

Advance Social Science Archive Journal

Available Online: <https://assajournal.com>

Vol.3 No.1, January-March, 2025. Page No.665-687

Print ISSN: [3006-2497](#) Online ISSN: [3006-2500](#)

Platform & Workflow by: [Open Journal Systems](#)



ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN SUSTAINING SOFT SKILLS CAREERS IN DIGITAL MARKET: A STUDY OF FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR FRESH FREELANCERS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of English language proficiency in sustaining successful freelancing careers, particularly within the digital market. As more clients turn to freelancers and with platforms like Upwork and Fiverr emerging, freelancers must learn how to communicate to work internationally. In this paper, an attempt has been made to analyze how English language proficiency affects career opportunities and the applicability of soft skills like communication skills, team management, and flexibility while choosing freelancing as a career. Carried out through a quantitative survey of 150 freelancers from various fields, this study reveals that better English proficiency is directly related to higher career achievements, especially in fields such as Information technology, content writing, and voice-over. Based on this research, it was proposed that the retention principle offers clients soft aptitudes and English proficiency is critical across technical competencies about clients and job satisfaction. The paper provides helpful suggestions for freelance translators to improve their English so that they can have better job prospects and longer career spans.

Keywords: English Proficiency, Soft Skills, Freelancing Careers, Digital Market, Communication Skills, Remote Work, Career Sustainability

1. Introduction

1.1 Overview of Freelancing and Soft Skills

Freelancing is now widely practiced and is a rapidly growing economic model in today's economy, especially in digital industries. Freelancing has become a new culture due to advancements in technology, the new generation and the new setup allow employees to work from the comfort of their homes due to COVID-19 by using online

platforms such as Upwork, Fiverr, and Freelancer.com. According to Chester et al. (2023), this shift has been most apparent within sectors like information technology and content creation and customer service subsectors. With such flexibility and freedom that is accorded to any freelancer, they get to experience a wider diversity in occupations of their various fields.

With this escalating competition, there has been an emergence of new commodities of soft skills like good communication, problem-solving, time management, and flexibility. These skills are crucial for freelancers because the latter need not only to do their job but also to have a good working relationship with clients. Sattayathamrongthian and Vanpetch (2023) underline that professional soft skills should be developed since the freelance market is built around self-organization and interpersonal communication when searching for and obtaining contracts. Tossavainen (2023) further makes a point that freelancers with strong hard skills who perform well with these soft skills are in a better position to achieve longevity in their careers.

1.2 Significance of English in the Global Freelancing Market

The global rise of freelancing has emphasized the importance of English language proficiency. Freelancers who are optimistic about working with different clients from different parts of the world should be good in English since English is the primary language of international business. In the view of Qamar (2024), English serves as a medium that also helps the freelancer in business interactions and contract negotiations and gets projects from international clients. This is especially true for the service industry where a large number of workers may be interacting with international clients or communicating in English with coworkers within such industries as content creation, voice-over services, video editing, and information technology services.

According to Romagnuolo and Elefante (2023), it has also been a focus that it is impossible to overemphasize the importance of the English language in a globalizing freelancing environment. The last advantage is connected with the possibility for freelancers with good English language knowledge to work in the global market and gain trustful contacts with clients as well as to improve a personal brand. English proficiency is therefore the cornerstone for increasing freelancers' prospects, earning capabilities, and warranted career longevity.

1.3 Research Objectives

This paper seeks to explore the critical role of English language proficiency in sustaining soft skills careers for freelancers in the digital market. This research will focus on the relationship that exists between the level of English competency and job performance in freelancing. The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To assess the impact of English language proficiency on the career success and sustainability of fresh freelancers.
2. To identify the freelance sectors that require the most English proficiency and analyze how language skills influence success in these sectors.
3. To explore freelancers' perceptions of the role of English in their career development and marketability.

1.4 Research Questions

To guide the investigation, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. How does English language proficiency affect the career success and sustainability of fresh freelancers?
2. Which freelance sectors require English proficiency the most, and how does it influence success in those sectors?
3. How do freelancers perceive the importance of English language proficiency in their career development and marketability?

1.5 Significance of the Topic

The relevance of this study is found in the answers to the research questions in its ability to explain the how English language is influential in freelancers' career success in the digital market (Sattayathamrongthian & Vanpetch, 2023). This rationale is crucial as freelancing becomes more popular in different nations; comprehending how much English skills impact career success is crucial for businesses functioning to improve their appeal and ensure stable organic development. In line with Tongwa (2024), optimum freelancers are those who are conversant in English thus they can cover a global market, perform cross-cultural communications, and manage themselves in global markets hence the issue of sustainability may not haunt them.

Therefore, this research can provide practical advice for new freelance workers seeking to enhance their skills in English to advance their careers by analyzing freelancers' opinions and identifying sectors that require English most. This is even more evident in content creation, IT, and customer support where English has become a standard medium of communication whereby writing, talking, and conversing in it is associated with more and better-paying clients (Qamar, 2024; Gussek & Wiesche, 2023).

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Emergence and Growth of Freelancing in the Digital Economy

Freelancing has become an essential part of the international economy, especially within the digital business environment. Chester et al. (2023) also note that freelancing is on the rise because industries have become more digitized and this has changed the nature of how businesses exist and source much of their workforce. Many have supported freelancing in that teleworking has allowed employees within different industries such as information technology, creative services, and consulting, among

others, the freedom to work. Freelancing marketplaces like; Upwork, Fiverr, and Freelancer.com among others have brought significant changes in the freelancing job market where workers can easily access clients and their projects. It has also led to an easier market where freelancers who like a certain type of work can be able to get jobs that they like.

Besides the technological changes, the authors Ahsan et al. (2022) also point to the concept of freelancing as a result of COVID-19 which has surged the use of work from home in all fields. The events of the pandemic exposed a demand for remote freelancers, especially in areas of information technology, customer relations, and marketing needing cheap and efficient workforce solutions. Riaz et al., (2021) have also noted that the gig economy has expanded sharply in this decade and freelancing job opportunities in particular have increased tremendously, particularly in the developing countries because freelancing appears to be a new way of working as opposed to a traditional employment status.

However, there is a lot of competition in freelancing even though it is expanding. According to Sattayathamrongthian and Vanpetch's (2023) observation, freelancers have to self-promote themselves to remain visible among the growing competition. Relevant experience that can be crucial to the overall freelancer's engagements concerns the proficiency of not only technical skills but also general communication and interpersonal skills necessary to sustain a relationship with the client as well as to acquire the next contract. Due to the increased competition in the freelancing market, self-organization and independence are becoming vital for the freelancer's business in the long run.

2.2 The Increasing Importance of Soft Skills for Freelancers

While technical skills form the foundation of many freelancing careers, soft skills have become increasingly crucial for freelancers who aim to succeed in the digital market. According to Tossavainen (2023), freelancers in their interactions with clients need to rely on communication skills, time management skills, flexibility, and problem-solving skills among other skills. Uncontrolled working hours differ from employment, where employers can monitor employees and their training, and address problems that arise directly: freelancers have to schedule time wisely, convey ideas clearly, and fearlessly solve problems on their own. This autonomy is coupled with a lot of self-organization and personal discipline which is useful in handling several clients, projects, and timelines concurrently.

Also, Sattayathamrongthian and Vanpetch (2023) highlight how skilled freelancers manage the interpersonal communicative aspect of their business. Freelancers need to communicate with clients through texts, emails, video, or chat, which can involve sharing expectations as well as setting up working rapport. Another important soft skill

may be identified as problem-solving. Businesses tied in content development, website planning and advancement, and digital promotion frequently manage to encounter occasional quandaries, for instance, time constraints or client demands that direct inventive effort. According to Tossavainen (2023) these point out that freelancers who deliver on the above areas are better placed to develop long-term relationships with them which in turn translates to repeat business and referrals thus increasing the sustainability of the career.

In addition, flexibility has risen as an important requirement because freelancers have to cope with varying technologies and clients' demands. The same was said by Sattayathamrongthian and Vanpetch (2023) whereby freelancers have to be versatile and know how and when to learn new tools, and market fluctuations. Freelancers who demonstrate adaptability are often more successful in navigating shifts in market trends, new technologies, and client preferences, which helps them maintain a competitive edge.

2.3 English Proficiency as a Key Factor in Freelancing Success

In an increasingly interconnected global market, English language proficiency has emerged as a crucial factor for freelancers seeking to compete internationally. According to Qamar (2024), English plays an enormous role in business, especially where digital freelancers run their independent businesses by operating for international clients who expect them to articulate themselves transact business negotiate employment contracts, and deliver quality work. Freelancers who are fluent in English have better chances of getting connected with foreigners, not only do they stand to be granted opportunities to work on international projects but also they have higher chances of developing long-term associations with them.

In turn, Romagnuolo and Elefante (2023) also stress that fluency in English is key to wider opportunities. When working on freelancing websites those occupations that involve direct communication often emphasize the native or near-native English speaker. According to Fatima et al. (2024), mastery of English also helps freelancers establish a connection with a larger number of clients and engage in industry discussions and visibility improvement. These points are important in achieving the essentials of freelance work since projects may be given to those who have mastery of how to express their ideas coherently, and quickly grasp what the client needs to be done and respond to queries appropriately.

Nevertheless, the function of English does not end with using it in spoken words only. These include: Proposals, emails, reports, etc.: In their writing, Ahsan et al. (2022) say that the language used must be professional, free from errors, and comprehensible. Cutler pointed out that in the course of the working relationship, the quality of the communication a freelancer demonstrates in writing and by phone matters a lot when

it comes to the willingness of clients to work with a freelancer again or make additional work to keep business flowing. English, thus, is crucial not only for spoken communication but also for generating good, pro-client written content.

2.4 Freelance Sectors Most Affected by English Proficiency

Some freelance areas need higher English skills because of the nature of clients and the cooperation with them, the peculiarity of the given projects. Ahsan et al. (2022) found that the voice-over industry, content writing and development sector, and IT sectors are the fields that demand a good command of the English language. As with any voice-over job, language skills are called for to provide material that would be appropriate for a client from another country. There is an expectation for the freelancers in this sector to provide the tone, emotion, and clarity of the content that is to be produced for the English-speaking audience.

Likewise, content creation, particularly writing for videos, means a high level of English proficiency especially for anyone who wants to target companies from around the world. Gussek and Wiesche (2023) describe one of the challenges video editors and content creators face while working with clients from different countries who have different language backgrounds and different cultural values. Fluency in English also leads to effective communication of instructions on the particular project, changes, and so on, therefore the outcome is satisfactory to the client. For example, most YouTube creators tend to have a universal channel, and making content friendly, culturally appealing, and in English helps so much in expanding their stream.

In the IT sector knowledge of the English language is especially important for freelancing in case one works with foreign clients. In this view, according to Gussek and Wiesche (2023) most programming languages, and technical documents are in English, and IT freelancers have to relate with these to address projects. Moreover, most communications, whether through email, project proposal, or progress reports are mainly in English hence there is a need for good writing and understanding skills.

2.5 Challenges Faced by Non-Native English Freelancers

Despite these benefits, many freelancers who could use an added language learn that they are disadvantaged in terms of both having access to well-paid jobs and competing head-to-head with native English writers. Some of the challenges that Alali (2022) noticed are: language limitations; customer communication issues; and problems with expressing the details of a project. Some of these challenges affect the freelancer's capacity to look for business and sell his or her services to secure projects and deliver value that meets the needs of the buyer.

Secondly, Riaz et al., (2021) agree that such freelancers may face biases with concerns to hiring since a majority of clients may opt to hire native English testimonials. This bias may often keep the non-native freelancers locked in the particular paying scale or

may reduce their probability of being hired for prestigious jobs. Referring to Fatima et al (2024) this means that one of the difficulties is that language quality must be enhanced to achieve balance.

Concerning these challenges, Tongwa (2024) suggests that those self-employed writers, who are not fully proficient in the English language should develop language fluency programs or otherwise patronize online language learning facilities. Such tools can assist the freelance workers to improve their language ability especially writing and communication to increase their chances of bidding for the richer clients.

2.6 Literature Gaps and Areas for Future Research

Even though many recent studies investigate the mediating effect of English proficiency in freelancing, thus, some concept gaps exist, which researchers should investigate further. First, much of the prior literature on freelancing covers how English skills affect freelancer's capability in connecting to global clients, with scant attention paid to how non-English proficient freelancers can overcome extra-linguistic barriers with the use of translating tools and bilingualism. Future research may compare these other forms of communication to give a fuller look into how writers overcome language obstacles.

Second, although some previous research has identified soft skills as relevant to freelancing, there are few investigations about the relevance of soft skills for various freelance sectors. It is imperative to adopt a more advanced understanding of how soft skills relevant to a particular sector like customer relations within creative industries or technology problem solving in IT affect freelance business. Research that examines the various forms of soft skills required in diverse industries may be helpful to working Independents who have intentions of niche markets.

Moreover, Fatima et al. (2024) argue that there is a lack of further the effects of the freelancing platform in the development of language demands and careers for non-native English freelance. While these platforms are rapidly gaining significance, it may be insightful to comprehend how policies that are technological aspects that include language support and client reviews, impact on careers of non-native English speakers for both platform developers and freelancers.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative research design to investigate the impact of English language proficiency on the success and sustainability of soft skills careers for freelancers in the digital market. The quantitative approach will be used since it entails the collection of quantities whereby correlation tests of English proficiency and various parameters of freelancing success can be made. A cross-sectional approach will be used, this means that data will be collected at one time and hence capture the

correspondence of the freelance workers' English competency with their employment statistics. This design is appropriate to employ to establish the frequency of particular indicators—language competencies and soft competencies—and their relationship with freelancing success across various domains.

3.2 Data Collection

To gather the required information, an online questionnaire will be used that will be completed by freelancers who work in different sectors. The utilization of an online survey is beneficial especially because the population of freelancers covers a diverse marked of geographical areas (Ryser, 2021). This approach is also consistent with the objective of this study, to consider freelancers' accounts of how English is used in their work. In an attempt to quantify the survey, closed-ended questions as well as the Likert scale will be used so that quantitative as well as categorical data may be collected.

The questionnaire will include generic questions on demographics, like age, years of experience as a freelancer, and the type of work they do., as well as specific questions about one's English skills, the self-estimation of soft skills needed for freelancing (like communication, planning and so on), and the type of career they have (regardless of its success). This structured approach means that the study covers parameters that can determine the freelancers' career path and growth in the international market.

3.3 Sample Size and Selection

The target sample of this study will comprise 150 freelancers willing to participate in the research originating from several fields including; content creation, IT services, customer relations, and video making industry. Such sample size is reasonable enough to provide statistical power and is also not too large to handle analysis for the given studies. The freelancers will be selected through non-probability sampling, and convenience sampling since freelancers are available on freelancing platforms such as Upwork, Fiverr, Freelancer.com, and social media forums where freelancers are often seen. The target population will be freelancers with 0-5 years of experience because this segment is possibly to have more issues in career self-management and language development.

The sample will also have an interest in geographic variation to capture freelancers who live in both local and international areas which will also allow examination of any impact of English-speaking or non-speaking countries (Ryser, 2021). This means that the selection will enable the study to obtain diversified experience hence enabling general results to be made to the entire freelancing community.

3.4 Data Analysis

After data collection, the results of the collected data will be presented by using frequency analysis which will include data concerning the demographics of the respondents, the level of self-estimated proficiency in English, and their career

employment results. These descriptive analyses will generate knowledge regarding the level of English proficiency, the broad freelance sectors, and perceived success in the freelancing career (Qamar, 2024).

Also, correlation analysis will be made on the test results to find out if there is any relationship with other factors like soft skills and career advancement. This will also aid in the establishment of a relationship between the level of English and the level of performance especially in the area of client's acquisition, income generated, and the level of job satisfaction. Regression analysis will be conducted to determine whether soft skills together with English proficiency predict the main indicators of freelancing success. These statistical techniques shall enable a detailed analysis of the success and sustainability factors of freelancing careers.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are central to the design and conduct of this research. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, ensuring that they are fully aware of the study's purpose and their right to withdraw at any time. As the survey will target freelancers with different profiles and working in different geographical regions, the survey will be set in a way that the questions it contains will be proper in different cultures. Participant identity will be concealed and all data will be run through the process of anonymity to conceal the identity of the respondents. The data will remain confidential and be utilized only for the research described in this paper.

Moreover, participants will be informed that their participation is based on their own free will and they will not suffer any repercussions in case they decide not to participate. Due respect to the recommendations made by various academicians, the study will abide by the ethical conduct of the various academic institutions while conducting the research activities.

3.6 Limitations

While this methodology offers several strengths, such as broad accessibility and the ability to collect large amounts of data, it also has some inherent limitations. The first is the use of survey data and feelings-related variables that make up the key independent and dependent variables; freelancers' English proficiency and soft skills. Self-reports might be influenced by response biases, for example, response bias of overconfidence, which may distort the results. Another limitation is that in this study, purposive sampling—convenience sampling is used, so the sample might not be representative of the total freelancing population. Freelancers who are more involved in the site itself or use social media discussions make up a huge proportion than other freelancers who are not so inclined to end up posting their data online or those who work offline or are less inclined to social networks.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Overview of Survey Results

To establish the effects of English language fluency on freelancing businesses' survivability and effectiveness, a survey was conducted among 150 freelancers from all different fields. The participants of the study were freelancers with different geographical backgrounds, levels of education, and experience, which gave an overview of the influence of language proficiency in the digital platform.

Confidential data indicated that most of the freelancers said that they were fluent in English. More than 40% of participants selected "Advanced" in terms of perceiving the English language, while more than 30% utilized English 'Always' for freelancing activities. This is in sharp rise with the trend of English as a universal medium of communication as observed by Qamar (2024) and Romagnuolo & Elefante (2023). Also, there is scarce negative feedback regarding soft skills that are communication and time management as 81% of the respondents reported never receiving any feedback from the clients regarding their soft skills.

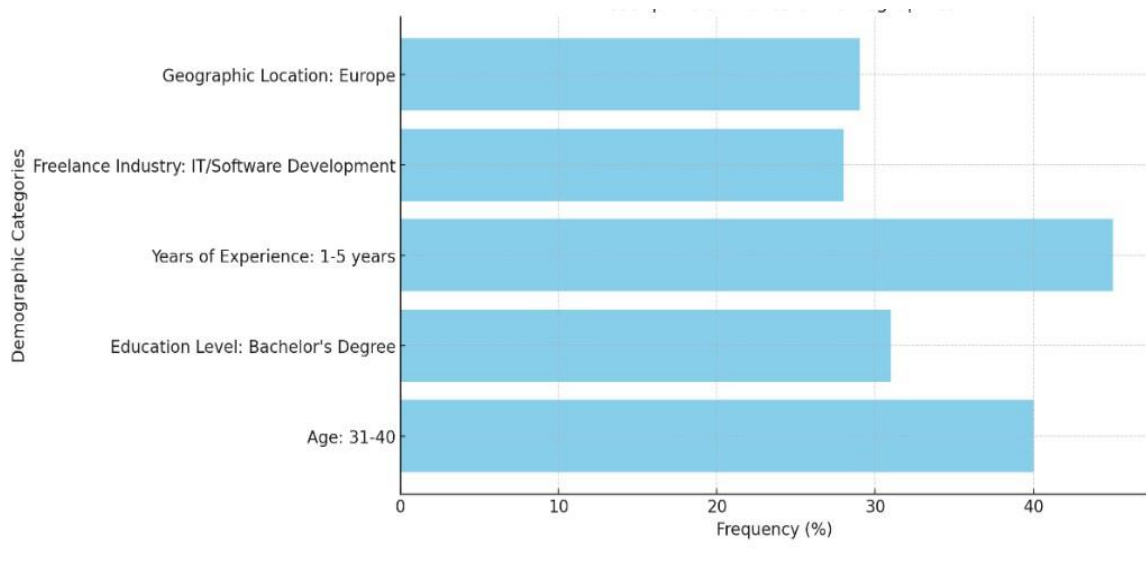
The study also discovered that freelancers who have good soft skills coupled with good English language skills are more likely to work with repeat clients and maybe, earn high-income projects. In line with the objective of the study, Sattayathamrongthian and Vanpetch (2023) called for the development of self-regulation and familiarization with basic communication skills as facilitating factors for freelancing.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

In Table 1 below, the demographic variables of the respondents with regards to age, education level, years of experience as a freelancer, and the industry they belong to, have their respective descriptive statistics. The largest part of the respondents was 31-40 years old and half of them had worked as a freelancer for less than 5 years. The most dominant freelance sectors on the platform included IT/software development, writing/content creation, and customer support which also corresponds to the increase in the use of digital platform freelancing that has boosted the freelancing business in the information technology sector (Chester et al., 2023).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Demographics

Demographic Variable	Most Frequent Response	Frequency (%)
Age	31-40	40%
Education Level	Bachelor's degree	31%
Years of Experience	1-5 years	45%
Freelance Industry	IT/Software Development	28%
Geographic Location	Europe	29%



The findings regarding the age and educational background of respondents are consistent with those of Chester et al. (2023), who noted that freelancing has increasingly become an accessible career option for individuals in their 30s and 40s, particularly in the tech and creative sectors.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

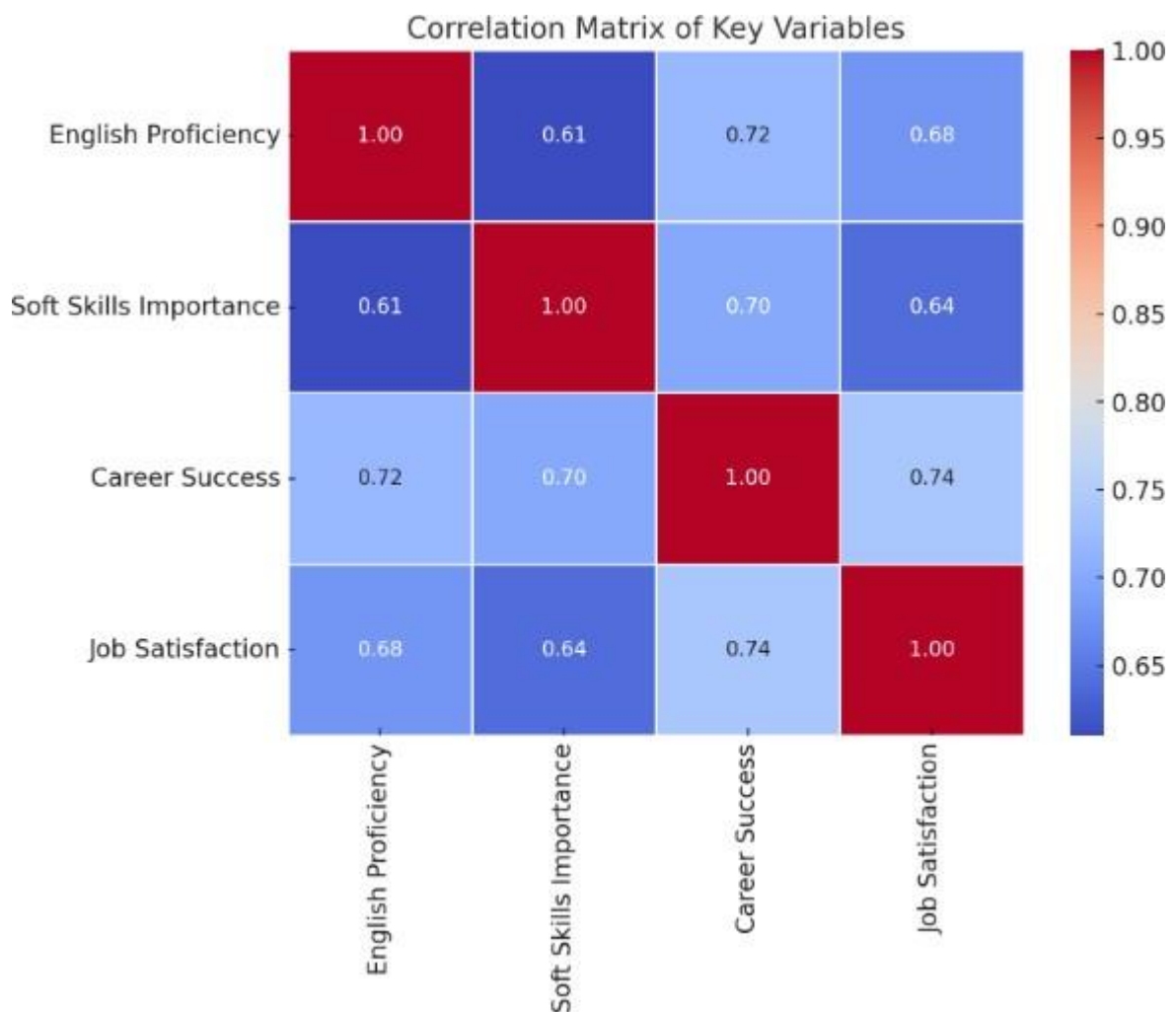
The correlation analysis conducted on the survey data reveals several key relationships between English proficiency, soft skills, and freelancing success. It has been revealed that English language proficiency was statistically significant in the success predictors implied through careers such as reputation and repeat clients. This agrees with the observations made by Qamar (2024) who postulated that freelancers with a better command of English were likely to get more expensive and repeat business because they can communicate with the client all over the world.

Furthermore, the results revealed that students' English level has a positive and indeed a strong relationship with soft skills that include communication and problem-solving skills. Students, who reported higher levels of English proficiency, displayed higher self-assessed communication skills; consistent with the findings of Tossavainen (2023) where communication emerged as a central component of the freelance economy. This can be interpreted to mean that the clear and effective use of English helps develop other soft skills through personal interactions to allow freelancers to deliver client relationship solutions.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Key Variables

Variable	English Proficiency	Soft Skills Importance	Career Success	Job Satisfaction
English Proficiency	1	0.61	0.72	0.68
Soft Skills Importance	0.61	1	0.70	0.64
Career Success	0.72	0.70	1	0.74
Job Satisfaction	0.68	0.64	0.74	1

(Significant at the 0.01 level)



The strong correlation of English with career advancement also supplements the view toward the significance of English in the freelance domain. Considering and correlating the results obtained, it was significant to determine whether increased mastery of English corresponded to increased satisfaction and promotion within freelancers' occupations. This fact also matches with Romagnuolo & Elefante (2023) who also

reported that strong English is required to build a long-lasting sustainable career as a freelancer for international markets.

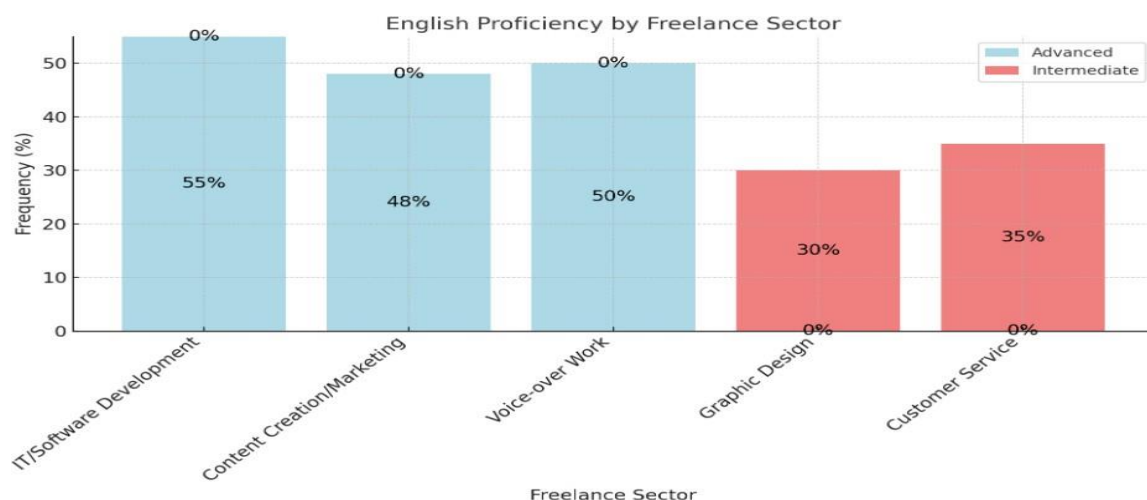
4.4 Sector-Specific Insights

A breakdown of the results showed that certain freelance subfields are more sensitive to English language abilities than others. For example, the nature of work requires highly English-proficient freelancers in IT and software development, content writers, and voice-over talents. In these sectors, English is used as the working language for technical writing and as the communication medium of clients. This reaffirms Gussek and Wiesche (2023) who found out that IT and content creation are among the freelancer-friendly industries where mastery of English increases freelancing chances and diversity.

However, some sectors to which the medium level of the language importance could be attributable as graphic design and customer service were reported to have a lesser degree of dependency on English. As for English, though it is still relevant as a means of communication, especially in working with foreign clients, the graphic or onsite nature of such industries provides further opportunities to offset low English proficiency with technical know-how or outstanding people skills.

Table 3: English Proficiency by Freelance Sector

Freelance Sector	English Proficiency Level	Frequency (%)
IT/Software Development	Advanced	55%
Content Creation/Marketing	Advanced	48%
Voice-over Work	Advanced	50%
Graphic Design	Intermediate	30%
Customer Service	Intermediate	35%



The higher reliance on English in sectors like IT/software development and content creation is reflected in the frequency of advanced English proficiency in these industries.

4.5 Comparison with Literature

The findings of this research are therefore consistent with and build on previous research on freelancing and language skills. In Qamar (2024) and Romagnuolo and Elefante (2023), the authors pointed out that English language understanding serves as a core determinant of participating markets in freelancing. This paper supports this assertion because our findings reveal that freelancers with enhanced English skills will attract a better-paid project and establish better working rapport with customers.

On the same note, the results regarding soft skills and freelancing success in this paper agree with Tossavainen (2023) who noted a shift towards increased relevance of technical skills like communication and problem-solving in freelancing. One of the critical factors that freelancers need to learn how to achieve is the mastery of technical, human, and other capital.

However, in contrast to some previous research that highlighted only language proficiency as a problem, the current study demonstrates that it is possible to succeed as a freelancer with less than a facility in English; graphic design, customer support, etc. This shows that even though English is hugely relevant, it is not the only ingredient for the success of all freelancers.

This survey shows that language plays an important role in the performance and viability of freelancing businesses in the global digital sphere. Freelancers with better English proficiency are in a better position to get repeated more clientele base, higher paying projects, and increased job satisfaction. However, soft skills are as crucial, and in the given cue when something is crucial, timely communication skills act as the defining factor. Consequently, the results of this study indicate that freelancers require increasing these two components to become more competitive in the market; this means the language proficiency level, as well as the development of interpersonal skills.

As for further research, more attention could be paid to the compensatory practices of non-native English freelancers and the consequences of the language support policies of freelancing platforms on one's success. In addition, exploring the duties of other languages and multilingualism as the factors impacting the success of freelancing may give other insights into how freelancers from different language backgrounds look at the global marketplace.

4.6 Practical Recommendations for Freelancers

Based on the findings of this study, the following practical recommendations are provided for freelancers aiming to enhance their career prospects in the global market:

1. **Invest in Language Training:** Freelancers should consider investing in developing their language, especially English since that is what most coach clients use. Freelancers need to pay attention to expert language and business communication to have more successful conversations.
2. **Enhance Soft Skills:** From this point of view, freelancers also have to invest in crucial non-technical skills, mentioned as communication skills, planning and organizational skills, flexibility, and decision-making. These skills not only enhance client engagement but also assist freelancers in multitasking, meeting deadlines, and fixing problems on their own. To develop or improve specific areas, attending workshops or webinars or taking an online course in soft skills will be beneficial for freelancers.
3. **Leverage Freelance Platforms Effectively:** Freelancers should make sure that the skills listed in their freelancer account with any of the freelancer platforms like Upwork or Fiver, should not lack the technical skill and fluency in the English language. Soft skills and language proficiency play a major part in standing out from the competitors. Further, developing a list of work experiences, positive feedback and testimonies from clients as well as proofs of clients requesting the freelancer's service repeatedly can act as proof of the proficiency of the freelancer as well as his proficiency in English.
4. **Adapt to Market Demands:** The freelancers whose line of work does not require them to write or speak the English language often will also benefit from improved communication skills, although not to the extent that a content creator or an IT professional will need to make the change. They should consider other factors which are listed below; One can add proficiency with technical tools relevant to the specialization, have a visually appealing portfolio, or offer their services in more than one language if possible.
5. **Overcome Communication Barriers:** Non-native English-speaking freelancers should be proactive in addressing communication challenges by using language tools such as grammar checkers, translation apps, or professional proofreaders. This can help minimize misunderstandings and ensure that proposals, emails, and client communications are clear and professional. Additionally, they could benefit from collaborating with other freelancers or mentors who can offer feedback and guidance on improving language and communication strategies.
6. **Seek Continuous Feedback:** Freelancers should not expect the clients to approach them on how they handle themselves concerning communication skills. Freelance workers should consider getting to know how their clients view their performance since this will assist them in noticing the weak areas and

changing the course accordingly. This might involve seeking feedback on the work done by the project teams or occasionally, checking into how the communication process could be enhanced after handling clients.

7. **Target Niche Markets:** Freelancers working for industries with high dominance of English should consider working for specific client segments or industries, which may not be as competitive but may demand good English skills. This will assist freelancers who are not native English speakers as they will be allowed to ensure that they adapt to that specific market by establishing their niche that individuals with their level of specialization in their areas of specialty, as well as expertise in that language, pay for.

By following these recommendations, freelancers can improve their chances of success in the competitive global freelancing market. The combination of strong technical skills, proficient English language abilities, and essential soft skills will enable freelancers to better navigate the challenges of freelancing while positioning themselves for long-term career sustainability.

5. Conclusion

This case study aimed to investigate the importance of the English language as a significant factor in maintaining freelancers' freelance career efficacy, especially so in the context of the digital economy for which interpersonal skills matter. Therefore the research presents the reality that fluency in English is more than a benefit it is a necessity for everybody especially freelancers in the freelance economy world. Freelancers with better English tend to work with those who will pay for better quality work, and get reused by their past employers and everyone seeks to advance in their freelancing career, especially in IT, writing, and voice-over where English is dominant. Additionally, it brought out the revelation of how soft skills professional, including communication, time management, and flexibility, are essential in adding to technical skills. Precisely those freelancers who improve those aspects gain better communications with clients, higher job satisfaction, and more career longevity. The effects of English language proficiency on employability and soft skills mean that freelancers need to be proficient in the English language and other people's skills to succeed in the current linear digital economy.

The challenges that non-native English freelancers have consist of language barriers and bias issues that may include language barriers and biases but are flexible and can be overcome through language enhancement, the usage of favorable language tools, and professional development. This research adds to a current body of knowledge on freelancing and provides suggestions for new freelancers who have the desire to be more marketable and successful on the platform.

Lastly, with freelancing growing all around the world, it is possible to mention that enough English and proper soft skills will be always relevant for a freelancer who wants to conquer the difficulties of the new digital economy paradigm and obtain remunerative and stable career evolution.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

Freelancer Language Proficiency and Soft Skills Survey

Section 1: Demographic Information

- What is your age?
 - Under 20
 - 21-30
 - 31-40
 - 41-50
 - 51 and above
- What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Non-binary
 - Prefer not to say
- What is your highest level of education?
 - High school or equivalent
 - Associate degree
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Master's degree
 - Doctorate
 - Other
- How many years of experience do you have as a freelancer?
 - Less than 1 year

- 1-2 years
 - 3-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 10+ years
- Which freelance industry do you primarily work in? (Select all that apply)
 - IT/Software Development
 - Content Creation/Marketing
 - Video Production/Editing
 - Graphic Design
 - Voice-over work
 - Customer Service
 - Consulting
 - Other
- What is your geographic location?
 - North America
 - Europe
 - Asia
 - Africa
 - South America
 - Australia/Oceania

Section 2: English Proficiency

- How would you rate your overall English proficiency?
 - Beginner
 - Intermediate
 - Advanced
 - Native/Fluent
- How often do you use English in your freelancing tasks (e.g., client communication, writing proposals, etc.)?
 - Never
 - Rarely
 - Sometimes
 - Often
 - Always
- In which areas do you feel confident in your English language skills? (Select all that apply)
 - Speaking
 - Writing
 - Listening

- Reading
- How often do you encounter communication barriers when working with international clients?
 - Never
 - Rarely
 - Occasionally
 - Often
 - Always
- Do you use any language assistance tools (e.g., translation apps, grammar checkers, etc.) while working with clients?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Occasionally
- Do you feel that your level of English proficiency limits your ability to secure clients or higher-paying projects?
 - Yes, significantly
 - Yes, moderately
 - No, not at all
 - I am unsure

Section 3: Soft Skills

- Please rate your proficiency in the following soft skills in the context of your freelancing career:
 - **Communication (written and verbal)**
 - Very poor
 - Poor
 - Average
 - Good
 - Excellent
 - **Time Management**
 - Very poor
 - Poor
 - Average
 - Good
 - Excellent
 - **Adaptability**
 - Very poor
 - Poor
 - Average

- Good
 - Excellent
 - **Problem-Solving**
 - Very poor
 - Poor
 - Average
 - Good
 - Excellent
- Which of the following soft skills do you find most important in maintaining successful relationships with clients? (Select all that apply)
 - Communication (written and verbal)
 - Time management
 - Adaptability
 - Problem-solving
 - Self-motivation
 - Negotiation
 - Conflict resolution
 - Other
- In your opinion, how important are soft skills for success in your freelance career?
 - Not important
 - Slightly important
 - Moderately important
 - Very important
- Have you ever received feedback from clients about your soft skills? If so, what was the feedback related to?
 - Yes
 - No

Section 4: Career Success and English Proficiency

- How do you measure success in your freelancing career? (Select all that apply)
 - Income/earnings
 - Number of repeat clients
 - Job satisfaction
 - Work-life balance
 - Reputation and client feedback
 - Number of projects completed
 - Career growth and learning opportunities

- Do you think your English proficiency has contributed to your success in securing repeat clients?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Unsure
- In your experience, how often does English proficiency impact your ability to access high-paying projects?
 - Never
 - Rarely
 - Sometimes
 - Often
 - Always
- Which of the following freelance sectors do you believe require the highest level of English proficiency for success? (Select all that apply)
 - IT/Software Development
 - Content Creation/Marketing
 - Video Production/Editing
 - Voice-over Work
 - Graphic Design
 - Customer Service
 - Consulting
 - Other
- How would you rate your overall job satisfaction with your freelancing career?
 - Very dissatisfied
 - Dissatisfied
 - Neutral
 - Satisfied
 - Very satisfied
- Do you feel that improving your English proficiency would significantly improve your chances of success in freelancing?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
- Would you recommend English language improvement as a strategy for new freelancers to succeed?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not sure

Section 5: Final Thoughts

- In your opinion, what is the most important factor contributing to your success as a freelancer?
 - Technical expertise
 - English proficiency
 - Soft skills
 - Client relationships
 - Marketing and self-promotion
 - Other