I stick to schedules and prepare ahead (P04_CQ2.S2).

Cases B and E emphasized patience when facing technical issues or supply delays. Case C, meanwhile, demonstrated creativity by transforming disruptions into opportunities for new content:

Teaching online means you need to adjust not just to technology but also to students' moods and needs (P05_CQ2.S2).

Digital tools and organizational systems were maximized according to professional needs. Cases A and D utilized project management apps and calendars to organize tasks efficiently: *I use Slack and Notion for work coordination (P04_CQ2.S3).*

Case B tracked business operations with spreadsheets and scheduling tools. Case C leveraged creative software such as Canva and editing tools:

I use Canva and editing tools to produce content efficiently (P03_CQ2.S3).

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Case E relied on structured lesson plans and teaching platforms with trackers:

I use Zoom for classes, Google Classroom for assignments, and Notion to keep track of lessons (P05_CQ2.S3).

Self-care and work-life balance were prioritized by all participants. Cases A and B explored Davao or took breaks to prevent burnout. Cases C and E unplugged from social media and dedicated time to family:

I avoid overloading my schedule. I include rest days and do hobbies like gardening to refresh my mind (P05_CQ2.S4).

Case D emphasized sleep discipline and exercise to cope with night shift stress:

During the day, I rest, exercise, or run errands (P04_CQ2.S4).

Motivation and personal drive were drawn from diverse sources. Cases A and B celebrated milestones and small rewards, while Cases C and E found inspiration from Davao's culture, nature, and students' progress:

Teaching students from around the world while staying in Davao feels like the best of both worlds (P05_CQ2.S5).

Case D depended on practical motivators like coffee:

For staying awake during night shifts, I prepare my workspace with good lighting and coffee (P04_CQ2.S5).

Finally, social and professional support systems were crucial because they provided participants with guidance, opportunities for collaborations, and a sense of community that helped reduce the isolation often associated with remote work. Cases A and B joined freelancer and entrepreneur communities, Case C collaborated with local influencers and businesses, Case D relied on his virtual remote team, and Case E engaged in online teacher forums and local gatherings:

My co-workers online are very supportive. Locally, my family helps me adjust by respecting my unusual schedule (P04_CQ2.S6).

Online teacher communities are a big help—we share teaching hacks (P05_CQ2.S6).

Overall, these coping strategies demonstrate resilience, preparedness, and adaptability. While common themes emerge—connectivity, discipline, tools, self-care, motivation, and professional networks—the variations in methods highlight how each profession tailors strategies to its specific context.

3.4. Similarities and Differences in Experiences of Digital Nomads

The experiences of digital nomads in the Davao Region reveal both shared practices and variations across cases as indicated in Table 4. These patterns show how nomads maintain core strategies while adapting them to their professional context, clients, and personal circumstances.

Table 4. Similarities and Differences in Experiences of Digital Nomads in Davao Region

Themes	Similarities Across Cases	Differences Across Cases	Explanation

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Work Routines and Flexibility	All cases (A–E) follow structured daily patterns, aligning work with client/student needs and digital tasks.	Cases A, D, and E adjust schedules based on foreign clients and time zones, while B and C operate within local daytime hours.	<i>Similarity:</i> reflects the universal need for structure to remain productive. <i>Differences :</i> arise from the nature of clients (international vs. local) and job types (teaching, business, or creative work).
Memorable Work-Life Moments	Cases A–C highlight experiences in unique Davao settings (beach, cafés, festivals), while D–E note personal milestones celebrated remotely.	Case A’s island work setup contrasts with C’s festival coverage, while D and E emphasize interpersonal connections (birthdays, student engagement).	<i>Similarities :</i> show how environment and milestones enrich nomad life. <i>Differences:</i> reflect professional focus—content creators highlight events/places, whereas educators/employees emphasize relationships.
Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity	All cases depend on stable internet; hence they often work in cafés or co-working hubs to secure a reliable connection and enjoy a productive environment.	Case B emphasizes logistics and courier support, while A, D, and E stress the importance of backup connections.	<i>Similarity:</i> shared reliance on digital infrastructure is a core need. <i>Difference:</i> role-specific requirements (e-commerce logistics vs. teaching or freelancing) shape how infrastructure is valued.
Benefits of Davao Lifestyle	Cases A–E shared advantages of being a digital nomad such as lower costs, balance of lifestyle, and flexibility to support family.	Case B stresses reinvestment in business, C values creative freedom, E focuses on staying close to family, while A and D highlight relaxation and balance.	<i>Similarity:</i> shows Davao’s supportive environment as a draw for nomads. <i>Differences:</i> show how personal values (business growth, creativity, family, or leisure) determine the specific benefits experienced.

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Challenges and Struggles	The majority experienced internet disruptions while working.	Cases D and E emphasize fatigue from time zones/night shifts, C notes social misunderstanding of influencer work, and A notes isolation.	<i>Similarity:</i> common theme is technical vulnerability. <i>Differences</i> :show that lifestyle-related strains (social perception, health, isolation) depend on profession and work hours.
Cultural Integration in Davao	All cases recognize the impact of Davaoeños' discipline, order, and supportiveness.	Cases B and C highlight “support local” culture; A, D, E stress discipline/respect shaping professionalism.	<i>Siimilarity:</i> reflects Davao's collective cultural values. <i>Differences:</i> show how those values are internalized differently—entrepreneurs draw business confidence from local support, while others find professional alignment in discipline.
Networking and Community Building	All connect with communities via online groups, forums, or events.	Case B stresses entrepreneur groups and bazaars; C emphasizes influencer collaborations; A and D focus on freelancer groups; E connects mainly with educators.	<i>Similarity:</i> reflects the necessity of networks for social/professional support. <i>Differences:</i> are shaped by professional identity—entrepreneurs, influencers, freelancers, and educators tap into distinct circles.

First, in organizing work routines, all digital nomads (A–E) maintained structured schedules to balance tasks and flexibility. The similarity reflects the shared need for productivity and client satisfaction. Differences emerged as Cases A, D, and E adjusted heavily to international time zones, while Cases A, B, and C emphasized integrating leisure and cultural activities into daily routines.

Second, in creating memorable work-life moments, all participants valued meaningful experiences that combine lifestyle and work. While Cases A, B, and C enjoyed memorable experiences in Davao's culture, sharing stories of quiet mornings in cafés, beach trips, and lively festivals, Cases D and E found meaning in more personal milestones. One cherished virtual gathering with loved ones abroad, while the other discovered purpose in teaching moments

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that connected them with students from various cultures. These differences highlight how each digital nomad formed personal connections with varied individuals from different locations.

Third, in managing digital infrastructure and connectivity, all relied on stable internet and co-working spaces. The similarity reflects the foundational role of digital infrastructure in their work. Differences arose in strategies: Cases A, D, and E maintained backup connections and multiple ISPs; Case B relied on courier and logistics support, while Case C created advance content to mitigate disruptions.

Fourth, in appreciating lifestyle benefits, all cases agreed Davao offers advantages over larger cities, highlighting affordability and supportive environment. Differences included Cases B and D valuing financial savings and reinvestment, Case A enjoying cultural balance, Case C focusing on creative freedom, and Case E emphasizing family closeness.

Fifth, in confronting challenges, all cases struggled with internet and power interruptions. The similarity reflects shared reliance on digital infrastructure. Fragmented struggles differed: Case B faced courier delays, Case C dealt with skepticism about digital careers, Case D managed health issues from night shifts, and Case A coped with social isolation.

Sixth, in networking and professional integration, all participants actively built communities through online and group

discussions. The similarity shows the universal importance of social and professional support. Differences lay in network type: Cases A and D joined freelancer communities, Case B participated in entrepreneur networks, Case C collaborated with local influencers, and Case E engaged with online teacher forums and local gatherings.

The findings show that while digital nomads in Davao share core experiences—structured work routines, connectivity reliance, cultural integration, lifestyle benefits, and professional networking—the specific ways these practices are implemented vary according to profession, personal priorities, and client needs.

Similarities and Differences in the Coping Strategies of Digital Nomads

The cross-case analysis shows that digital nomads in the Davao Region share several common coping strategies, yet each individual applies these strategies in ways shaped by the demands of their specific work roles as reflected in Table 5.

The first theme, Ensuring Connectivity and Continuity, reveals that uninterrupted internet access is a universal requirement among all the cases. Regardless of their profession, each participant maintains multiple backup options to avoid disruptions. However, the manner in which they respond when connectivity issues arise differs. Those engaged in teaching prepare alternative lesson plans or adjust

Table 5. Similarities and Differences in Coping Strategies of Digital Nomads in Davao Region

Themes	Similarities Across Cases	Differences Across Cases	Explanation
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Ensuring Connectivity and Continuity	All cases (A–E) maintain backup systems (mobile data, SIMs, ISPs).	Cases A and B use co-working spaces; C reschedules live sessions; E informs students and sends lesson plans.	<i>Similarity:</i> shows connectivity as a universal survival strategy. <i>Differences:</i> show job-specific coping: teaching requires continuity planning, influencing uses rescheduling, and entrepreneurs depend on stable logistics.
Discipline, Patience, and Adaptability	All cases (A–E) demonstrate resilience through discipline or patience.	A and D stress strict adherence to routines; B and E rely on patience; C highlights creativity in turning challenges into opportunities.	<i>Similarity:</i> shared resilience underscores that digital work is unpredictable. <i>Differences:</i> strategies diverge: structured roles (teaching, night shifts) depend on discipline, while entrepreneurial/creative roles thrive on adaptability and innovation.
Use of Digital Tools and Organization	All cases (A–E) use digital tools to manage time and work.	A and D rely on project management apps; B uses spreadsheets/logistics trackers; C uses editing/design tools; E uses teaching platforms.	<i>Similarity:</i> reflects the universal need for digital organization <i>Difference:</i> type of tool differs based on work nature—task management for freelancers, logistics for businesses, creative apps for influencers, and teaching systems for educators.
Self-Care and Work-Life Balance	All cases (A – E) emphasize breaks, relaxation, or disconnecting to avoid burnout.	A and B prefer city exploration; C and E unplug from social media and prioritize family; D emphasizes sleep and exercise.	<i>Similarity:</i> reflects awareness of burnout risk. <i>Differences:</i> coping is shaped by lifestyle—some prioritize external activities (exploring), while others focus on internal wellness (sleep, family, meditation).

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Motivation and Personal Drive	All cases (A-E) maintain motivation through rewards, inspiration, or stimulants.	A and B set milestones/rewards; C and E draw motivation from culture, nature, or student progress; D relies on coffee.	<i>Similarity:</i> shows self-motivation as key to remote work. <i>Differences:</i> depend on role identity—educators value student progress, creators draw cultural inspiration, while others use tangible rewards or stimulants.
Social and Professional Support Systems	All cases (A-E) engage with networks (freelancer, entrepreneur, influencer, educator).	A and B emphasize peer groups; C relies on influencer collaborations; D leans on virtual teams; E draws support from teacher forums.	<i>Similarity:</i> highlights community as a coping anchor. <i>Differences:</i> reflect profession-specific needs: business owners seek networks, influencers collaborations, employees teams, and educators forums.

Class arrangements, influencers simply reschedule online activities, while entrepreneurs focus on maintaining operational flow. These differences point to the job-specific nature of continuity planning.

The second theme, *Discipline, Patience, and Adaptability*, reflects a shared form of resilience among all participants. While some digital nomads rely on strict routines to stay productive, others cope by remaining patient during setbacks, and some even reinterpret challenges as opportunities to innovate. The contrast across cases suggests that resilience is a constant requirement in remote work, but its expression varies depending on whether the role is structured, flexible, or creative.

The third theme, Use of Digital Tools and Organization, demonstrates that technological support is essential across all cases, yet the nature of the tools used varies. Freelancers rely on project management applications, business owners monitor operations through spreadsheets and trackers, influencers depend on editing and

design tools, and teachers use digital learning platforms. Although organization is a common need, each profession draws on specific digital systems that match its workflow.

A fourth theme, Self-Care and Work–Life Balance, emphasizes that all participants recognize the need for rest to prevent burnout. Their approaches, however, differ. Some prefer external activities such as exploring the city, while others recharge through family time, digital detox, or maintaining consistent sleep and exercise habits. These variations show that while the desire for balance is shared, the form of self-care is influenced by lifestyle and personal preference.

The fifth theme, Motivation and Personal Drive, highlights that internal motivation plays an important role in sustaining productivity. For some, setting milestones and rewards keeps them focused; for others, inspiration comes from cultural experiences, nature, or the progress of their students. There are also cases where simple stimulants like coffee help maintain focus. The

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similarities indicate that motivation is central to remote work, while the differences reflect individual sources of inspiration tied to identity and role.

Finally, the theme on Social and Professional Support Systems shows that all digital nomads rely on some form of community for

encouragement and assistance. These include peer groups, collaborations, virtual work teams, and online professional forums. The specific support sought varies across professions, but all cases view social and professional networks as essential anchors that help them manage the pressures of digital work.

This chapter discusses the main findings, practical implications, suggestions for future research, and final thoughts based on the themes found in the data. The qualitative multiple case study explores the experiences of digital nomads in the Davao Region, how they cope with work-related challenges, and the similarities and differences between cases. The discussion highlights key themes such as work routines and flexibility, memorable work-life moments, digital infrastructure and connectivity, lifestyle benefits, challenges faced, cultural integration, networking, community building, and the coping strategies used to maintain productivity, motivation, and well-being.

3.5. Experiences of Digital Nomads in Davao Region

After analyzing the data for the first research question, seven main themes emerged from the lived experiences of digital nomads in the Davao Region.

The first theme is organizing work schedules and routines. For these nomads, work is not just about completing tasks—it's about weaving a life around work. Daily routines are carefully crafted to balance lesson preparation, content creation, client meetings, and personal time. These routines are often adjusted to accommodate different time zones and the flexibility their jobs demand. For instance, Cases A, D, and E shifted their schedules to serve clients in other countries, while Cases A, B, and C deliberately added cultural and leisure activities into their days, creating a rhythm that blends productivity with enjoyment. Their

stories show that structure is not rigidity—it is freedom with boundaries.

The second theme is memorable work-life moments. These nomads do not simply work in a city—they live in it. They immerse themselves in personal milestones, cultural experiences, and local activities, transforming ordinary days into memorable ones. Cases A to C shared tales of mornings at Davao's sunlit beaches, afternoons in bustling cafés, and evenings at lively festivals. Cases D and E celebrated virtual achievements and teaching moments across cultures. As Mitchell (2025) suggests, infusing work with meaningful experiences keeps people motivated and fulfilled. Reading their accounts, one can feel the excitement, the small joys, and the sense of fulfillment in every workday.

The third theme is digital infrastructure and connectivity. Behind every seamless online session lies careful planning and preparation. Reliable internet, backup connections, co-working spaces, and pre-prepared content are essential lifelines. Cases A and B relied on mobile data and co-working hubs; Case D invested in multiple internet providers; and Cases C and E kept backup lesson plans and adjusted schedules when disruptions occurred. These practices align with Salunke (2024), emphasizing that strong digital infrastructure is crucial for the smooth flow of remote work. Their resilience in the face of technical challenges illustrates a quiet but persistent determination.

The fourth theme is appreciating lifestyle benefits. Beyond work, the city offers freedom,

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creativity, and balance. Affordability, flexible schedules, creative autonomy, and proximity to family shape their satisfaction. Cases B and D focused on saving and reinvesting; Case A cherished cultural diversity; Case C relished creative freedom; and Case E valued being near family. Widiyanto, Samsuri, and Hariyanti (2024) note that where digital workers live influences satisfaction and lifestyle. These stories remind us that location is more than geography—it is a source of wellbeing and inspiration.

The fifth theme is confronting challenges. Life as a digital nomad is not without obstacles: internet or power outages, time zone fatigue, health concerns, courier delays, and uncertainties about digital careers. Yet all participants found ways to navigate these difficulties, demonstrating flexibility, creativity, and persistence. Kochevoy, Kolesnik, and Vlasova (2024) highlight that resilience and adaptability are essential for productivity in digital work. Their experiences reflect courage and resourcefulness, showing that challenges are not barriers but opportunities to adapt and grow.

The sixth theme is cultural integration. Living in Davao influences not just their routines but their professional behavior. Discipline, respect, and the supportive nature of Davaoños shaped how participants interacted with clients and colleagues. Cases A, D, and E emphasized respect for local norms and order, while Cases B and C took pride in local brands and engaged with the creative community. As Yusuf, Limakrisna, and Muharam (2022) argue, local culture shapes professional interactions, and these nomads' stories reveal a deep sense of belonging and adaptation.

The final theme is networking and community building. Professional connections are lifelines for digital nomads. Cases A and D participated in freelancer or remote worker communities; Case B attended entrepreneur networks; Case C collaborated with influencers; and Case E joined teacher forums. Dimitrieska (2024) emphasizes that social and professional networks are vital

for learning, support, and growth. Through their stories, one can sense the warmth of connection, the excitement of collaboration, and the reassurance that comes from being part of a larger community.

3.6. Coping Strategies of Digital Nomads in Davao Region

The first essential theme of coping strategies is ensuring connectivity and continuity to overcome challenges such as internet instability, power interruptions, and platform disruptions. This finding aligns with Li (2024), who emphasizes the importance of digital preparedness for remote work, including backup connections and redundant systems to maintain operational stability. Key strategies employed by participants include mobile data, SIM card backups, multiple ISPs (Cases A, B, D), co-working hubs for stable connectivity (Cases A, B), and advance preparation with rescheduled sessions or backup lesson/content plans (Cases C, E). Such strategic preparedness enables digital nomads to maintain productivity and meet client expectations despite unpredictable disruptions.

The second theme is discipline, patience, and adaptability, encompassing strict adherence to schedules, resilience in facing technical failures, and creativity in transforming challenges into opportunities. Cases A and D emphasized rigorous adherence to deadlines and structured routines, while Cases B and E demonstrated patience when dealing with connectivity issues or logistical delays. Case C highlighted creativity by turning interruptions into content or lesson improvements. These practices are consistent with Shukri (2024), who underscores the role of adaptability and emotional resilience in sustaining remote work performance.

The third theme is use of digital tools and organizational systems, which allows participants to manage tasks, content, and client engagement efficiently. Cases A and D employed project management apps and calendars, Case B used spreadsheets and

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scheduling tools, Case C relied on creative platforms like Canva and editing software, and Case E leveraged teaching platforms and trackers. These findings resonate with Li and Zhao (2023), who highlight that effective use of digital platforms is central to time management, productivity, and continuity in digital professions.

The fourth theme is self-care and work-life balance, reflecting the need to manage stress, fatigue, and isolation. Participants implemented varied strategies: Cases A and B refreshed by exploring the city or taking breaks; Cases C and E unplugged from social media and spent quality time with family; while Case D emphasized sleep discipline and exercise to cope with night shifts. These findings align with Sarkar (2022), who notes that deliberate work-life balance strategies help mitigate burnout and maintain long-term performance in remote work settings.

The fifth theme is sustaining motivation and personal drive, which supports consistent performance despite long hours or challenging circumstances. Cases A and B celebrated small milestones and rewards, Cases C and E drew inspiration from Davao's culture, nature, and student progress, while Case D used practical motivators like coffee to sustain energy during night shifts. This aligns with Romero (2024), who emphasizes that personal incentives and environmental inspiration are critical for maintaining engagement in digital work.

The sixth theme is social and professional support systems, underscoring the role of networks in coping with challenges such as isolation, career doubts, and professional development needs. Cases A and B joined freelancer or entrepreneur communities, Case C collaborated with local influencers and businesses, Case D relied on remote teams, and Case E participated in teacher forums and meet-ups. This finding is consistent with Den Dulk and Swanberg (2021), who argue that peer and community support enhances resilience,

fosters knowledge-sharing, and buffers stress in work–family or remote work contexts.

Overall, the coping strategies of digital nomads in Davao demonstrate resilience and adaptability through preparedness, discipline, technology use, self-care, motivation, and professional networks. While all participants share these core approaches, variations in implementation reflect the unique demands of each profession, individual preferences, and the contextual realities of digital work in the region.

3.7. Similarities and Differences of Experiences among Digital Nomads in Davao Region

Work-Life Journey. All digital nomads (A, B, C, D, E) have experience organizing their work schedules and routines to balance client demands, deadlines, and productivity. They share a structured approach that helps them deliver consistent results and maintain professional reliability. There are differences in how they schedule their work: Cases A, D, and E adjusted their routines to international time zones, while Cases A, B, and C included leisure and cultural activities in their daily plans. These findings support Yung, Bucarey, Olivares, and Christiansen (2020), who note that flexible scheduling is shaped by work demands, client expectations, and personal lifestyle, and that balancing productivity with well-being is essential for digital nomads.

All participants have experience adapting their work methods and offerings to improve results and meet client or audience needs. They all adjust their workflows, content, or services based on demand or context. However, their areas of focus differ: Cases A and B focused on client tasks and productivity, Case C on creative content, Case D on structured routines for long shifts, and Case E on teaching methods and lesson delivery. These observations are supported by Mitchell (2025) and Isroilov (2024), who note that professionals adapt their work to client expectations, seasonality, or

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context, with specialization and audience focus shaping their workflows and priorities.

All cases relied on digital infrastructure and technology to keep their work running. They all depend on connectivity, software, and organizational platforms to manage tasks efficiently. However, the tools they used differ: Case A and D used project management apps and calendars; Case B used spreadsheets and scheduling tools; Case C used creative editing software; and Case E used lesson trackers and teaching platforms. These findings align with Kareem, Shbikat, and Alsoussi (2025) and Barunda et al. (2023), who note that technology choices depend on a professional's output, task needs, and workflow efficiency.

All digital nomads used coping strategies and self-care to keep up their performance. They all value well-being, stress management, and motivation, but their methods differ. Cases A and B took breaks or explored to refresh, Cases C and E focused on unplugging and spending time with family, and Case D relied on sleep discipline and exercise to handle night shifts. This aligns with Sun & Lee (2024) and Wang & Hu (2022), who show that personal and situational factors shape coping strategies in demanding digital work, with people adjusting their practices to remain efficient and healthy.

All participants used professional and social networking to support their work. They all rely on communities for guidance, collaboration, and sharing knowledge, but the types of networks differ. Cases A and B joined freelancer or entrepreneur groups, Case C worked with local influencers and businesses, Case D depended on remote teams, and Case E joined teacher forums and meet-ups. This aligns with Thakur et al. (2024) and Afolabi et al. (2023), who note that networking depends on professional field, collaboration needs, and the type of support required.

All cases show experience with self-motivation and keeping up their work drive. They all take a

proactive approach to staying engaged and productive, but their sources of motivation differ. Cases A and B celebrated small milestones, Cases C and E found inspiration in culture, nature, and student progress, and Case D used practical motivators like coffee during long shifts. Cahyani (2024) and Wang and Shi (2021) note that motivation strategies depend on personal preferences, work context, and professional needs, demonstrating how digital nomads adjust their motivation to achieve their goals.

Coping Strategies. The theme of ensuring connectivity and continuity is evident in all cases (A, B, C, D, E), who cope by maintaining stable internet and reliable work infrastructure. However, differences emerged in strategies: Cases A and B use mobile data and co-working spaces, Case D invests in multiple ISPs, while Cases C and E reschedule sessions or notify clients during disruptions. Overall, maintaining connectivity is essential due to the digital nature of their work, but strategies vary depending on available resources, type of work, and reliance on live interactions. These findings align with Okeke, Bakare, and Achumie (2024), who note that strategic planning for resource reliability ensures operational continuity in digital and remote work contexts. Similarly, Sánchez (2023) emphasizes that proactive infrastructure management supports consistent service delivery and reduces disruption-related losses.

The theme of discipline, patience, and adaptability is present across all cases, reflecting resilience in navigating work challenges. Differences appear in expression: Cases A and D adhere strictly to deadlines and routines, Cases B and E practice patience when facing technical failures or delays, and Case C applies creativity to convert disruptions into opportunities. Maintaining discipline and adaptability is essential for sustaining productivity under uncertain conditions. These patterns mirror Kim, Lee, Kim, Cha, and Cheong (2023), who report that work adaptability and structured routines

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are critical in managing operational uncertainties and enhancing professional efficiency.

The use of digital tools and organization emerges as a common coping strategy for efficiency and task management. Cases A and D rely on project management apps and calendars, Case B uses scheduling tools and spreadsheets, Case C leverages creative platforms like Canva, and Case E employs teaching trackers and lesson plans. While all depend on technology, tool selection varies by profession and task requirements. Salunke (2024) highlights that diversified tool use enhances workflow efficiency and supports professional resilience, while Barunda et al. (2023) emphasize that aligning technology with task demands improves performance outcomes.

Self-care and work-life balance is acknowledged by all participants as essential to prevent burnout. Differences are observed in practices: Cases A and B refresh through exploration or breaks, Cases C and E prioritize unplugging and family time, while Case D emphasizes sleep and exercise. Stress management and well-being maintenance are critical for long-term sustainability of remote work. These findings are consistent with Rose and Dolega (2022), who underline the importance of tailored self-care routines in mitigating occupational stress, and Craig and Ma (2022), who report that individualized strategies are necessary to maintain resilience in demanding work environments.

Handling competition and location issues is evident in all cases, though strategies differ: Cases C, D, and E display patience and focus on their own work, Case C prepares backup options, Case D adjusts pricing or promotions, and Case B relocates when infrastructure changes occur. Competition management is necessary to maintain operational stability, yet variations are shaped by market intensity and environmental constraints. Hamizar (2023) notes that adaptive strategies, including relocation or price adjustment, enable professionals to remain

competitive, while Elaman, Iri, Jemahan, and Lian (2024) highlight the role of focus and quality maintenance in mitigating market pressure.

Complying with and negotiating regulations is a coping strategy observed in Cases A, C, and D. Case A advocates for specific work practices, Case C strictly follows rules to avoid penalties, and Case D benefits from supportive local authorities. While compliance is critical for operational legitimacy, strategies vary depending on regulatory context and level of local support. Kariuki and Racaud (2024) indicate that negotiation and compliance strategies are influenced by governance structures and local enforcement, while Du, Bao, and Zhang (2024) emphasize that local support or strict regulation affects the degree of flexibility in coping methods.

Engaging and retaining clients/customers is central to all cases (A, B, C, D, E). Case A greets and smiles to maintain rapport, Case B relies on patience and faith, Case C offers discounts and alternatives, Case D provides bulk incentives, and Case E gives freebies while actively listening to clients. Client engagement is critical to sustaining professional relationships and output, though interaction methods vary by personality, work type, and audience demographics. Lukmana and Maghfirah (2024) highlight that empathy, friendliness, and responsiveness foster loyalty, while Anderson (2025) underscores that personalized attention builds trust and ensures repeated engagement.

Finally, relying on social and professional support systems is observed in all cases. Cases A and B utilize freelancer or entrepreneur groups, Case C collaborates with influencers, Case D depends on remote teams, and Case E engages with educator forums. Support networks are vital for guidance, knowledge-sharing, and emotional resilience. López Doblas, Faus Bertomeu, and Gómez Redondo (2021) emphasize that social and professional support provides instrumental and emotional resources, while Cogan, Pret, and

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Cardon (2022) highlight that collaboration enhances adaptive capacity and collective problem-solving.

The findings of this study support Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (2000), which states that people are naturally motivated to grow and maintain well-being when their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met. Digital nomads demonstrated positive traits such as maintaining structured work schedules, using technology effectively, solving problems creatively, and building networks. These behaviors show their autonomy and competence in managing work and life. On the other hand, issues such as poor connectivity, competition, and regulatory challenges were outside pressures that tested their resilience and self-control. As SDT suggests, participants used adaptive strategies to stay motivated and maintain well-being, showing that meeting their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness was key to handling the challenges of remote work.

4. Conclusion

This study reveals the quiet strength and adaptability of digital nomads in the Davao Region, who continue to meet the demands of remote work despite unstable connectivity, shifting schedules, and the daily challenge of balancing personal responsibilities with professional expectations. Their stories showed me not only how they cope, but also how much determination and discipline are required to sustain a life built around digital mobility. As I moved through this research, I found myself

5. Recommendations

Future research may further examine the coping strategies identified in this study by applying quantitative approaches. These strategies can be operationalized as measurable variables in survey-based studies to determine their relationship to digital nomads' work performance, productivity, client satisfaction, or

3.8. Implication for Practice

This study found seven main coping strategies used by digital nomads in the Davao Region. These include ensuring they have reliable internet and power, maintaining disciplined yet flexible routines, using digital tools, taking care of themselves, staying motivated, building strong client relationships, and connecting with social and professional networks. These approaches help digital nomads stay productive by handling technical issues, maintaining routines, using technology, taking care of their well-being, staying motivated, and seeking support from their communities. Improving remote work infrastructure with help from local governments, internet providers, wellness services, coworking spaces, and local groups can make their work conditions even better. These findings offer practical advice for future digital professionals and highlight the need to be prepared, adaptable, and resourceful when facing technical problems, competition, and regulations.

learning alongside them, by becoming more patient with the process, more attentive to the details of their experiences, and more aware of the human effort behind every digital task. This journey has widened my reflection of digital work and has gently reshaped my outlook as a researcher, reminding me that resilience is not loud or dramatic but often appears in small, steady acts of commitment that keep people moving forward.

overall well-being. Researchers can use different methods and study designs to better understand digital nomads' experiences. Future studies might combine surveys and interviews to get a fuller picture of how digital nomads cope. Long-term studies could follow digital nomads over time to see how their routines, stress, and

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ways of adapting change. Ethnographic or digital ethnography methods might reveal cultural or community patterns that interviews alone could miss. Experimental or quasi-experimental studies could also test how changes like better internet or new productivity tools impact work results.

Future studies could look at how AI tools, automation, and digital platforms affect digital nomads' productivity, risk of burnout, choices about where to live, and long-term career paths.

Supplementary Details

Author Contributions:

This paper was collaboratively authored by two researchers, each contributing according to their expertise: Jingle Marie R. Amago led the development of the introduction, interpretation of results, and discussion of findings; Dr. Gempes was responsible for the comprehensive review, ensured the rigor of the study through validation of the methodology and results critical refinement of the manuscript.

Institutional Review Board Statement:

This research endeavor was submitted for ethical review. It received full-board approval from the University of the Immaculate Conception Research Ethics Committee (UIC-REC) to ensure compliance with ethical standards during the conduct of this research. The approved protocol code was GS-ER-09-25-0374

Informed Consent Statement:

Researchers can use methods like Structural Equation Modeling or regression analysis to see how different coping strategies work together to support resilience, job performance, and well-being. It can also study how things like high-speed internet, coworking spaces, local government help, or new technologies affect the sustainability of remote work. Looking at these factors could give useful information to policymakers, workforce planners, and organizations that support people who work from anywhere.

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study. All research participants were informed of the purpose and procedure of the study, potential risks and discomforts, benefits, data privacy and confidentiality and their rights as research participants.

Conflicts of Interest:

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Disclosure Statement:

In the course of writing the research, the following AI tools were employed, along with their specific applications, such as; ChatGPT – assisted in drafting, refining and improving the structure and wording of the sections of the manuscript. Grammarly – provided grammar checking, clarity enhancement, and paraphrasing of cited articles for coherence and readability. I have reviewed and verified all outputs generated with the assistance of the above-mentioned AI tools, ensuring their accuracy, relevance, and alignment with the requirements of my work.

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