

The role of Government for developing digital platform to establish a freelancer's market in Pakistan

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ABSTRACTS

This paper explores the perceptions of Pakistani freelancers regarding the role of the government in enhancing their career success. Through a qualitative approach by in-depth interview, the study examines the challenges faced by freelancers in Pakistan and the extent to which they believe government policies and initiatives can help address these challenges. Findings suggest that while freelancers face various obstacles, including lack of access to finance, limited opportunities, and inadequate infrastructure, they perceive the government's role as minimal. Participant expressed the need for greater recognition of the freelance industry, stronger regulatory frameworks, and more investment in skills development and digital infrastructure. The paper concludes that the Pakistani government must play a more active role in promoting and supporting the freelance industry, as it has the potential to contribute significantly to the country's economic growth and development.

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Introduction

The world of work has undergone significant transformations in recent years, with a growing number of professionals turning to freelancing as a viable career option. In Pakistan, the rise of freelancing has been particularly noticeable, with a large number of individuals choosing to work independently, offering their skills and services to clients across the globe. While freelancing offers many benefits, such as flexibility, autonomy, and the ability to work from anywhere, it also presents challenges, particularly in terms of finding clients, building a reputation, and managing finances. In this context, the role of the government becomes crucial in enhancing the success of freelancers. This qualitative paper aims to explore the perspectives of Pakistani freelancers on the role of the government in supporting their career success. By analyzing the experiences and perceptions of freelancers, this study aims to shed light on the opportunities and challenges facing the freelancing community in Pakistan, and provide insights into how the government can play a more effective role in enhancing their prospects.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the global economy, with millions of people losing their jobs or experiencing reduced working hours. In this context, many professionals have turned to freelancing platforms as a means of earning a living. Freelancing offers several advantages during a pandemic, including the ability to work remotely, flexibility in terms of work hours, and the potential for greater job security. Furthermore, many companies have also turned to freelancers as a way of reducing costs, as they do not have to provide benefits or pay for office space. For many individuals, freelancing has become a lifeline during the pandemic, providing a source of income and a way to stay

connected to the workforce. As such, understanding the role of the government in enhancing the success of freelancers is particularly important during COVID-19, as freelancing has become an increasingly popular way of earning a living. By exploring the perspectives of Pakistani freelancers on the role of the government in supporting their career success, this study can provide insights into how policymakers can better support the freelancing community during and beyond the pandemic.

Literature Review

This rapid change in the market of workplace is now developing new forms of work shifting from traditional work to new protean and boundary less work which seems to be great for the employees who were unable to work in traditional organization systems. The quantitative study in Italy (425 Italian freelancer respondents) they tried to analyze the structural relationship between new emerging work of freelancing and career success of freelancers. This study identified that the career success of freelancers could be more efficient and progressive if they are professionally committed to the work (Alessandro Lo Presti, march 02, 2018). As we know that USA is far more developed than other states like Pakistan but somehow US is trying to put these underdeveloped countries on the same table for future developments. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals SDGs is a big step towards achieving the goals for change. ICT information communication technology systems of e-government can play a huge role for the competitive advantages of transforming to the e-world. This SDGs of United Nation's came in 2015 till 2030 for achieving digital targets of e-government and coping with the challenges of ICT systems for change. In 2016 Pakistan parliament became the first ever parliament to take the SDGs as nation's sustainable development goals to achieve. E-government can reduce the gap between workers and implementing forces of change development (Kashif Rehman, 2018). The Philippines government found the gap of hiring and posting of people who were not able to do job for outsourcing business. Then government initiated the training programs for the people who were not able to do their jobs due to underprivileged citizenship, and make them skillful for the freelancing market. The government gave them all the necessary facilities and made them skilled as freelancers. They got the results that people accepted that government training programs were so helpful for them which they were not educated and skilled before. They also mentioned the structural issues somewhere like the issue of internet in some areas (Karsten Eskelund, 2019). Bangladesh is facing issues on large scale for the employment of graduates comparatively to the same sized country of its own. On the other hand the country have developed more skilled employees on freelance market and working effectively, earning money on their own as compared to the other country of same sized. But there's still need to develop sustainable facilities for the freelancers of the country as they are facing issues. (Rahman, 2017)

The Bangladesh people are moving to this freelance market increasingly and making their country economy strong. People are becoming more attracted towards this flexible timings of this job rather than stiff shift of 9-5 traditional work. The Indian freelance market is the biggest market which increasing day by day. People from freelance market are getting more and more jobs and work orders. This the reason rise in freelance market of first world countries is real (Sayeed, December 2018). In the detailed qualitative study on India , there described the emerging digital work challenges and potential of freelancers and platforms provided for the better performance. They described how big is the freelance market of India and how rapidly it is increasing with every passing day and how effectively freelancers are being provided with the developed platforms of freelancing to perform their best in the new digital era (Rajat Kathuria, December 2017).

There we got to know that how different states and their e-government is developing competitive strategies for the development of digital freelance markets. The world is progressively increasing in the freelance market and ever state government is trying their best

to build up their country economy and the labor of the states are also participating to work in this digitally developing platforms. The big reason for the workers to perform with huge interest is that they are earning good money from this freelance market but still freelancers expect some good initiatives to be taken from government so they can develop more sustainable freelance market of the country.

Research Question

How do Pakistan freelancers see the role of government in enhancing their career success?

Objectives of the study

There are three main objectives of this study for which we are doing this research paper. The gap was identified at very early stage and then we thought about how this gap can be reduced. These are the main purposes of this research study to achieve the best possible solutions.

Given are the main objectives of the study;

- The first objective of the study is to find the gap between freelancers and government of Pakistan for contributing in freelancing market of Pakistan.
- The second main objective of the study is to actually know that how government of Pakistan is helping freelancers for their career success and creating more skilled workforce in digital market.
- The third objective of the study is to find what platforms Pakistan government is providing to freelancers for capacity building trainings and globally performing on digital platforms.

Guiding Philosophy

Ontology is the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of reality and existence. In the context of the freelancing market in Pakistan, the ontological approach would be based on the belief that reality is subjective and shaped by individual experiences and perceptions. This approach would recognize that the freelancing market in Pakistan is a social construct that is influenced by various factors such as cultural norms, economic conditions, and political policies.

Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired. In the context of the freelancing market in Pakistan, the epistemological approach would be based on a constructivist perspective, which posits that knowledge is socially constructed and shaped by personal experiences and interactions with others. This approach would recognize that knowledge about the freelancing market in Pakistan is shaped by the perspectives and experiences of the individuals involved, including freelancers, clients, and policymakers. In terms of research methodology, the ontological and epistemological approach for a qualitative study on the freelancing market in Pakistan would involve conducting interviews and gathering data from individuals with diverse experiences and perspectives. This would allow for a comprehensive understanding of the various factors that influence the freelancing market in Pakistan, including the role of the government in enhancing the career success of freelancers. The analysis of the data would be based on a thematic approach that identifies key patterns and themes that emerge from the interviews, which would then be interpreted in light of the research question and relevant literature. The guiding philosophy for a qualitative paper on the freelancer's market of Pakistan is based on the belief that the experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in the freelancing industry provide valuable insights into the nature of the market and the role of the government in enhancing the career success of freelancers.

This philosophy recognizes that the freelancing market is a social construct that is shaped by various factors, including cultural norms, economic conditions, and political policies. The philosophy is based on the following principles: Respect for the voices of freelancers: The philosophy acknowledges the value of hearing directly from freelancers themselves, as they have unique insights into the challenges and opportunities of working in the freelancing industry in Pakistan. Their perspectives should be respected and incorporated into the analysis of the data.

Holistic understanding of the market: The philosophy recognizes that the freelancing market in Pakistan is complex and multifaceted, and requires a holistic approach to fully understand its nature. This involves taking into account the experiences and perspectives of all stakeholders, including freelancers, clients, and policymakers. Recognition of the influence of social, cultural, and political factors: The philosophy recognizes that the freelancing market in Pakistan is shaped by social, cultural, and political factors, which influence the experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in the market. These factors should be taken into account when analyzing the data.

Constructivist epistemology: The philosophy adopts a constructivist epistemology, which recognizes that knowledge is socially constructed and shaped by personal experiences and interactions with others. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the experiences and perspectives of individuals involved in the freelancing market. Overall, the guiding philosophy on freelancers' market of Pakistan is based on the belief that the voices and experiences of individuals involved in the market provide valuable insights into its nature, and that a holistic and constructivist approach is necessary to fully understand the market and the role of the government in enhancing the career success of freelancers.

Methodology

The methodology used for this paper is qualitative approach of collecting and analyzing data from identified participant, who are experienced in the particular field. There's one main research question which supposed to be the main idea of research, 6 questions are designed as qualitative questionnaire furthermore there would be 2 tentative probes for each dimension which supposed to be asked too from the respondent. Participant selection: Identified participant who is relevant to the research question and have experience in the field of interest. In this case, the participant could be Pakistani freelancer who have experience working in the freelancing industry.

Data collection: Conducted one-on-one interview with the selected participant. The interview is be semi-structured and open-ended questions, allowing for free-flowing conversation while still ensuring that all relevant topics are covered.

Data analysis: Transcribe the interview recordings on Zoom and analyze the data using a thematic analysis approach. Look for patterns, themes, and recurring ideas that emerge from the interview. Interpretation: Interpret the findings in light of the research question and relevant literature. Consider the implications of the findings and how they contribute to the existing knowledge in the field.

Ethics: Ensure that ethical guidelines are followed throughout the research process, including obtaining informed consent from participants and maintaining confidentiality of their personal information.

Data Collected

Codes of Verbatim		
1-Capacity Building		
Axial Codes		
Government Role to Improve	International Freelancing Market	Training Programs
The government must either replace the workforce with those who have technical minds or seek for fresh minds, particularly young minds.	<p>In the freelancing markets of the United States of America and Canada, even government officials have technical skills regarding the increasingly digitalized world.</p> <p>It won't be the government that gives us access to the platform; rather, it'll be businesspeople and individuals working on their own time who try to create platforms like this, build websites, and design software.</p>	<p>I believe that programmers run by the government such as digi skills and e-rozgar are very helpful for young minds to engage with overseas customers like myself. One such customer is myself.</p> <p>In terms of training, I believe the government is doing an excellent job; however, as I indicated earlier, they are not moving the process along very quickly.</p> <p>There are not many different courses available; rather, there are approximately six to seven generic courses. These courses cover topics such as search engine optimisation (SEO), graphic design, autocad, and content writing.</p> <p>E-rozgar is, and by this I</p>

		<p>mean is, a better skill than digital skills; while both are improved, e-rogar has a little edge over digital abilities.</p> <p>There are a variety of programmes available through this e-rozgar. These programmes encompass more than just digital skills; however, my knowledge of digital skills is limited. Some of the programmes available through this e-rozgar include website development, search engine optimisation, and wordpress development.</p>
	<p>Open Code</p> <p>Competition with India</p> <p>I believe that the only way for a government to change is if it challenges itself to compete with the rest of the world, like India, which is undergoing tremendous transformation.</p>	

2-Legal Rights

The government has not made significant progress in establishing legal rights and legal relations through the implementation of regulations regarding freelancing.

If I'm not mistaken, Pakistan had its first taste of the internet around the year 2003 or 2004, but the country didn't pass its first version of the PECA until 2008, or maybe even 2016.

Now that the government has realised the potential that we are among the top ten in freelancing all around the world, they are trying to, they will tax us; therefore, I do not believe there is a problem with taxation; however, they do need to provide us with more and more facilities over the internet.

Axial Codes

Payment Methods	Rapid Change	Rules and Regulations
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<p>Payoneer is the platform via which we receive online payments; without them, our business would not function as effectively.</p> <p>I believe that the payment methods that I outlined are the one item that is missing from the legal act. They are not responsible for formulating policy.</p>	<p>The government of Pakistan is aware that Pakistan is one of those countries that earns a significant amount of money through freelancing platforms; hence, if they want to enhance their earnings, I suppose they will need to act quickly.</p> <p>In the future, I do not believe that the government will take anything near ten years.</p> <p>I am aware that there will not be a lot of time because of the pressure that will be brought on by the youth and the pressure that will be brought on by the competition internationally that we will face from countries such as India, the United States of America, Canada, and European countries. As a result, I believe that our government will try to do something beneficial for us.</p> <p>I mean, there is some kind of issue, there is some kind of you know "uhh" back the door thing that our government is trying to do, and so I think that if this is going to happen, then you know that we are not going to receive, that our future will not, will not be what it is today.</p>	<p>Because of the prevalence of illicit practices on Facebook, we have no alternative but to establish some ground rules and guidelines.</p> <p>People are offering work, receiving work, and just doing work, however in the end there are a number of people conducting scams, so there should be some sort of regulating aspects that should be generated. People are offering work, obtaining work, and doing work.</p> <p>There are a lot of people, like I've seen people doing scams over certain platforms, so there should be some sort of regulations, and there should also be some secure methods for payments, for freelancers. In my opinion, regulations over scammers are necessary because there are a lot of people who participate in such activities.</p>
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3- Platforms Provided By the Government

There are five main Freelancing platforms:
Fiver, Upwork, freelancer, guru made, people per hour.

The problem is that these forums are not headquartered in Pakistan; even Guru is from India, while other platforms, like fiver, are established in other countries, like Israel.

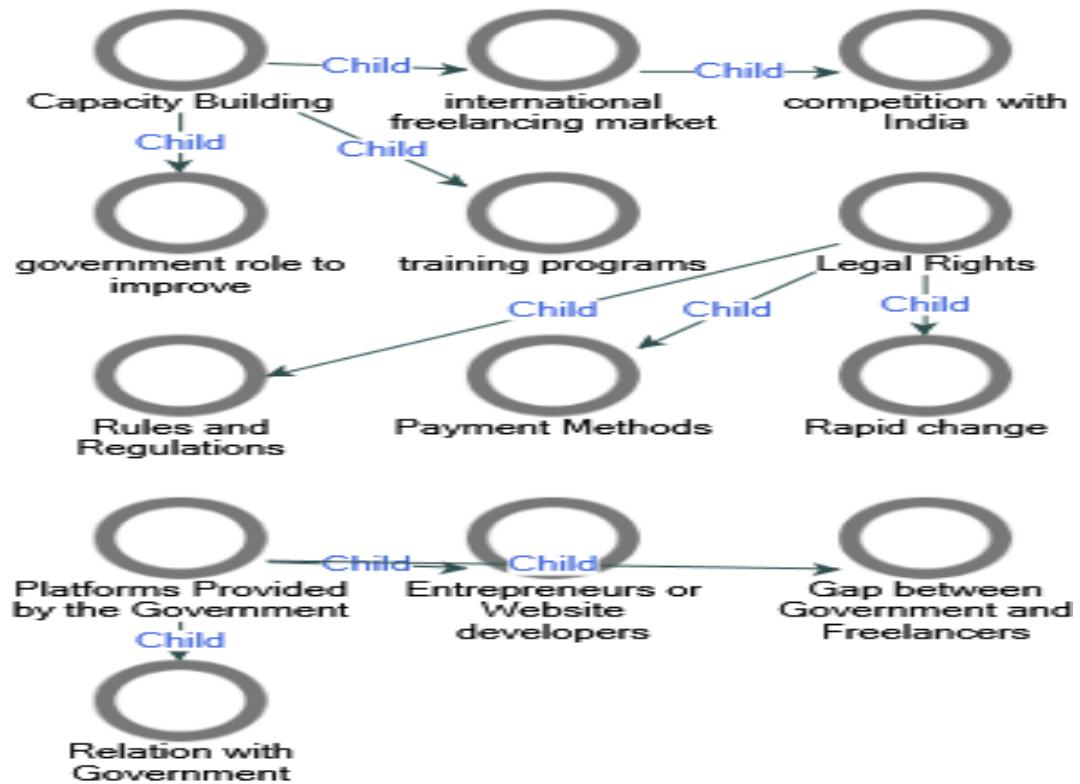
Despite the fact that I am earning from my services, the international market is expanding and becoming more prosperous as a result of my services.

Axial Codes	
Gap Between Government and Freelancers	Relation with Government
<p>So, the problem is with the law in the first place.</p> <p>The first thing that needs to be done is to establish some boundaries, some kind of limitations, and yes, there should be limitations if the government so desires.</p> <p>If the government is the one to impose the restrictions, it seems to reason that it will also be the one to supply us with the necessary facilities.</p> <p>I will state that they are supplying us, they are making us skilled, they are making us how to work professionally, and they are making us how to prevent (distortion in meeting) anything that is immoral over the platform. I will say that.</p> <p>There is a lack of specificity in that.</p> <p>We need to proceed with a knowledge of everything.</p> <p>It does not mean that if we are trained, we will know everything there is to know about freelancing and will be able to do anything over freelancing. It does mean, however, that the government should go with us and provide us with whatever we need along the way through/to our success.</p> <p>Following having training from digi skills, I have no, I have seen no role of government after that.</p>	<p>If you are earning this much money, and you've become so successful, and you are not paying taxes through freelancing, then the government will just come to ask you this question: from where are you earning money? So, I believe that this will be my relationship with the government going forward, at least for the foreseeable future.</p>

Data Analysis

The data were collected through semi-structured interview from only one respondent from Pakistan. First of all the interview was transcribed into verbatim meticulously. Then transcript of the respondent were imported into Nvivo software and the file was generated as a separate case for the coding process. There were three main dimensions of the study which were called as selective codes. The process of making selective codes and then axial codes with each relevant statement and code was iterative. The iterative process for making open codes by collecting the relevant statements together in bulk.

Map of the Codes



Results of Analysis

The role of the government in "capacity building" for the purpose of promoting the careers of freelancers in Pakistan was the first major subject that emerged from the study of the data. Although the respondent's government is making an effort to contribute to the improvement of freelancing careers, more needs to be done, and it needs to be done quickly. Three primary axial codes were derived from this subject. The first of these was training programmes; based on the responses of the respondents, it was determined that the government provides various different courses as part of its training programs. E-rozgar is quickly becoming one of the most popular and effective ways to obtain training for the freelancing industry. The second axial code was International Freelancing Market. Based on the responses of the respondents, there is a sizable international freelancing market in which to compete, such as the United States of America and Canada. Because India is developing at such a rapid rate and expanding at such a rapid rate in the freelancing market, the open code of this axial code was about to compete with the India market. The third axial code was "Government role to improve," and the response remarked that the government should replace its current staff with new technical minds who are familiar with the intricacies of the systems and have the ability to develop new methods.

According to the opinions of the people who participated in the survey, the government has not made a significant effort to provide freelancers with legal rights. This was the second primary focus of the research. The government has recognized the potential that lies within the younger generation, which will allow them to move more quickly. For the purpose of analyzing this topic, we developed three axial codes: (1) Rules and Regulations, (2) Fast Change, and (3) Payment Methods. A particular statement was made by the respondent indicating that there are cons that need to be managed through the formulation of laws and regulations pertaining to these cons. Since the government is aware that Pakistan is among the countries that are earning and creating revenue through freelancing and that it is in the top 10 list of the countries doing freelancing, it is imperative that they move quickly to enact

laws and policies in order to maintain control of the situation in light of the growing amount of pressure coming from young people. The issue of payment methods is one of the most significant challenges that freelancers encounter in the freelancing sector. One respondent in particular mentioned that pioneer is not operating effectively.

The provision of "Platforms by the Government" to independent contractors was the focus of the third major finding of the study. There are many other platforms, all of which were named by the reply, however there is not one single platform that was developed in Pakistan. Because of the contributions made to those platforms, the global market is benefiting, and the owners of those platforms are making money thanks to the labour done by Pakistani freelancers. It is not just the responsibility of the government, but also of business owners and people who design websites to create platforms for people who work online. This topic was broken down into two axial codes: the first one was the distance between the government and freelancers, and the second one was the relationship with the government. According to the viewpoint of the respondent, "Gap is the law." Respondent after respondent brought up the necessity for laws and guidelines to be made regarding the repercussions of using such platforms, as well as the requirement for stringent rules to be followed. Because of the lack of specificity in that, it is necessary to establish some constraints. Respondent believes that the only time they will interact with the government is when the government comes to them for tax payment.

Contribution

The most significant contribution that this recent study is providing new ways for stepping into digital world. This online working system assists people all over the world in pursuing their work, and as a result, the lives of all humans have been fundamentally altered as a direct result of COVID-19. Everyone is now diverted to the new normal things of life these days, and the new normal of working from home, such as freelancing, is contributing much for the people who are being unemployed and are not working anywhere. These are people who wanted to work and earn money for their families, but they did not have opportunities to do a job. People now have the opportunity to make money from the world of e-commerce, which is now contributing globally. This study will be helpful in getting to know the details of how the government is contributing into this endeavor because Pakistan was one of the few countries to start training programs for new freelancers when this study was being conducted. The manner in which the government is making things accessible and reachable for members of the general public who are currently working as freelancers and people who wish to go into this freelancing field is being discussed. This new study was to be done because it was necessary to determine how the government can build new platforms for freelancers and how it can thoughtfully work towards improving the freelancing industry in Pakistan so that it can compete successfully on an international level. Due to the fact that these topics have never been investigated on such a broad scale previously, this study is producing new information that may be used in research.

Limitations

This study of research is about a certain factor of how government is playing role in building career success for the freelancers so it will be only useful for the freelancers of Pakistan. They will be having more knowledge about the creative ways of freelancing and improving themselves in the market. This study does not apply on all industrial sectors which are not related to freelancing. This research paper is all about freelance market of Pakistan and how government is playing role for the development of e-workers and how freelancers see the role of government is helping them. This paper is purely qualitative research paper in which we will be conducting interviews from freelancers of Pakistan, the interview questions purely based on qualitative research concepts. There is no quantitative or mixed method kind of concepts and questions involved in this research paper.

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