

Beyond Borders and Boundaries: Determinants of Job Satisfaction Among Digital Nomads in a Changing World

Lusine Kirakosyan^{1*} , Diana Gevorgyan², Sos Khachikyan³, Vadim Grigoryan⁴, Yeva Grigoryan⁵

^{1,2,3,4,5} *Armenian State University of Economics*

*Corresponding Author: sos.khachikyan@asue.am

Citation: Kirakosyan, L., Gevorgyan, D., Khachikyan, S., Grigoryan, V. and Grigoryan, Y. (2025). Beyond Borders and Boundaries: Determinants of Job Satisfaction Among Digital Nomads in a Changing World, *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change*, 10(2), 1984-1993. <https://doi.org/10.64753/jcasc.v10i2.1897>

Published: November 15, 2025

ABSTRACT

The rapid increase of location-independent employment has resulted in the emergence of digital nomad as a growing segment of the global workforce that combine remote work with the travel. Despite the popularity of this lifestyle, limited research has examined the specific factors that influence their job satisfaction. This study investigates how personal, professional, and environmental variables such as autonomy, work-life balance, social connectedness, and destination characteristics affect job satisfaction among digital nomads. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study integrates data from a global online survey of 377 participants and 15 in-depth interviews to provide both quantitative insights and rich qualitative viewpoints. The results reveal that work autonomy and work-life balance are the strongest indicators of job satisfaction, while challenges such as professional isolation and career uncertainty remain significant concerns. These findings suggest new insights into the evolving nature of work and well-being in an interconnected world, with implications for organizations, policymakers, and individuals seeking to support sustainable remote work lifestyles.

Keywords: Digital Nomads, Job Satisfaction, Remote Work, Work-Life Balance, Workplace Flexibility

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of technology has changed the nature of work with multiple functions outside the office and in a mobile or remote context. The change has also increased a new class of digital nomads that use technology to work while traveling to various locations, which enables them to lead a travel-oriented, sedentary lifestyle. While enhanced flexibility offers several personal and professional advantages, it also presents complex issues that can directly or indirectly diminish job satisfaction. This paper explores the extensive scope of possible reasons that affect the level of job satisfaction of digital nomads in the context of dynamic global developments. A better understanding of job satisfaction and fulfillment among digital nomads can be achieved by examining personal, professional, and contextual factors. The digital nomad is an example of a person whose work involves ICTs (Information Communication Technologies) and includes traveling activities.

Digital nomadism became recognised as a mainstream phenomenon in 2014–15 when dedicated online communities emerged (e.g., Nomad List), coworking spaces opened and conference series began. While researchers at that time anticipated the emergence of such professionals, it would be fair to note that these individuals did not exist then. In any case, the phenomenon became widespread in the early 2000s. In the modern era, one way or another, a substantial number of people have access to remote work configurations, which makes it easier to adopt such a lifestyle. To fully comprehend this answer, it is crucial to consider various perspectives associated with living as a digital nomad.

The employee contentment level is essential for any organization to fulfill its objectives, reflecting the feelings about the job and perception. In the current fast-paced and interconnected world, balances between work and

personal life are shifting. Balancing work and personal life is essential for digital nomadism, a growing trend where individuals can work remotely while traveling. Thanks to modern technologies, it is no longer bound by geographical borders. Digital nomadism promotes personal freedom, flexible working conditions, and immersion in diverse cultures. However, this lifestyle also presents challenges, including irregular income, social isolation, and the complexities of navigating unfamiliar cultural and geographic contexts. As this trend becomes more popular, it is crucial to determine the extent to which job satisfaction is a component of digital nomadism. Job satisfaction is the cornerstone of job performance and overall well-being and is conditioned by the issues that make personal, professional, and environmental bases. Digital nomads don't work in fixed, dimensioned spaces like traditional employees, and what keeps them engaged at work might also be completely different from the ones of standard working environments. Several reasons have contributed to the rise of digital nomadism, ranging from technology and globalization to transformations in work-life priorities. Their convergence has enabled people to break free from the chains of the office environment and to live and work more flexibly and remotely. Globalization has enabled the fluid exchange of talent and knowledge across countries, fostering the development of remote work and transnational collaboration. This transformation has caused countless people to take the plunge and become digital nomads with an increasing focus on work-life balance, personal satisfaction, and greater autonomy. The main issues of the study are:

- understanding the unique challenges and opportunities that digital nomads face in their workplaces, including how they achieve work-life balance, create social connections, and integrate into diverse cultural environments.
- studying the impact of personal factors such as personality, motivation, and career ambition on digital nomads' work satisfaction
- investigating how professional elements such as autonomy, flexibility, and the nature of work itself impact their work experience
- examining the influence of contextual factors such as destination characteristics, access to technology, and quality of living conditions on their overall well-being and job satisfaction
- investigating the potential impact of digital nomadism on individual and societal well-being, including its effects on mental health, physical health, and overall life satisfaction.

This research targets important problems to deliver useful knowledge about the emerging requirements of digital nomads for people and organizations, including policymakers who wish to understand and support this expanding remote workforce. The results will influence how organizations create inclusive remote workplaces and promote employee well-being while defining digital-age work practices.

The research focuses on the complex phenomenon of job satisfaction among digital nomads and provides a deep analysis of personal, professional, and contextual factors that influence their work-related happiness and fulfillment. This research will contribute to a better understanding of the evolving nature of work and well-being in an increasingly interconnected and globally mobile workforce. However, the reality of digital nomadism is often more complex than the idealized image of constant travel and freedom. The digital nomad is free to work from anywhere but also comes across the challenges of loneliness, cultural differences, and a never-ending adapting process. Finding a balance between work and personal life can be challenging for digital nomads. The lines between work and leisure often blur in a location-independent lifestyle, making it difficult to establish new friendships. Furthermore, the similar tendency to move frequently can make it complicated to build strong connections.

Another point is that the sustainability of digital nomadism depends on numerous variables, such as the quality of internet connections, cost and comfort of living locations, and the level of friendly approach from the chosen destinations. These factors can vary significantly depending on the location and impact overall life and work experience of a digital nomad. Despite these challenges, digital nomadism is rapidly gaining traction, with several individuals embracing this lifestyle. This tendency has profound ramifications for people, institutions, and societies. For individuals, the digital nomad lifestyle offers increased self-determination, flexibility, and opportunities for personal development. For businesses, it is a chance to access the best talent worldwide and to boost employee engagement and efficiency. For society, it poses significant questions about the future of work, its impact on local economies, and the policies needed to provide for the health and welfare of this growing cohort of the working population. This research will contribute to a better understanding of the factors that drive job satisfaction among digital nomads, ultimately informing strategies to support their well-being and foster a more sustainable and fulfilling future of work in the digital age. By looking at how personal, job-related, and surrounding things mix, this research will show the tough parts and chances that come with this new job style and guide the plan to help these workers do well in future years.

Research Questions

1. What are the key personal, professional, and environmental determinants of job satisfaction among digital nomads in a globally mobile work environment?

2. How do autonomy, work-life balance, and social connectedness interact to influence the overall well-being and job satisfaction of digital nomads across different regions?

Purpose

The purpose of the given research is to investigate the multifaceted determinants of job satisfaction among digital nomads by analyzing personal, professional, and contextual factors within their unique work environments. This study aims to deepen understanding of the evolving dynamics of remote work and contribute empirical insights that can inform individuals, organizations, and policymakers seeking to support the well-being and sustainable integration of digital nomads into the modern workforce. The findings are intended to guide the development of inclusive remote work policies and practices, enhance employee satisfaction, and address the broader societal implications of this growing global trend.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate the determinants of job satisfaction among digital nomads. This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, providing a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted phenomenon of job satisfaction within this unique workforce.

Quantitative data collection includes a structured online survey will be administered to a large and diverse sample of digital nomads worldwide. The survey will utilize validated scales to measure key variables, including:

- **Job Satisfaction:** Measured using established scales such as the job satisfaction survey.
- **Work-Life Balance:** Assessed through scales that measure perceived conflict between work and personal life.
- **Autonomy:** Measured using scales that assess perceived control over work schedule, tasks, and decision-making.
- **Social Connection:** Measured through scales that assess social integration, perceived social support, and feelings of loneliness.
- **Destination Characteristics:** Assessed through 18 questions related to cost of living, quality of life, access to infrastructure (internet, co-working spaces), and overall satisfaction with the destination.
- **Work-Related Factors:** Measured through questions related to income stability, job security, career growth opportunities, and the nature of work (e.g., freelancing, remote employment).

Qualitative data collection includes literature review on remote work, digital nomadism, and job satisfaction involving academic articles, books, and other publications available to identify common patterns, themes, and gaps in the existing research. The 15 digital nomads represented diverse industries including IT, marketing, consulting, design, writing, education, finance, and content creation. Interviews probe more deeply into participants' experiences, perceptions, and concerns on issues of job satisfaction, work-life balance, and the realities of the digital nomad lifestyle. This mixed-methods design ensures that both personal experiences and overall trends are captured, giving a balanced picture of the determinants of job satisfaction. The quantitative strand gives statistical data on key variables, and the qualitative data will add depth and richness to these findings. By integrating the methods, the study aims to identify trends that may not be evident from either method alone. This strategy also facilitates data triangulation, which enhances the validity and reliability of the outcomes. The results will contribute to the current understanding of how digital nomads perceive and deal with the issues of work, life, and mobility in an increasingly interconnected world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are both similarities and differences in the scholarly viewpoints expressed in the discussion of digital nomadism and job satisfaction. Early theorists approached the phenomenon from quite different perspectives, starting with the concept's historical development. The main focus of Toffler's 1980 work was the technological potential of remote work via "electronic cottages," which emphasized a stationary, home-based approach. On the other hand, Makimoto and Manners' predictions from 1997 showed incredible foresight, correctly predicting the mobile nature of digital work that would emerge decades later. Definitions of digital nomadism have changed considerably in recent years. The tools and infrastructure that allow for location-independent work are the main focus of Nash and colleagues' primarily technological approach to the phenomenon. Thompson provides a more thorough framework that incorporates technological capabilities with aspects of personal preference and lifestyle. The debate in the field regarding whether digital nomadism should be viewed primarily as a technological

revolution or as a more extensive social and cultural transformation is reflected in this definitional distinction. Particularly intriguing contradictions and complementarities are found in the research on job satisfaction among digital nomads. While Wang and colleagues provide strong evidence for autonomy as the critical factor, Felstead and Henseke's work highlights workplace flexibility as the main driver of satisfaction. According to Rodriguez-Sanchez's research team, acquired skills like resilience and self-efficacy can be developed over time. However, Cook's writing highlights natural personality qualities like tolerance for uncertainty and openness to new experiences. Although these viewpoints are not inherently incompatible, they do offer distinct strategies for assisting and cultivating prosperous digital nomads. Numerous perspectives have been used to analyze environmental factors and their effects on the satisfaction of digital nomads. By looking at how various destination attributes impact work outcomes, Lee's research team tackles the question from a productivity perspective. Müller's research focuses more on the decision-making process, looking at how amenities and infrastructure are used by digital nomads to choose their destinations. These various methods highlight how difficult it is to comprehend how location influences the contentment of digital nomads. Recent studies have focused especially on the social dimensions of digital nomadism. While Davidson's work focuses more on the establishment and upkeep of virtual communities, Thompson's team highlights the critical role that professional networks play in preserving job satisfaction. These viewpoints provide various, yet complementary, answers to the problem of professional isolation that many digital nomads encounter. One of the main themes in contemporary research is work-life integration. This study highlights how difficult it is to uphold sound boundaries in a way of life that naturally conflates work and personal life. There are still a lot of things we don't know about digital nomadism, according to the most recent research. There aren't many studies that look at the long-term viability of digital nomad careers over time. Also, not enough research has been done on the role of cultural adaptation and how it affects job satisfaction, especially in cross-cultural settings. Theories about how to understand digital nomad satisfaction are always changing, as traditional models of job satisfaction may not fully capture the unique aspects of working as a digital nomad. Thompson's proposed frameworks give us new ways to think about these experiences, but there is still a big gap between established organisational theory and new ways of working. Combining existing research shows that there are a number of areas where scholars agree, especially when it comes to the role of technology in enabling learning and the value of being flexible and independent. There is still a lot of disagreement about what makes people happy, how important personal traits are compared to learnt skills, and how physical and virtual communities can help digital nomads succeed.

This research provides several lines for future investigation, such as understanding the long-term career trajectory and cross-cultural adaptation of digital nomads. Building on specific measures of digital nomad satisfaction also represents an important area of future research in the field. These streams of research can help to some degree fill in some of the lacunae in our existing knowledge of this new phenomenon.

FINDINGS

To explore the multifaceted determinants of job satisfaction among digital nomads in this evolving landscape, a survey was conducted, the results of which illuminate key factors beyond traditional work boundaries. The survey respondents represented a diverse range of nationalities, with participants from 47 different countries, with participants predominantly aged 25-34 (48.3%), holding bachelor's degrees (50.6%), working as freelancers (47.0%) in the IT sector (42.4%), and earning between \$2,000-\$4,000 monthly (32.6%). The most represented nationalities were American (21.2%), British (11.6%), German (8.3%), Canadian (7.5%), and Australian (6.2%). Current locations of respondents spanned 63 countries, with notable concentrations in Southeast Asia (27.4%), Europe (24.8%), Latin America (18.6%), and North America (15.2%).

The research examined several dimensions related to job satisfaction. Figure 1 illustrates the mean scores for overall job satisfaction and its various components.

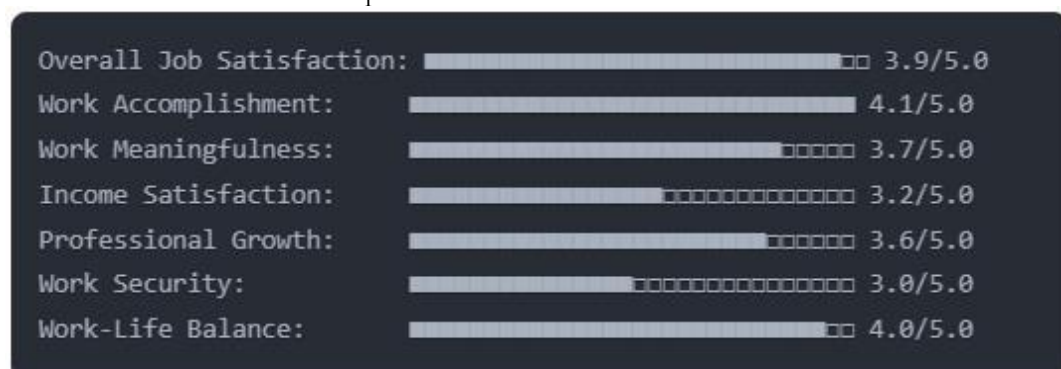


Figure 1: Mean scores of job satisfaction dimensions

Reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 for the job satisfaction scale, indicating high internal consistency. Factor analysis confirmed that these items loaded onto a single factor explaining 68.4% of the variance. Work-life balance emerged as a critical component of digital nomads' job satisfaction. Table 1 presents the mean scores for work-life balance indicators.

Table 1: Work-life balance indicators (Scale: 1-5)

Indicator	Mean	SD
Effectively balancing work and personal life	3.9	0.81
Having enough time for leisure activities	4.2	0.76
Ability to disconnect from work when needed	3.6	1.05
Flexible work schedule for personal activities	4.3	0.72
Maintaining healthy relationships while working remotely	3.4	0.98
Managing work responsibilities without overwhelming personal life	3.7	0.89
Having clear boundaries between work and personal time	3.5	1.10

The data reveal that digital nomads report highest satisfaction with the flexibility of their work schedule ($M=4.3$, $SD=0.72$) and time availability for leisure activities ($M=4.2$, $SD=0.76$). However, they face challenges in maintaining healthy relationships ($M=3.4$, $SD=0.98$) and disconnecting from work ($M=3.6$, $SD=1.05$). Work autonomy was measured across seven dimensions. Figure 2 illustrates these dimensions and their corresponding scores.

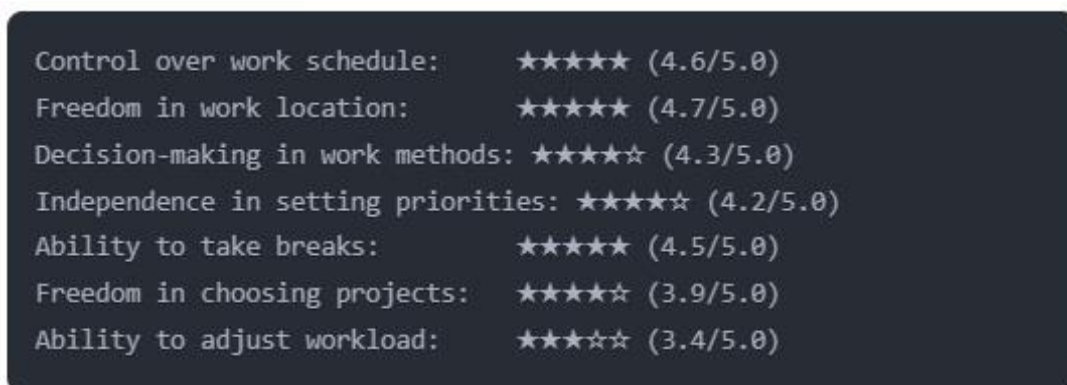


Figure 2: Work autonomy dimensions

Digital nomads reported high levels of location independence ($M=4.7$, $SD=0.58$) and schedule control ($M=4.6$, $SD=0.64$), which are foundational elements of the digital nomad lifestyle. However, the ability to adjust workload ($M=3.4$, $SD=1.12$) scored considerably lower, suggesting potential challenges in workload management. The study examined professional connections and social support, revealing mixed results. The results indicate that digital nomads face significant challenges in maintaining professional connections. The lowest scores were observed for feeling part of a professional community ($M=3.0$, $SD=1.09$) and having adequate social support ($M=2.9$, $SD=1.13$). However, they reported higher capability in collaborating with others when needed ($M=3.5$, $SD=0.92$) and building new professional relationships ($M=3.4$, $SD=0.98$). The survey examined how location-related factors influence digital nomads' work satisfaction. Safety ($M=4.3$, $SD=0.74$) and cost of living ($M=4.2$, $SD=0.82$) emerged as the highest-rated location factors, while cultural acceptance of digital nomads ($M=3.6$, $SD=1.12$) scored lowest. Internet reliability, often cited as critical in the literature, scored relatively high ($M=4.0$, $SD=0.95$) but showed greater variability across regions. Digital nomads' perceptions of career stability and development were assessed through seven indicators. The analysis reveals a stark contrast between digital nomads' opportunities for skill development ($M=4.0$, $SD=0.78$) and their perceived job security ($M=2.9$, $SD=1.18$). This suggests that while the lifestyle enables continuous learning and skill acquisition, it comes with significant concerns about long-term job stability. When asked about future plans as digital nomads, participants provided varied responses. A substantial proportion of respondents (45.5%) planned to continue as digital nomads for more than 5 years or indefinitely, indicating a strong commitment to this lifestyle. Only 8.5% intended to stop within a year. Regarding recommending the digital nomad lifestyle to others: Yes: 58.7%, Maybe: 32.3%, No: 9 %. To determine the key

predictors of job satisfaction among digital nomads, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. Table 2 presents the results of this analysis.

Table 2: Multiple regression analysis - predictors of job satisfaction

Predictor Variable	β	SE	t	p-value
Work Autonomy	0.42	0.05	8.40	<0.001
Work-Life Balance	0.38	0.04	9.50	<0.001
Income Level	0.21	0.03	7.00	<0.001
Professional Connections	0.19	0.04	4.75	<0.001
Location Factors	0.15	0.03	5.00	<0.001
Duration as Digital Nomad	0.11	0.04	2.75	0.006
Educational Level	0.05	0.03	1.67	0.097
Age	0.03	0.02	1.50	0.134
Gender	0.02	0.04	0.50	0.617

Model summary: $R^2 = 0.68$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.65$, $F(9, 377) = 42.63$, $p < 0.001$ The regression model explained 65% of the variance in job satisfaction (adjusted $R^2 = 0.65$). Work autonomy emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$), followed by work-life balance ($\beta = 0.38$, $p < 0.001$) and income level ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$). Demographic variables such as age, gender, and educational level were not significant predictors.

Table 3 presents the correlation matrix between key variables in the study.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix of Key Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Job Satisfaction	1.00						
2. Work Autonomy	0.64*	1.00					
3. Work-Life Balance	0.61*	0.57*	1.00				
4. Professional Connections	0.42*	0.28*	0.35*	1.00			
5. Location Factors	0.39*	0.31*	0.48*	0.29*	1.00		
6. Career Stability	0.45*	0.32*	0.39*	0.36*	0.25*	1.00	
7. Income Level	0.47*	0.24*	0.33*	0.18*	0.21*	0.43*	1.00

Note: * $p < 0.01$

The correlation matrix reveals strong positive relationships between job satisfaction and work autonomy ($r = 0.64$, $p < 0.01$), as well as between job satisfaction and work-life balance ($r = 0.61$, $p < 0.01$). Professional connections showed a moderate correlation with job satisfaction ($r = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$), supporting the importance of social factors despite the independent nature of digital nomadism. The study found significant regional variations in job satisfaction and its determinants.

Southeast Asia emerged as the region with the highest overall job satisfaction ($M=4.2$, $SD=0.68$) and work-life balance scores ($M=4.3$, $SD=0.71$), likely due to its combination of low cost of living, digital nomad-friendly infrastructure, and lifestyle amenities. North American and European digital nomads reported higher income levels but lower work-life balance scores than their counterparts in Southeast Asia and Latin America.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research provides significant insights into the determinants of job satisfaction among digital nomads in a rapidly evolving remote work landscape. Several key findings emerge from the analysis:

1. **Work autonomy and work-life balance are paramount:** The regression analysis identifies autonomy in the workplace ($\beta = 0.42$) and work-life balance ($\beta = 0.38$), as the two most important predictors of digital

nomads' job satisfaction. These findings echo the inherent motivations for pursuing a location-independent lifestyle: autonomy in deciding working hours, where one works, and the ability to engage in a healthy work-life balance.

2. **Economic factors remain significant but not primary:** Although income level emerged as a notable predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.21$); it was a less powerful predictor than lifestyle factors. This means that digital nomads place a premium on autonomy and quality of life to the extent that they will sacrifice income which disrupts the career models that are usually focused on advancement and income.

3. **Professional isolation presents a significant challenge:** The comparatively low means for professional community belonging ($M=3.0$) and social support ($M=2.9$) identify a significant vulnerability in the digital nomad lifestyle of what may be an earn it and lose it factor. Professional isolation was a risk or trade-off for gaining independence and mobility, and this too may be a reason why some individuals ultimately return to more traditional types of work arrangements.

4. **Regional context substantially impacts satisfaction:** The and across regions mean that where to locate in terms of location is of great importance for digital nomads that are interested in job satisfaction while not to neglect social satisfaction. With Southeast Asia emerging as the region with the highest score ($M=4.2$), it indicates that aspects such as cost of living that are appealing to nomads and internet infrastructure and cultures openness to digital nomads create environments that enhance job satisfaction.

5. **Career uncertainty tempers an otherwise positive experience:** While digital nomads indicate a strong level of access to skill development opportunities ($M=4.0$), their responses regarding their anxiety over job security ($M=2.9$) indicates a vulnerability regarding their career path that is sustainable, and not just trend-based. This tension between present freedom and future stability represents a key psychological challenge in the digital nomad lifestyle.

6. **Long-term commitment to the lifestyle is substantial:** The results show that 45.5% of respondents want to remain digital nomads for over 5 years or indefinitely, suggesting for the respondents work arrangement is a legitimate career path rather than a temporary arrangement or extended travel stint for many practitioners.

7. **Digital nomadism appears to be a positive choice for most:** The high recommendation rate (58.7% would recommend unconditionally) suggests that even with the challenges identified, the majority of digital nomads look at the lifestyle positively, with only 9% saying they would not recommend it.

To supplement the survey data, a portion of the same survey respondents was asked follow-up questions in semi-structured in-depth interviews, the thematic analysis of which revealed the following insights. This set of questions aims to go deeper into the experiences and perspectives of digital nomads on the questions from the survey.

The in-depth interviews gave a richer qualitative interpretation of the influences on job satisfaction with work.

Key themes included in the analysis across the 15 digital nomads in sample from a variety of industries include:

- **Journey and expectations:**

- ✓ Many participants were driven by a desire for autonomy and freedom, but often underestimated the challenges of establishing a stable work routine and social network in new locations.

- ✓ Several interviewees transitioned from traditional office jobs, seeking a more fulfilling and flexible lifestyle.

- **Benefits and drawbacks:**

- ✓ The most cited benefits were flexibility, cultural immersion, and personal growth.

- ✓ Drawbacks included inconsistent income, difficulties with time zone management, and feelings of isolation.

- **Work-life balance and productivity:**

- ✓ Participants employed various strategies for maintaining productivity, including designated workspaces, time-blocking, and setting clear boundaries.

- ✓ Work-life balance was perceived as both a benefit and a challenge, requiring constant negotiation and self-discipline.

- **Challenges and fulfillment:**

- ✓ Finding consistent, fulfilling work was a significant challenge, with many relying on freelance platforms and networking.

- ✓ Job satisfaction was strongly correlated with a sense of purpose, autonomy, and the ability to align work with personal values.

- **Isolation and community:**
 - ✓ Combating isolation was a key concern, with participants actively seeking out co-working spaces, online communities, and local social events.
 - ✓ The importance of building a supportive network was emphasized.
- **Location and well-being:**
 - ✓ Factors such as cost of living, internet connectivity, and cultural attractions influenced location choices.
 - ✓ The impact of location on well-being was significant, with access to nature and a sense of community being highly valued.
- **Professional development and career goals:**
 - ✓ Many digital nomads are actively pursuing online courses, and attending online conferences to keep their skills up to date.
 - ✓ Long term career goals varied, but many participants wanted to build location independent businesses, or consulting firms.
- **Overall job satisfaction and well-being:**
 - ✓ While challenges existed, most participants reported high levels of job satisfaction, driven by the freedom and autonomy of the lifestyle.
 - ✓ The digital nomad lifestyle was perceived as having a positive impact on overall well-being, but required proactive management of stress and social connections.

The research reveals that job satisfaction among digital nomads is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon. The "Beyond Borders and Boundaries" framework is supported by the findings, which demonstrate that traditional determinants of job satisfaction are augmented by factors unique to the digital nomad experience.

- **Autonomy and flexibility:** These will continue to be central to job satisfaction, but a more structured approach will mitigate burnout and support a consistent level of productivity.
- **Community and connection:** The importance of social connection cannot be overemphasized. Digital nomads should proactively develop relationships to counteract feelings of isolation.
- **Location independence and well-being:** While autonomy of work location reaps many benefits, it requires time and attention to be consciously aware of one's practical and emotional demands.
- **Proactive career management:** Digital nomads must take a proactive role in their careers; developing skills and networks continuously.
- **The evolving nature of work:** The study shows that work is transitioning and location-independent careers continue to grow. As the landscape shifts, the reflections and discoveries from this study will serve future studies and meet the demands of rising digital nomads.

These findings contribute to our understanding of evolving work patterns in a networked digital world economy. The findings suggest that organizations that want to hold on to employees in an increasingly remote-friendly work environment must emphasize autonomy, integration of work and life, and the potential for deep connection. Similarly, policymakers designing digital nomad visa programs should not only consider economic factors but infrastructure and community integration factors that contribute to overall well-being. This study has limitations including being a cross-sectional study leading to inability to infer causation, as well as possible self-selection bias in the sample. Future directions should also seek longitudinal designs to evaluate how satisfaction changes throughout a digital nomad's career, as well as, an individual's career advancement within the context of having an alternative lifestyle. As remote work continues to grow around the world, exploring the relationship between the factors that drive job satisfaction for people with the most extreme form of location independence digital nomads can inform our understanding of the future of work more generally. The findings of this study imply that the psychological rewards of autonomy and work-life integration may outweigh conventional career motivators for a sizable portion of knowledge workers, revealing important ways that careers will be restructured in the digital economy.

CONCLUSION

This mixed-methods investigation reveals that work autonomy and work-life balance mainly serve to drive job satisfaction among digital nomads since they explain the most satisfaction variance. These factors point toward a fundamental shift in workforce priorities. Now, psychological fulfillment via self-determination supersedes customary career motivators.

The study also uncovers important challenges however. A vulnerability that is critical is professional isolation, as it is evidenced by low scores in social support and in community belonging. This isolation paradox spotlights the intrinsic strain between belonging and autonomy in contemporary remote work where disconnection follows independence.

Southeast Asia emerges as just the most favorable environment because regional variations impact the digital nomad experience. For successful digital nomad destinations, they seem to provide for thorough ecosystems. These ecosystems support professional productivity as well as personal well-being but they do not simply supply technological infrastructure.

The research reveals a fundamental rebalancing of career aspirations. Despite concerns over job security, nearly half of participants plan to continue nomadic work for years, indicating a thoughtful trade-off between traditional security and lifestyle fulfillment. It is a paradigmatic shift in what individuals perceive as career success.

These insights have real implications for a range of stakeholders. Organizations should enable autonomy for employees, but offer relevant resources to help minimize any potential feelings of isolation that come from working remotely. And when it comes to policymakers who craft programming for digital nomads, the range of logistics and community resources in addition to economic-related initiatives should be a consideration. This study was limited in its design by using a cross-sectional approach; therefore future longitudinal research examining the career trajectories of nomads is needed. The "Beyond Borders and Boundaries" framework validated by this study within the context of work and life meaning indicates that satisfaction with a job in the digital era can occur without regard to the constraints typically linked to a distinctive organization or a geographical area. As the global workforce pivots toward remote organizational structures, we will need learn more about how digital nomadism can provide meaningful understandings into the future of work itself, particularly as the findings indicate that previous boundaries formed in work and life are dissolving in many instances to form more integrated approaches that embrace autonomy but also meaningfulness.

This research helps with our understandings of how individuals navigate a location-independent work structure, and that antecedent factors could provide rationale for better supporting an increasingly mobile global workforce. The digital nomad phenomenon is not just a lifestyle alternative but a preview of a larger shift in the workplace's acceptance of centering human agency, a more holistic human outlook on well-being, and meaningful ways to integrate personal goals and professional work.

REFERENCES

- Alvin Toffler. *The Third Wave*. WILLIAM MORROW AND COMPANY, INC. New York. 1980, pages 544.
- Aroles, J., Granter, E., & de Vaujany, F. X. (2020). 'Becoming mainstream': The professionalisation and corporatisation of digital nomadism. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 35(1), 114–129.
- Beatty, J. E., & Torbert, W. R. (2003). The false duality of work and leisure. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 12(3), 239–252.
- Bednorz, J. (2024). Working from anywhere? Work from here! Approaches to attract digital nomads. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 105, Article 103715.
- Bozzi, A., & Müller, D. (2024). Digital nomadism from the perspective of places and mobilities: A literature review. *European Transport Research Review*, 16, Article 50.
- Clark, S. C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, 53(6), 747–770.
- Cook, D. (2023a). What is a digital nomad? Definition and taxonomy in the era of mainstream remote work. *World Leisure Journal*, 65(2), 256–275.
- Daniel Schlagwein (2018). The history of digital nomadism. International Workshop on the Changing Nature of Work (CNOW), San Francisco, CA. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329182172_The_History_of_Digital_Nomadism
- Florice, T., & Pavia, N. (2021). Linkage of leisure with remote work and digital nomadism in tourist accommodation facilities. *Tourism in Southern and Eastern Europe*, 6, 247–268.
- Felstead, A., & Henseke, G. (2017). Remote and flexible work: A systematic review. *Nepal Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 6(2), pages 131-144.
- Hannah, I. C., Dolnicar, S., & Laesser, C. (2020). In search of a digital nomad: defining the phenomenon. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 22(3), 267-282. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341133344_In_search_of_a_digital_nomad_defining_the_phenomenon
- Hannonen, O. (2020). In search of a digital nomad: Defining the phenomenon. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 22(3), 335–353.
- Lee, J., Shin, H., & Kang, J. (2024). Investigating the managerial effects of workcations (work + vacations) on digital nomad employees: Workcation satisfaction, work engagement, innovation behavior, intention to stay, and revisit intention. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 324–331.
- Leonardi, P. M., Bailey, D. E., & Pierce, C. S. (2019). The coevolution of objects and boundaries over time: Materiality, affordances, and boundary salience. *Information Systems Research*, 30(2), 665–686.

- Marx, J., Stieglitz, S., Brünker, F., & Mirbabaie, M. (2023). Home (office) is where your heart is: Exploring the identity of the 'corporate nomad' knowledge worker archetype. *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, 65(3), 293–308.
- Nash, Caleece; Jarrahi, Mohammad Hossein; Sutherland, Will (2020). Nomadic work and location independence: the Role of space in shaping the work of digital nomads. *Human behavior and emerging technologies*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/345397670_Nomadic_Work_and_Location_Independence_The_Role_of_Space_in_Shaping_the_Work_of_Digital_Nomads
- Prester, J., Cecez-Kecmanovic, D., & Schlagwein, D. (2019). Becoming a digital nomad: Identity emergence in the flow of practice. In *International conference on information systems 2019*, Munich, Germany.
- Pritchard, K. (2012). Combining qualitative methods. In G. Symon, & C. Cassell (Eds.), *Qualitative organizational research: Core methods and current challenges* (pp. 132–148). London: Sage.
- Rainoldi, M., Ladkin, A., & Buhalis, D. (2024). Blending work and leisure: A future digital worker hybrid lifestyle perspective. *Annals of Leisure Research*, 27(2), 215–235.
- Rodríguez-Sánchez, A. M., Salanova, M., Cifre, E., & Grau, R. M. (2011). Enjoyment and self-efficacy intersect to predict job performance and flow in the workplace. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 26(6), 427–441.
- "The Virtual Villages Helping Digital Nomads Find Real-World Friends." *WIRED*, 26 Nov. 2024, www.wired.com/story/digital-nomad-virtual-villages/.
- Thompson BY (2018). Digital nomads: employment in the online gig economy, *Glocalism Journal of Culture, Politics & Innovation*, pages 26.
- Thompson, B. Y. (2019). The digital nomad lifestyle: (remote) work/leisure balance, privilege, and constructed community. *International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure*, 2(1-2), 27–42.
- Thompson, B. Y. (2021). The digital nomad. In *Digital nomads living on the margins: Remote-working laptop entrepreneurs in the gig economy*, pages. 1–11.
- Wang, B., Liu, Y., Qian, J., & Parker, S. K. (2021). Achieving Effective Remote Working ... *Applied Psychology* 70(1), pages 16–59.