

# Exploring Freelancer Satisfaction: Impact of Cultural Norms, Digital Tech, and Government Support in Nepal

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## ABSTRACT

Freelancing work and the gig economy are prevalent in today's world. The main objective of this research is to assess how cultural and social norms, digital tech support, and government support factors impact freelancers' career satisfaction. The study takes a quantitative approach, with a structured questionnaire issued to 390 freelancers. The research design employs descriptive and causal-comparative methodologies to examine the correlations between variables. The findings show that all three independent variables significantly influence career satisfaction. Government programs have the greatest impact, highlighting the need for supportive policies. Digital technology and assistance also greatly improve professional satisfaction, demonstrating the importance of good digital tools and platforms. Cultural and social norms have a beneficial but less significant impact. The study argues that politicians should increase government support for freelancers to boost job satisfaction. Investing in digital infrastructure and addressing cultural attitudes of freelancing might help freelancers. The study shows the importance of targeted methods that meet the specific issues and opportunities that freelancers encounter in emerging countries to create a more supportive and happy work environment.

**Keywords:** Freelancers, Gig Economy, Supportive Policies, Work Efficiency

## 1. Introduction

Freelancing has become a popular way to make a living worldwide since it allows people to work hours on various projects. The gig economy includes freelance activity and a non-standard and flexible labor structure (Hudek et al., 2020). For a long time, freelance work was synonymous with random work and dismal unemployment (Akhmetshin et al., 2018). The gig economy is expanding rapidly (Roy & Shrivastava, 2020; Vardanyan, 2023), and numerous digital platforms enable this (Rao, 2021; Thompson, 2018). This gives freelancers unprecedented access to the worldwide market (Mettler & Williams, 2011). While there are advantages, freelancing has challenges (Hoedemaekers, 2021). Income can fluctuate unpredictably, causing one to lose the benefits of a regular job, and assistance from government and organizational sources may be unpredictable. Knowing what makes freelancers happy allows them to establish a supportive environment that benefits their employment and general wellness (Warr & Clapperton, 2010). Cultural and social norms are common beliefs, attitudes, and actions that shape group conduct (Dahal, 2021; Demeulenaere, 2021; Ostrom, 2000). These traditions influence job choices, workplace ethics, and the legality of freelancing. In cultures that place a premium on established employment, freelancers may face discrimination or go unnoticed. However, communities that value freedom and entrepreneurship may accept freelancing (Popiel, 2017). Understanding how cultural and social norms affect freelancers' happiness is critical because they may influence their desire to freelance and social network support (Blaising & Dabbish, 2022; Ghimire et al., 2021; Peters et al., 2020).

Digital tools and support enable freelancers to work quickly and efficiently (Sutherland et al., 2020). This includes fast internet access, collaborative initiatives, online markets, and communication tools. Digital tools impact freelancers' productivity, job happiness, and ability to find employment (Bhatnagar & Grosse, 2019). Freelancers who live in places with good internet connectivity can easily contact clients worldwide, track their work, and access various tools. Workers in regions with insufficient digital infrastructure may struggle to connect, access crucial tools, and compete globally. Government programs assist workers through policies (Fechter, 2016), regulations (Mosse & Lewis, 2005), and programs (Agg, 2006). Major government programs may include tax incentives, legal rights, financial aid, and social security. Government assistance is critical for freelancers (Riaz et al., 2021) who lack perks and protections. Government plans that offer security and lessen the risks of freelancing can make freelancers happier (Rasheed et al., 2022). As a result, the scale and effectiveness of government programs impact freelancers' happiness and health. There are several reasons why understanding these processes is crucial. To begin, making freelancers happier can result in more work completion, greater quality work, and more money flowing in from the labor market. Second, it can help politicians determine the steps to assist this increasing workforce. Third, it can assist platform creators and tech businesses in developing tools that fulfil the needs of freelancers. It can help schools and training programs determine how to provide workers with the necessary skills and information.

According to Zhang and Zheng (2009), cultural and social norms substantially impact job prospects, career choices, and how people are treated in the workplace. Their findings show that cultural values shape job satisfaction and commitment and guide career decision of individuals (Hauff et al., 2015; Leung et al., 2011), also showed the importance of various job characteristics in different cultural contexts. According to Huđek et al. (2021), digital technology has transformed freelancing by allowing greater communication, collaboration, and resource access. However, freelancers' success in using these technologies varies greatly, affecting both productivity and overall pleasure. Tomer and Mishra (2019) discovered that digital technologies enable remote work and project-based jobs, but their impact on long-term career success remains restricted. According to Lee et al. (2020) and Rafiq and Chin (2019), government programs and policies are vital for freelancers since they provide crucial financial support and legal protections. Effective government interventions can boost career happiness by providing stability and reducing the dangers associated with freelancing work. These factors combine to produce a complicated and dynamic work environment for freelancers, influencing their success and long-term job satisfaction. Career satisfaction, which is important for both individuals and organizations, includes perceptions of career achievements and chances for future growth, as noted by research such as Loi and Ngo (2010), Gattiker and Larwood (1988), and Hamid and Amir Ishak (2018). Understanding the complex interplay of cultural norms, digital technology, and government assistance is critical for developing ways to increase freelancer job happiness in the face of changing global trends.

According to Rafiq and Chin (2019), cultural values such as harmony, stability, and safety, which are essential to many countries, paradoxically enhance the negative effects of employment insecurity. Berber et al. (2023) observe that technology modifies educational institutions and causes fundamental changes in learning techniques and content, emphasizing educational excellence (Yu et al., 2018). Additionally, the use of digitally mediated communication, spiritual work values, and workplace involvement have all contributed significantly to an increase in satisfied career outcomes (Dahal et al., 2020; Yuniarti & Adhiatma, 2021), highlighting the numerous factors influencing freelancer well-being. As Lee et al. (2020) point out, freelancers frequently find themselves in institutional blind spots when lobbying for fair contract treatment, access to health care, and employment insurance.

According to Sharma (2023), freelancers and Hired have made freelancing IT tasks more available to Nepa's IT service providers. According to Abug et al. (2023), younger generations' increasing preference for freelance work reflects a desire for flexibility and greater work-life balance. Recent economic and organizational changes have increased workforce diversity, with freelancers being underrepresented (Lo Presti et al., 2018). Addressing regulatory hurdles and economic security is critical to developing a sustainable gig economy environment in Nepal (Ghimire et al., 2024; Poudel, 2024). Given these dynamics, it is critical to investigate how cultural norms, digital technology, and government assistance influence freelancer happiness and build strong policies and strategies to promote and sustain the rising freelance workforce.

Even with increased studies, how these variables affect freelancer happiness is still unclear, particularly in situations with different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Most research has concentrated on established nations, which has left a vacuum in our knowledge of the dynamics of emerging economies, where freelancing is more common as a source of income. An issue concerning the manner in which cultural and social norms, digital technology and assistance, and government programs all work together to affect freelancer job happiness must be addressed because the interaction between these factors is understudied. Developing all-encompassing solutions to boost freelancer happiness and encourage long-term growth in the gig economy requires addressing these gaps. On the ground, freelancers traverse a challenging environment with widely differing cultural norms, technology accessibility, and government participation. Inadequate digital infrastructure might impede competition, and strong cultural norms can discourage freelancing as a viable career route. Government support differs as well; some actively encourage freelancing through advantageous policies, while others offer nothing in the way of aid. Therefore, the study aims to explore the interrelationships between cultural norms, digital technology utilization, government support policies, and their effect on freelancer satisfaction.

This study is highly noteworthy as it examines the relationship between cultural norms, digital technologies, and government backing concerning freelancer happiness. The aim is to investigate the interplay of these characteristics in different cultural and socioeconomic contexts, with a specific emphasis on developing economies where freelancing is becoming more common. The research intends to give insights that can inform the creation of customized policies and strategies by clarifying these processes. These activities are essential for improving the well-being of freelancers, promoting stable career paths, and creating a favorable climate for sustained growth in the global independent workforce. This research improves industry expertise and advises stakeholders on support systems for freelancers' unique challenges and opportunities worldwide. The study's shortcoming is that it may not be generalizable beyond the unique sample of 390 Kathmandu students. While the study gives useful insights into this specific group's thoughts and experiences, the findings may not completely represent the viewpoints and settings in other parts of Nepal or across various demographic groups.

The study is structured into six sections. The Introduction establishes the context by providing a thorough background on these elements, identifying the research topic, offering pertinent research questions, defining explicit goals, explaining the study's significance, and recognizing its limits. The Literature Review synthesizes current information using earlier theories and concepts, establishing a solid basis for the study's conceptual framework. The methodology describes the research design, population, sampling methodologies, data sources, and measurement instruments, including the Corbach test for dependability and demographic insights. Finally, Presentation and Analysis summarise key variables using descriptive statistics, investigate correlations, and conduct regression analysis to uncover predictive

relationships between cultural norms, digital technology use, government support, and freelancer satisfaction, contributing valuable insights to the field and guiding future studies and policy initiatives.

## 2. Literature Review

The psychological contract theory, which examines the implied commitments and expectations people feel in their work interactions, is the foundation for this investigation (Bhattarai et al., 2020; Storey et al., 2005; Seeck & Parzefall, 2008). This theory looks at freelancers' expectations and unspoken agreements with platforms or clients (Layraman & Sirarujanon, 2020). It suggests that how well these expectations match and are met over time impacts freelancers' levels of satisfaction and well-being (Van den Groenendaal et al., 2023; Seifried et al., 2024). Several important factors influence freelancers' satisfaction, including fairness, trust, and defining roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, by concentrating on the goals and expectations guiding freelancers' work involvement, expectancy theory offers a useful framework for comprehending their level of pleasure (Dahal et al., 2023; Jeong & Choi, 2017). This theory holds that the views that independent contractors have about the results of their work (expectancy), the perceived relationship between performance and rewards (instrumentality), and the importance they attach to these rewards (valence) all have a role in how satisfied they are. According to Haq et al. (2018), freelancers experience happiness when they think that their hard work will produce effective project outcomes, that these outcomes will be fairly compensated, and that these rewards will have personal significance for them (Norwani et al., 2022) through establishing clear performance-reward linkages, matching expectations, and providing incentives that are consistent with the values of independent contractors.

### 2.1 Cultural and Social Norms

Haar and Brougham (2013) examined a model of job satisfaction that took cultural well-being into account alongside other well-established characteristics including human capital, demography, individual variations, and organisational sponsorship. They found that job satisfaction was substantially correlated with workplace cultural well-being. Shevchuk and Strebkov (2016) demonstrate that true freelancers overlook security and social values. Ma and MacMillan (1999) demonstrated how organizational culture affects professional satisfaction. Zeng (2024) found that in Taiwan, contract relations are often confused with interpersonal relations linked to affect and reciprocity. However, in freelance contracts, the onus for keeping relations and proving trustworthiness seems to be on the freelancers, who may feel pressured to give in to favours by sacrificing their own interests. Contract relations in England are rooted in moral equality and the importance of honouring commitments. Consequently, parties to a contract in England are less likely to expect each other to be flexible and less likely to deviate from their mutual responsibilities than in Taiwan. Chang and Suttikun (2017) found that social norms had a detrimental impact on self-esteem.

Freelancers see entrepreneurial activities differently depending on their experience, values, personal attitudes, social conventions, and behavior (Damian & Empoli, 2021). Huey and Zaman (2009) concluded that a supportive culture influences the link between commitment and satisfaction. Social norms can be defined as a type of unwritten rule that is known and shared among specific groups in response to feelings of shame or guilt and behaving in the group's best interests rather than the individual. According to Abid (2021), norms play an important role in deciding the shift from intention to behavior by influencing the individual positively or negatively based on the beliefs of close relationships such as peers.

Social values drive happiness with jobs and careers. Peters et al. (2020) found that female freelancers frequently have conflicting ideals, which makes it difficult for them to achieve work-life balance, financial independence, and meaningful work all at once. Fulker and Riedl (2024) looked at the preferences of freelancers on Upwork, a big online labour market platform, regarding collaborative work arrangements. Campbell et al. (2019) also show that collaborative behavior and design skills are socially formed. According to Huđek et al. (2021), freelancers' impression of cultural and social standards has a favorable and significant impact on their employment and career happiness. According to Salas-Vallina et al. (2020), individuals feel productive when there is a good selection of services. Hermawati et al. (2021) discovered that use, value, tradition, and image barriers all negatively impact customers' intentions to use freelance marketplaces. So, this study leads to the following proposition based on theoretical and empirical support:

*H1: Freelancers' happiness in their work lives is heavily influenced by societal and cultural standards.*

## **2.2 Digital Technology and Support**

According to Huđek and Širec (2023), the digitalization of the labor market creates new framework conditions for work, including increased differentiation and flexibility among labor market groups. Toth et al. (2020) found a strong and positive link between work involvement and job-person fit on digital work platforms. The task is getting harder because the whole work setting has moved to the cloud. Freelancing sites are part of a bigger community of businesses that make money by helping independent workers and clients find each other online. This is known as the "gig economy." According to Huđek et al. (2021), digitalization and cultural and social norms play a big role in how well new independent jobs do in terms of job happiness. This is because technology can make people vulnerable when they don't have enough support. Moorkens (2020) stated that many freelance participants feel frightened by technology. With the advancement of digital technology, support can improve career happiness. Renee Barnett and Bradley (2007) showed that fast technology progress has changed a lot of things and created a new way for labour to be sold for money. During the pandemic's digitisation era, spending and income changes need to be made quickly. However, it is not usual for business unit managers to ask backup workers (who are not firm employees) to finish the job quickly (Arief, 2020). It found that the tremendous impact of digitization on the overall job paradigm.

On the other hand, there is a strong positive relationship between academics' digital literacy and career satisfaction. This means that academics who can't learn digital literacy skills and use them in the classroom will not be able to be happy with their jobs because they can't provide an education that meets the needs of the digital age (Berber et al., 2023; Dahal, 2022). The findings of Sadler et al. (2006) show that mobile phones were mostly utilized to handle personal activities and concerns unrelated to local employment. Freelancers require support resources; higher resources are likely to contribute to greater satisfaction with the work-life balance (Davis et al., 2014). According to Velimirovic's (2023) research, freelancers in the online gig economy confront various obstacles, including obtaining a consistent stream of work and competition, which leads to noncommitment. According to Ruggieri et al. (2016), digital inclusion can increase freelancer opportunities.

As freelancing becomes more digital, perceptions of unfairness and diminished negotiating power and autonomy are expected to make it more difficult for digital freelancers to achieve more fulfilling work experiences (Nemkova et al., 2019). Alvarez De La Vega et al. (2022) discovered that online freelancers are responsible for many professional activities other than project delivery, such as recruiting new clients, updating their abilities, and managing their finances. Dunn et al. (2021) found that online working is a

type of labour market where workers and possible companies talk to each other through a computer. According to Gussek and Wiesche (2023), supporting signals are tied to something other than the person and reflect a specific type of team or group support. Salamon (2024) shows that some people who work in digital news don't have the right tools to do their jobs safely, and others have lost their jobs. According to Huđek et al. (2021), digitalisation has a good effect on government programs and the happiness of workers who have learnt to work in new ways. As a result, the study develops the following hypotheses:

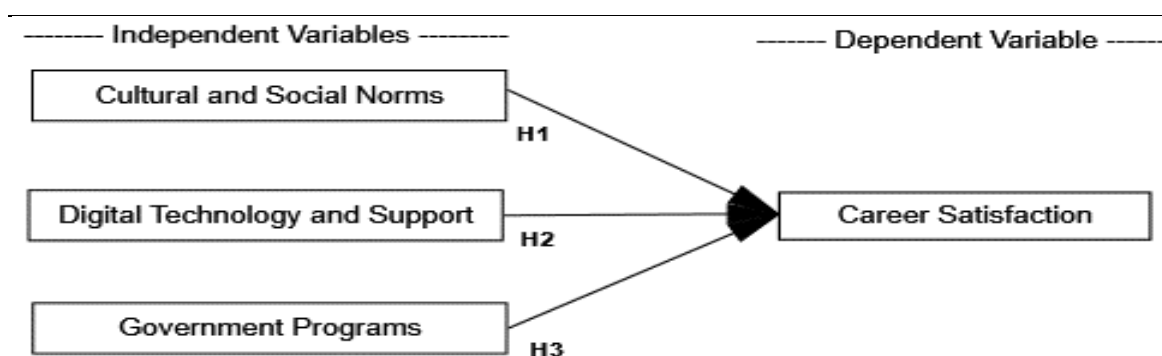
*H2: Freelancers' happiness in their work lives is significantly impacted by digital technologies and the support systems available to them.*

### 2.3 Government Programs

Blaising and Dabbish (2022) show that freelancing platforms online may provide a lot of great prospects for long-term professional growth. These include helping people explore and transition careers, building an entrepreneurial reputation, and transferring skills. Ghos (2024) and Joshi et al. (2023) agree that self-management of one's career is challenging, particularly when one is unemployed; nevertheless, they also agree that having a strong sense of self may help one succeed in these challenging times. Kamaruddin et al. (2018) found that the government and employer policies, as well as the economic viability in the plantation industry, were the main factors that made plantation workers appreciate their jobs. Huđek et al. (2021) suggest that freelancers who prioritize both intrinsic and economic rewards and maintaining a healthy work-life balance are more likely to attain long-term satisfaction. Odongo and Kyei (2018) showed Government can be considerably influenced by favorable and supportive government policies. Also, Mayombe and Mayombe (2021) addressed how municipalities may help young people who are out of work by providing them with vocational training and education.

According to recent evidence from Ashton et al. (2024), freelancers who had previously worked with local government noted that creative commissions were frequently underpaid, and projects had unrealistic expectations. Payment or invoice processing delays also discouraged them from applying for future opportunities. According to Muszyński et al. (2023), several online platform freelancers who work on their own terms encountered administrative hurdles and were not eligible for temporary government assistance for enterprises during COVID-19. Additionally, freelancers require psychological assistance. According to Warran et al. (2023), there is a need of knowledge on how to assist freelancers during the pandemic, including potential strategies for dealing with dwindling work prospects, shifting social networks, and mental health consequences. All of these aspects contribute to professional satisfaction; hence, the study proposes that:

*H3: There is a significant relationship between government programs' effect on freelancers' career satisfaction.*



**Figure 1: Research Framework**

### 3. Methodology

This section discusses the research design, sample, population, and sampling strategies utilized in the study, the nature and sources of data, and the methodologies used for analysis, including demographics.

A mix of descriptive and causal-comparative research approaches is used in this study. The descriptive aspect provides an in-depth profile of freelancer satisfaction levels and the impact of cultural norms, digital technology, and government support. The causal-comparative part examines the cause-and-effect correlations between these variables, comparing different groups to understand better how these factors influence freelancer satisfaction, hence providing insights into prospective improvement measures.

The sample for this study includes 390 freelancers from Kathmandu. This demographic was chosen to thoroughly study the numerous elements impacting freelancer happiness in a particular cultural and socioeconomic context, focusing on freelancers in Kathmandu. This study used non-probability convenience sampling, which was chosen to efficiently collect data from 390 freelancers in Kathmandu who were both available and willing to participate. While this approach may restrict the findings' generalizability, it enables the practical and timely collection of pertinent information, providing useful insights into freelancer happiness.

This study's uses primary, structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was separated into two sections: Section A collected demographic data, including age, gender, freelance working hours, and income level. Section B contained 21 modified statements from Hudek et al. (2021) that measured Cultural and Social Norms (5 statements), Digital Technology and Support (5 statements), Career Satisfaction (6 statements), and Government Programmes (5 statements). Responses were rated on a 1-5 Likert scale, from Strongly Disagree to Agree Strongly. The printed questionnaires were sent to economically active groups in Kathmandu to ensure complete data collection.

In this study, mean, median, and standard deviation were calculated using descriptive analysis methods to analyze data, providing a clear summary of the dataset's central tendency and variability. The Cronbach's Alpha test determined the reliability of questionnaire items evaluating Cultural and Social Norms, Digital Technology and Support, Career Satisfaction, and Government Programmes. Correlation analysis investigated the correlations between these variables, revealing any significant associations. Regression analysis, including checks for the Durbin-Watson statistic, normality, linearity, and variance inflation factor (VIF), was used to understand the predictive power of cultural norms, digital technology, and government support on freelancer satisfaction, showing knowledge about the variables impacting the results of freelancers' careers in Kathmandu. The study is based on the following regression model:

$$CS (Y) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CASN_1 + \beta_2 DTAS_2 + \beta_3 GP_3 + e \dots \dots \dots (i)$$

Where,

CS= Career Satisfaction

CASN<sub>1</sub> = Cultural and Social Norms

DTAS<sub>2</sub>= Digital Technology and Support

GP<sub>3</sub> = Government Programs

### 3.1 Demographic Profile of the Study

The study's demographic profile presents an overview of the 390 freelancers polled in Kathmandu, including their age, educational background, and income levels.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile**

Groups	Nos	%		Nos	%
<i>Age</i>					
19-26 years	142	36.4	SLC/SEE	48	12.3
27 -34 years	69	17.7	Up to intermediate	106	27.2
35 - 42 years	113	29.0	Bachelors level	142	36.4
Above 43 years	66	16.9	Masters and above	94	24.1
<i>Monthly Income</i>					
Below 10, 000	43	11.0			
10,000-30, 000	164	42.1			
30,000- 50, 000	102	26.2			
50,00- 70, 000	55	14.1			
Above 70,0000	26	6.7			
Total	390	100.0	Total	390	100.0

Table 1 shows the sample's results of demographics. Most participants were between 19 and 26 of their age, followed by those aged 35 to 42. The respondents' educational backgrounds varied, with the majority obtaining a bachelor's degree and a considerable portion completing up to an intermediate level or higher education. Regarding monthly income, most freelancers made between Nepalese rupees (NRs.) 10,000 and 30,000, with a smaller minority earning more than NRs. 70,000. These data show that freelancing in Kathmandu attracts a younger demographic with diverse educational backgrounds, and the salary range demonstrates that, while many freelancers earn a modest income, there is a range of earning potential within this group.

### 3.2 Cronbach Alpha Test

The internal consistency and reliability of the study's questionnaire were assessed using the Cronbach Alpha Test.

**Table 2: Internal consistency of the data**

Dimensions	Statements	Cronbach Alpha
CSN	5	0.708
DTS	5	0.718
GP	5	0.700
CS	6	0.757
Total	21	0.902

Table 2 illustrates the data's internal consistency, which was determined using the Cronbach Alpha Test. The findings are as follows: Cronbach's alpha values for cultural and social norms (CSN), with five statements, were 0.708. Digital Technology and Support (DTS) had five statements, which was 0.718; Government Programmes (GP) had five statements, which was 0.700; and Career Satisfaction (CS) had

six statements, which was 0.757. The questionnaire has a good level of dependability, as indicated by the overall internal consistency of 0.902 over 21 statements.

#### 4. Results

This section displays and analyses the obtained data using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to investigate the links and effects of the researched variables.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
CSN	390	1.00	5.00	3.54	.842
DTS	390	1.00	5.00	3.72	.802
GP	390	1.00	5.00	3.76	.772
Career Satisfaction	390	1.00	5.00	3.80	.739

As depicted in in Table 3 statistical descriptions of the research variables are shown. There was a wide range of opinions expressed, from one that deeply disagreed to five that agreed. As a whole, CSN was 3.54 with an SD of 0.842, showing moderate agreement with minor variation. DTS had a mean of 3.72 and an SD of 0.802, indicating general agreement and consistency in responses. GP received a mean score of 3.76 with an SD of 0.772, indicating general agreement on support and generally uniform responses. Career Satisfaction had the greatest mean of 3.80 and SD of 0.739, suggesting strong satisfaction with low variability. These findings indicate that CSN, DTS, GP, and job satisfaction are generally regarded positively; however, significant variety exists.

**Table 4: Correlations Results**

	CSN	DTS	GP	CS
CSN	1			
DTS	.614**	1		
GP	.626**	.695**	1	
CS	.569**	.686**	.719**	1

Table 4 shows the associations between the independent variables (CSN, DTS, and GP) and the dependent variable (CS). The moderate positive association (0.614\*\*) between CSN and DTS suggests that perceptions of digital technology and assistance improve as cultural and social norms improve. Similarly, the connection between CSN and GP (0.626\*\*) indicates that higher perceived cultural and social norms are associated with more beneficial government programs. The substantial positive connection between DTS and GP (0.695\*\*) indicates that digital technology and support advances are directly linked to improved government programs. The strongest association exists between GP and CS (0.719\*\*), indicating that career satisfaction increases significantly when government programs are evaluated positively. These findings collectively imply that improved cultural and social norms, digital technology, and government programs contribute to increased career satisfaction, emphasizing the relevance of these elements in determining freelancer work satisfaction.

**Table 5: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	SE of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.768 <sup>a</sup>	.589	.586	.47551	.589	184.570	3	386	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Government Programs, Cultural and Social Norms, Digital Technology and Support

b. Dependent Variable: Career Satisfaction

Table 5 summarises the regression study that looked at the influence of the independent factors on the dependent variable, CS. The R-squared score of 0.589 suggests that GP, CSN, and DTS account for about 58.9% of the variability in CS. After controlling for the number of predictors, the adjusted R-squared value of 0.586 indicates that this model explains a significant percentage of the variation in career satisfaction. The F-change value of 184.570 with a significance level of 0.000 indicates that the model greatly improves the prediction of career satisfaction, highlighting the independent variables' strong impact on the dependent variable.

**Table 6: Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.829	.129		6.412	.000		
	CSN	.087	.039	.099	2.252	.025	.546	1.831
	DTS	.300	.044	.325	6.800	.000	.465	2.152
	GP	.412	.046	.431	8.892	.000	.454	2.204

a. Dependent Variable: Career Satisfaction

Table 6 demonstrates that each predictor has a significant impact on career satisfaction. First, cultural and social norms, with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.087 and a standardized coefficient of 0.099, had a positive but minor effect on career satisfaction. This shows that while cultural and social norms impact freelancers' satisfaction with their work, they are less prominent than other aspects. This may represent the extent to which societal views and cultural values influence freelancers' impressions of their work environment and prospects. However, the impact is not equally significant as that of other factors.

Digital technology and assistance, with an unstandardised value of 0.300 and a standardised coefficient of 0.325, have a greater influence on job satisfaction. This suggests that improved access to and use of digital technologies considerably increases freelancer happiness. Improved digital tools and platforms allow for more efficient work processes, greater collaboration, and access to global markets, all contributing to higher job satisfaction. Government programmes have the greatest impact on career satisfaction, with an unstandardized coefficient of 0.412 and a standardized value of 0.431. This highlights the vital role of supportive government policies and programmes in increasing freelancer job satisfaction. Effective government measures that provide financial support, legal protections, and stability substantially impact freelancers' job satisfaction. This conclusion emphasizes the necessity of strong government assistance in creating a favorable work environment for freelancers. The statistical significance of all predictors demonstrates that their impacts on career satisfaction are real and not coincidence. The absence of multicollinearity issues adds to the trustworthiness of these findings, implying that each feature contributes independently to the overall model.

## 5. Discussion

The study's findings support and add to the knowledge of the variables influencing freelancer happiness that have been explored in earlier studies. According to research by Haar and Brougham (2013), career happiness is highly impacted by workplace cultural well-being, which lends credence to the notion that CSN heavily influences job satisfaction (Shahi et al., 2022). This is also supported by the study's findings, which demonstrate that social and cultural standards positively influence professional satisfaction (Karki et al., 2023). In comparison, Shevchuk and Strebkov (2016) found that independent contractors frequently ignore societal norms and security. Nonetheless, the research validates the noteworthy contribution of CSN and DTS in augmenting professional contentment, proposing a complex outlook whereby these constituents interplay to influence satisfaction.

Ma and MacMillan (1999) underlined the role of organizational culture on professional satisfaction, which supports the study's findings that GP and DTS strongly influence career satisfaction. According to Zeng (2024) and Chang and Suttikun (2017), social norms might have an adverse or divergent influence on work satisfaction across cultures. The study's findings mirror this, demonstrating favorable relationships between social norms and professional satisfaction despite various worldwide contexts. The study's findings are consistent with Damian and Empoli (2021) and Huey and Zaman (2009), who emphasized the importance of a supportive culture and social norms on freelancer satisfaction. Ghimire et al. (2023), Peters et al. (2020), and Huđek et al. (2021) found that integrating diverse values and cultural norms is vital for establishing work-life balance and job satisfaction, which the study supports.

In difference to previous findings by Salas-Vallina et al. (2020) and Moorkens (2020), which highlighted issues in managing work and life and vulnerabilities brought by technology, the study shows that supporting government programmes and effective DTS can alleviate these challenges. The study agrees with Alvarez De La Vega et al. (2022) and Dunn et al. (2021) in emphasizing the significance of digital technologies and the larger ecosystem of online freelancing platforms in affecting job happiness. The study emphasizes the necessity of integrating cultural norms, technology assistance, and government policies in promoting freelancer satisfaction. It completely explains how these aspects interact in the present digital and cultural context.

## 6. Conclusion and Implications

This study investigated the elements influencing freelancer satisfaction, emphasizing cultural and social norms, digital technologies and assistance, and government initiatives. The findings suggest that these elements considerably impact freelancers' career happiness. Cultural and social norms influence freelancers' acceptability and support, with traditional employment cultures frequently posing hurdles that contrast with those more welcoming of entrepreneurial labor. Digital technology is important because access to advanced tools and platforms increases productivity and connectedness, yet discrepancies in technology access can impact performance. Government programmes provide critical financial assistance and legal protections, with well-structured policies leading to better satisfaction. The findings emphasize the importance of knowing how these elements influence freelancer happiness and the necessity for additional research, particularly in emerging economies, to develop effective methods to support the evolving freelance workforce.

The study's findings have important ramifications for numerous stakeholders in the freelancing ecosystem. For policymakers, it emphasizes the importance of adopting customized programmes that address freelancers' specific difficulties, such as financial insecurity and insufficient legal protections. Creating complete support structures can increase job satisfaction and stability in the freelance industry. Employers

and digital platforms are encouraged to examine the impact of cultural and social norms when developing policies and support mechanisms so that they are inclusive and sensitive to varied backgrounds. Furthermore, investing in innovative digital infrastructure and tools is critical because it may dramatically improve freelancer productivity and job satisfaction. The paper also emphasizes the need for additional research on these aspects, particularly in emerging economies where freelancing is becoming popular. It can help to design personalized solutions that create a more supportive and equal environment for freelancers worldwide.

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