



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
SCHOOL OF COMMERCE
BUSINESS INFORMATION SYSTEM

**EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS TO ENTRY IN
THE ONLINE GIG ECONOMY FOR ETHIOPIANS: IN THE
CASE OF UPWORK**

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JUNE, 2024
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS
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Declaration

I, ADDIS MOGES declare that this thesis is my original work and that all sources of the materials in the research paper have been properly acknowledged. The matter embodied in this research paper has not been submitted earlier for award of any Master degree.

Declared by
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ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA
JUNE, 2024

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Certification

This is to certify that this thesis is prepared by Addis Moges, entitled; “Exploring opportunities and barriers to entry in the online gig economy for Ethiopians: in the case of upwork and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master’s Degree in Business Information System with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standard with respect to originality and quality.

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Examiner _____ Signature _____ Date _____

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Advisor _____ Signature _____ Date _____

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Abstract

The online gig economy has emerged as a significant source of employment opportunities globally. This study focuses on exploring the opportunities and barriers to entry in the online gig economy for Ethiopians, with a specific focus on the case of Upwork. Through a mixed-methods approach involving surveys, interviews, and data analysis, this research identifies the factors that facilitate or hinder Ethiopians' participation in the gig economy on platforms such as Upwork. This study examines the skills and qualifications demanded in the online gig economy and how well-aligned they are with the Ethiopian workforce. Additionally, this study investigates the barriers faced by Ethiopians, such as internet access, infrastructure limitations, and competition. The study seeks to provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by Ethiopians seeking to engage in online freelancing, as well as the potential benefits and opportunities that this mode of work offers. Based on gathered data the findings of the study suggest a complex interplay between opportunities, challenges, and support systems for freelancers on Upwork. There are an abundance of opportunities, but also significant barriers that need to be overcome. While challenges are faced, they might be perceived as less daunting than the initial hurdles. This study employed exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) to investigate the underlying structure of relationships between 15 variables in a dataset of 117 observations. Analysis of correlations revealed both positive and negative relationships between variables. Several variables exhibited strong positive correlations, suggesting they tend to change together. On the other hand, some variables showed strong negative correlations, indicating opposing trends.

Keywords: Gig Economy, Online gig economy, Ethiopia, Freelancers, Upwork,

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Acronyms

SPSS -	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
PCA-	Principal Component Analysis
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin
FA	Factor
PC	Principal Component

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

The rapid growth of the gig economy globally has revolutionized the way people work and earn a living. With the development of internet platforms, people around the world participate in a variety of gigs and freelancing. The online gig economy, which has made it simpler for people to offer their skills and services to a worldwide market, has shifted people's perceptions of employment. It should be highlighted that the full-time employee who works from home utilizing telecommunication technology is not a gig worker because he or she is a full-time employee of the firm (Dey et al., 2022). The online gig economy, which gives employees the chance to work on a short-term projects or tasks via digital platforms, has grown in the global labor market. As a rapidly expanding segment of the global economy, the online gig economy has drawn a lot of attention recently. The rise of the online gig economy, characterized by short-term, on-demand work assignments, has transformed the traditional work structure and created new opportunities for individuals to earn income and gain advanced work experience. Advances in technology and changing social norms are bringing about significant shifts in the work environment. In the gig market, low-wage workers from developing nations may earn more by working in identical tasks in developed countries. There are no boundaries, and all that is needed is access to a cellphone or internet connection (Heba Al-Sayed Mohamed Tolba, 2021). With the rise of digital platforms and advancements in technology, individuals can now earn a living by providing various services remotely. Remote work and location independence are becoming increasingly popular. Platforms like Upwork, Fiverr, Freelancer, etc. connect skilled professionals with clients worldwide, allowing freelancers to earn money from their skills without moving.

This phenomenon has also reached Ethiopia, where the online gig economy is emerging as a potential source of employment and income for many. The rise of the digital economy and advancements in remote work technology has given rise to a new breed of workers known as freelancers. These individuals leverage their skills and expertise to work remotely from anywhere in the world, often relying on online platforms to secure freelance gigs and projects. It

offers individuals the ability to work remotely, providing them with flexibility and the opportunity to escape the limitations of traditional employment barriers.

The high levels of unemployment in Ethiopia increased the need for alternative sources of income and employment; there were nearly 2.23 million unemployed people in Ethiopia as of 2024. The number increased compared to the previous year, when nearly 2.16 million people were unemployed but in the labor force in the country. Overall, unemployment in Ethiopia followed a rising trend from 2012 onwards, with a significant increase in 2020 (Saifaddin Galal, May 27, 2024). Ethiopia offers a promising market for the online gig economy to grow because of its expanding population, wealth of talent, and rising internet penetration. To support Ethiopian people's development and involvement in this quickly changing economic paradigm, there may be certain opportunities and barriers that must be recognized. The online gig economy also provides access to a global client base, allowing Ethiopian freelancers to compete on an international scale. Ethiopia, a country with a growing digital infrastructure, is now witnessing the emergence of freelancers. This research investigates the opportunities and barriers to entry into the online gig economy for Ethiopian freelancers.

This study explores the particular circumstances of Ethiopia and look into the potential and challenges that people encounter in the online gig economy. Through an analysis of the unique challenges and possible benefits, this study provides insight into how Ethiopian workers might benefit economically from the online gig economy.

As the country continues to experience technological advancements, it is crucial to understand the good opportunities and barriers that Ethiopians face when participating in the online gig economy. The online gig economy has the potential to contribute significantly to economic growth and development in Ethiopia.

Overall, the motivation behind this research lies in the need to understand and address potential advantages and specific challenges faced by Ethiopians in the online gig economy. By shedding light on these opportunities and barriers, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and empower individuals to navigate the gig economy successfully.

Organization Profile

Upwork Global Inc., formerly Elance-oDesk, is an American freelancing platform headquartered in Santa Clara and San Francisco, California. The company was formed in 2013 as Elance-oDesk, after the merger of Elance Inc. and oDesk Corp. The merged company was

subsequently rebranded to Upwork in 2015. In March 2022, Upwork was named on Time's list of TIME100 Most Influential Companies of 2022(en.wikipedia.org, March 30, 2022).

1.2 Statement of the problem

Despite possessing the necessary skills, many Ethiopians find it challenging to secure stable and fulfilling job opportunities on the online gig work. The study opens up interesting avenues for future research. Designing decent work in different sectors of the online gig economy would yield instructive results for comparison (Selvi S. et al., 2021).

The gig economy, characterized by online platforms such as Upwork, offers opportunities for individuals to participate in flexible and remote work arrangements. However, there is a lack of research on the specific sector opportunities and barriers to entry faced by Ethiopians in accessing and succeeding in the online gig economy, particularly on platforms like Upwork. This study aims to address this gap by investigating the unique challenges and advantages Ethiopian individuals encounter when trying to engage in online gig work through Upwork, thereby shedding light on the factors influencing their participation and success in this evolving digital marketplace.

1.3 Research question

The research questions that guide the study are:

- What are the opportunities presented by the online gig economy for individuals in Ethiopia?
- What are the main barriers hindering Ethiopians to enter and succeed on the Upwork platform?
- What are the challenges faced by individuals participating in the online gig economy in Ethiopia?
- How can we address the barriers and challenges that freelancers face and create a system that provides better benefits?

1.4 Research objectives

The following parts provide a description of the general and specific objectives of the study with regard to concentrated area, capacity, time, and available resources.

1.4.1 General objectives

The general objective of this research is to explore opportunities and barriers to entry in the online gig economy for Ethiopians freelancers, specifically on the Upwork platform.

1.4.2 Specific objectives

Specific objectives for this paper are:

- Identify the opportunities presented by the online gig economy for individuals in Ethiopia.
- Investigate the barriers and challenges faced by Ethiopians in accessing and participating in the online gig economy.
- Explore strategies and interventions to overcome barriers in the online gig economy for Ethiopians.
- According to the findings the study implies vital recommendations.

1.5 Significance of the study

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights into the factors influencing the participation of Ethiopians in the online gig economy, particularly within the context of Upwork. The research contributes to a deeper understanding of the online gig economy and its dynamics within the Ethiopian context. It shed light on the opportunities available for Ethiopians and the barriers they face when trying to enter this sector. By exploring the opportunities in the online gig economy, the study can highlight the potential for economic empowerment and income generation for Ethiopians.

The findings have several implications

Empowering the workforce: Creating focused interventions to provide people with the tools and resources, the need to succeed in the digital economy could be made easier by having a better understanding of the opportunities and difficulties Ethiopians encounter on sites like Upwork. This can enable individuals to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively participate in the gig economy, enhancing their employability and income potential. This could contribute to economic empowerment.

Contribute to academic discourse: The result of this research could enhance scholarly conversations about digital economies, labor globalization, and the effects of internet platforms on developing nations. It could also serve as a foundation for further research in this area.

Informing Policy and Regulation: The study's results could provide policymakers and regulators with crucial information to develop policies that support and facilitate Ethiopian participation in the online gig economy. This could involve addressing barriers such as internet access, digital literacy, and establishing support groups.

Guiding Business Strategies: Insights from this research could be valuable for companies, including Upwork, as they seek to expand their user base in Ethiopia. Understanding the specific needs and challenges of the local workforce could inform the development of tailored services and support mechanisms.

In conclusion, this study holds significant promise in shedding light on the realities of Ethiopians engaging in the online gig economy, offering valuable implications for workforce empowerment, business strategies, and academic discourse.

1.6 Scope of the study

The scope of this research encompasses different aspects, focusing on the specific context of Ethiopians engaging in the online gig economy, particularly through the platform of Upwork. The study primarily concentrates on the experiences of Ethiopians participating in the online gig economy. It will involve gathering data from freelancers residing in Ethiopia. The study identifies and analyzes the obstacles and challenges faced by Ethiopians attempting to enter and thrive in the online gig economy. With a focus on Upwork, the research assesses the unique dynamics of this platform and its impact on Ethiopian freelancers. The study utilizes a combination of qualitative methods, as well as quantitative data analysis.

In summary, the scope of this study is to comprehensively explore the opportunities and barriers specific to Ethiopians engaging in the online gig economy, with a particular emphasis on the context of Upwork, while considering both qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

1.7 Delimitation of the study

Firstly, the study is delimited to the perspective of Ethiopian individuals who are currently engaged in the online gig economy on Upwork. Other online platforms and gig economy sectors may have different dynamics and opportunities. Additionally, the research focus solely on the experiences of Ethiopians, and the findings are not generalizable to other countries or contexts.

Furthermore, due to time and resource constraints, the sample size for both the qualitative interviews and the quantitative survey are limited, while efforts are made to ensure diversity within the sample. The result doesn't capture the full range of experiences and perspectives within the Ethiopian gig economy.

Lastly, the research is conducted within a specific timeframe, and the finding doesn't capture any potential changes or developments in the online gig economy that may occur after the study is completed.

1.8 Organization of the research report

The study is organized in five chapters

Chapter one contains introduction, Background, Statement of the problem, Objective of the study, Significance of the study, Scope and delimitations of the study. In Chapter two literature review, theoretical and empirical review and conceptual framework are included. Chapter three contains Research Methodology, Research Design, Data Type and Source, Research strategy, Sampling procedure, Strategies for data collection, Data collection method and tools, Data presentation. The study's overall findings and general conclusion are presented in Chapter four. Chapter five includes the recommendation part of the study.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

2.1 Overview of online gig work and freelancing

In this section, the existing body of knowledge and research that is relevant to the topic of this study will be reviewed. By examining the works of previous researchers and scholars, we aim to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter and identify any gaps or areas for further investigation. The literature review will provide a solid foundation for our research, offering insights and theories that will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this field.

2.1.1 Online gig work

Online platforms that facilitate freelancing hire gig workers and provide global client support to do virtually deliverable tasks across a broad variety of job categories and skill levels. An alternative to the traditional job that offers greater autonomy, mobility, and flexibility—both physically and temporally—is made available to many workers by the online gig economy. In 2020, 59 million workers—more than a third of the US workforce—were drawn to these affordances. 36% of the people participated full-time, and their combined income was \$1.2 trillion. In 2016, 44% of workers used online freelancing as their main source of income, while in 2019, 46% of gig workers were able to work despite personal circumstances. (Hsieh et al., 2022)

Over time, technological advancements have brought about constant change in a number of elements of human life, including the labor and economic sectors. Many businesses have recently altered the way they operate and begun to consider freelance services as a substitute for hiring employees. The Internet has served as a meeting place for employers and job seekers in addition to serving as a bridge uniting people worldwide. By linking freelancers as service providers with businesses, organizations, or even other individuals searching for different kinds of freelancing services as their users, it now also enables the growth of a new business model. This new business model is also known as the online gig economy, where the two parties are only bound in either a short-term contract of employment or on a gig or task basis.(Aristi and Pratama, 2021)

2.1.2 Freelancing

Globally, freelance labor is beginning to change as a result of freelance marketplaces like Upwork and Fiverr that link independent contractors with clients. These platforms create a work model that links clients and independent contractors for services or projects. Although there isn't a consensus definition, this type of employment is frequently referred to as the "gig economy". Platforms for freelancing mostly act as intermediaries for knowledge-based freelance work, such as software development and creative writing, which entail utilizing teamwork, resources, and abilities to (re)produce knowledge. The purported flexibility that freelancers have regarding their work habits, timetables, and even compensation rates is one of the underlying themes of internet platforms for freelancing. Platforms for freelancing may make it easier for independent contractors to fit in non-work obligations into their schedules, which may appeal to professionals who have caregiving responsibilities, impairments, or just don't feel accepted in more bureaucratic environments. But the designs of these platforms encourage competition in an oversupplied global labor market, which frequently results in long hours, social isolation, and difficulties shutting off. Studies have indicated that whereas platforms promise flexibility and autonomy, not all freelancers are able to fulfill this promise.(Alvarez De La Vega et al., 2023)

Cloud-based consultants or independent contractors that use websites like Upwork or Freelancer to market their professional services. These individuals offer professional services, just like technologists and architects do, but they use platforms, not build them. Their work is frequently not restricted to a specific workplace or region, while some scholars have discovered spatial clustering even on international platforms that focus on digital labor. High levels of technical proficiency in disciplines including journalism, computer programming, and graphic design characterize this category, and its members are usually hired on a project-by-project basis. Cloud-based consultants frequently have to retain a substantial clientele in order to guarantee a steady stream of revenue. A crucial question is whether platforms that facilitate this kind of labor promote traditional economy companies outsourcing their work or if they offer a digital infrastructure that is taking the place of temporary employment agency.(Vallas and Schor, 2020)

2.2 Opportunities on Upwork for online freelancers

A growing number of people throughout the world have found employment in recent years on digital platforms like Upwork, Uber, Deliveroo, and Amazon Mechanical Turk rather than traditional organizations. According to estimates made by academics, 160 million people

work in the gig economy and find jobs on these platforms. Workers, particularly those in low-income nations, may find chances in the gig economy as they can often find better and more lucrative jobs on these platforms than they can through local employment.(Schou and Bucher, 2023)

Online platforms for freelancing, like Upwork, have significant potential for providing flexible work arrangements that allow freelancers to balance their job and other obligations in their lives—a practice known as "work-life." Prior research, however, indicates that this seeming flexibility may be compromised by platform features and the self-managing obligations of freelancing work.(Alvarez De La Vega et al., 2023)

Some platforms' features, such as accessing competitors' profiles, were viewed as opportunities to develop skills and land projects. Similar to previous research, our findings speak to the affordances platforms provide to find clients, which was particularly appreciated by those getting started as freelancers. Freelancing platforms were perceived as systems that provide opportunities to mitigate some of the precarity of freelance work, such as providing opportunities for professional development and enabling access to global markets of clients. (Carlos Alvarez De La Vega et al., 2021)

While much traditional industrial relations research has focused on the role of unions in collective action, freelancers have also been found to make extensive use of less formal and hierarchical groups, especially those facilitated by the Internet. Freelancers use these communication networks to obtain labor market opportunities and information, reduce social isolation, maintain professional norms, provide support and advice, and create feelings of community.(Wood et al., 2018)

2.3 Barriers to entry on Upwork for online freelancers

The economy is undergoing a dramatic change that will allow flexible work arrangements to transcend national borders. Global market expansion and significant change have resulted from the so-called gig or flex economy. A talent battle has developed from the expanding needs of the working population, pushing the gig workers to use technology to make their jobs easier. Although the gig economy is still in its infancy in India, the demand for labor on gig platforms has increased dramatically over the past several years.

One of the main causes of the gig economy's growing demand across all industries has been the low entrance barriers. The gig economy appears to benefit gig workers as well as gig platforms, but there are still many unanswered questions.

Six main barriers to entry for gig workers in the gig economy are identified on (Behl et al., 2022) which are: 1.Payment Structures 2.Incentives 3.High Competition 4.Operating Expenses 5.Login Hours and Late-Night Deliveries 6.Social Protection and Retirement Benefits. The paper also proposes strategies to reduce these entry barriers in the gig economy, such as improving payment structures, providing social protection and retirement benefits, and reducing operating expenses for gig workers. Overall, the findings suggest that addressing these barriers can help enhance productivity and generate employment opportunities in the gig economy.(Behl et al., 2022)

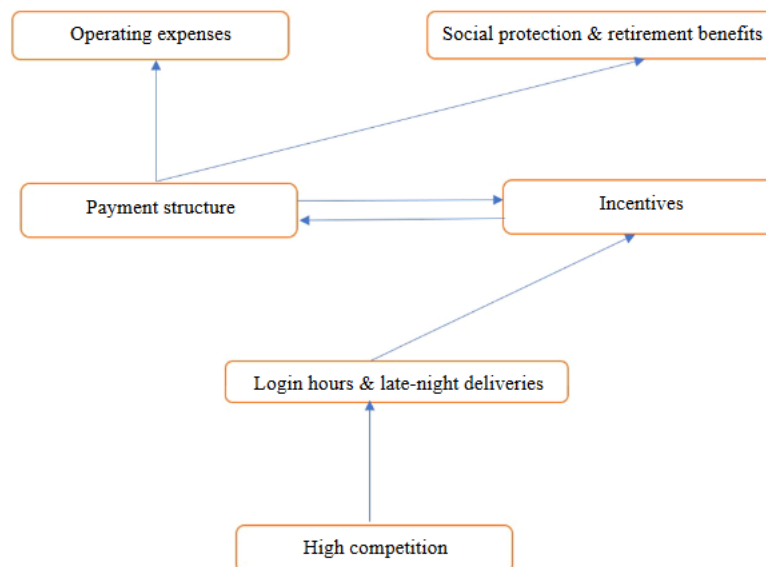


Fig 2.1 Relationship of entry barriers for gig workers in the gig platforms using interpretive structural modeling(ISM) (Behl et al., 2022)

2.4 Challenges of working on Upwork for online freelancers

Upwork's platform allows for payment and tracking of time and efficiency, but it also leaves the nature of work open-ended, allowing for various and evolving projects. Workers have developed meta skills or literacies to navigate obstacles and uncertainties imposed by the platform. These literacies include how gig workers build their reputation, compete for gigs, stay productive in a flexible working environment, secure transactions, avoid bad gigs or scams, and

build professional networks in an impersonal working environment. Gig workers on Upwork rely on volatile rating systems like the 'Job Success Score' and the 'Top-rated Badge', which become important components of their larger reputation. Workers who build good ratings and acquire badges can rely largely on clients bringing projects to them, rather than having to search and bid for them. Establishing good ratings is a complex task, as it requires understanding the algorithms behind the platform's automated evaluation system and constant monitoring of one's own ratings. Workers also learn to build ratings through trial and error, such as taking short-term, low-paying jobs or breaking up projects into smaller jobs to acquire more positive ratings. Building reputation is a complicated process that requires not only producing quality work but also developing the social and technical skills to handle temperamental clients and algorithms(Sutherland et al., 2020).

Upwork's semi-closed boundaries pose challenges for workers as they see it as part of a larger reputation-building or professional development effort. Workers see their success as independent freelancers and the development of their skillsets as a motivating purpose. Upwork's work history is codified in the platform's calculated ratings and reviews, making it difficult to transfer to other platforms or websites. Workers often link to their Upwork profile on their personal professional websites or blogs, but Upwork obscures their last name and forbids linking to personal websites. Building reputation is a constant challenge for workers on Upwork, and understanding various digital platforms and channels is essential. Additionally, Upwork's hiring procedures often require more involved evaluations and negotiations, which clients find inflated due to inflated job success scores(Sutherland et al., 2020).

Empirical review

Key emerging literacies that digital gig workers developed to address the precarity of independent freelancing work are Building reputation, Self-presentation, Maintaining productivity, Mitigating transaction risk, Building relationships.(Sutherland et al., 2020)

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.1 Method

The website Upwork was chosen for this study because, out of all the online marketplaces for freelancing, it has the largest and most active user base. Also, by concentrating on Upwork, the function of digital labor marketplaces in relation to online freelance work can be examined. Upwork allows for work in web and desktop development, engineering, marketing, industrial design, law, translation, data analytics and many other areas. Employees need to be able to handle uncertainty, exercise some creative agency in the project, and communicate with clients iteratively. This aspect of Upwork differentiates it from micro tasking sites like Amazon Mechanical Turk and ridesharing platforms like Uber.(Sutherland et al., 2020)

To explore the opportunities and barriers to entry in the online gig economy for Ethiopians particularly on the Upwork platform, a mixed-methods research approach was employed. The need for a mixed-method research design is to address the need of researching complex social phenomena with a view to understanding their complexities (Dawadi et al., 2021). The qualitative data is used to corroborate and support the quantitative data.

3.2 Research Design

In this study an exploratory research design was employed. Using an exploratory research design for a study helps to gain a better understanding of a topic or problem that is not well-defined or understood. This is useful because there is limited existing knowledge of the online gig economy in Ethiopia.

The research has begun with a thorough literature review to establish a theoretical framework and identify the key concepts and variables relevant to the study. This help to guide the research design and data collection process.

Non-probability sampling method was used for this study, because the number of freelancers on Upwork differs on a daily basis. There are always newly registered freelancers and at the same time there are registered but inactive freelancers. Non-probability sampling methods are less objective than probability techniques. The participants are selected through snowball sampling methods. From the three main types of the method which are linear snowball, exponential non-discriminative snowball and exponential discriminative snowball, for the

purpose of this study exponential discriminative snowball is employed in order to locate hidden population in a short duration of time.

For the qualitative component, in order to allow respondent to reflect their reaction in-detail, open ended questions were given at the end of the questionnaire, conducted with Ethiopian individuals who are currently engaged in the online gig economy specifically on the Upwork platform.

Quantitative survey was administered to a larger sample of Ethiopian freelancers on Upwork. This survey gathers data on perceived opportunities, barriers, challenges faced and potential advancements. The survey responses will be analyzed using statistical techniques to identify patterns, trends, and correlations.

3.3 Data Type and Source

The quantitative and qualitative data was collected from primary data source. The primary data was the data collected for the first time for the purpose of this study. Primary data involves getting views of study participants who are the respondents of the questionnaire to the study.

Primary Data

This data was collected for the first time directly from Ethiopian individuals who are currently engaged in the online gig economy on the Upwork platform.

3.4 Strategies for data collection

Surveys

Develop a survey instrument to collect quantitative and qualitative data from individuals currently working on Upwork residing in Ethiopia. The survey includes questions on opportunities, barriers and challenges they face while working on Upwork. The survey was administered online by creating a Google form.

3.5 Data collection method and tools

The questionnaire consists of demographic information such as age, gender, education level, and years of experience on Upwork, using a five-point Liker scale that is 5-Strongly agree, 4-Agree, 3-Neutral, 2= Disagree, 1-Strongly disagree, which allows respondents to indicate level of agreement with the statement provided and lastly at the end of the questionnaire an open-ended questions were included. Questionnaires was designed and administered to gather relevant information for the study.

The questionnaire were measured its reliability before distributed for the participants. For the pilot survey the sample questionnaire were distributed for 10 participants. And with their response, its reliability were measured using the SPSS software, Then the Cronbach's Alpha result is 0.770. For the questionnaire to be reliable the Cronbach's Alpha must be more than 0.7, because the result is more than 0.7 the questionnaire proceed to be distributed for the larger sample.

Scale: ALL VARIABLES

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	10	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	10	100.0
a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.			

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.770	.775	20

Fig 3.1 Reliability of the questionnaire used for this study

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

The data collected through online surveys using questionnaires made on Google form, was analyzed with the SPSS software. Both the questionnaires and open ended questions data were presented in tables, bar charts and graph. The information from the questionnaires was checked for completeness, accuracy, and consistency. The responses were coded using numerical codes to create a coding framework, which was then entered into the SPSS software.

3.6.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis

The collected demographic data was analyzed using measures of central tendency, including frequency distribution and cumulative percentages. The results were presented in tabular format to provide a clear and organized representation of the findings.

3.6.2 Inferential Statistical Analysis

In order to examine connections between variables and evaluate their importance, inferential analysis is employed. By utilizing statistical tests, it is possible to determine whether specific factors significantly affect the success and satisfaction of freelancers on upwork.

Correlation and Factor (PCA) analysis were employed to assess the significance of the independent variables and determine their respective levels of importance. The utilization of these statistical tools and the manner in which the results are presented is discussed in the following sections.

Correlation

Correlation refers to a statistical measure that quantifies the relationship between two variables. It determines the strength and direction of the association between the variables. The correlation coefficient, typically denoted as "r," ranges from -1 to +1. A positive value indicates a positive correlation, meaning that as one variable increases, the other variable also tends to increase. A negative value indicates a negative correlation.

Principal Component Analysis (PCA)

Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is a statistical technique used to simplify complex data sets by reducing the number of variables while retaining as much information as possible. It works by transforming the original variables into a new set of variables called principal components, which are linear combinations of the original variables.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations have been taken into account throughout the research process. Participants were fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and benefits of the study. Participants' identities and personal information are kept strictly confidential. Any data collected are anonymous and stored securely to ensure privacy and protect participants' identities. Adequate measures are taken to protect the collected data from unauthorized access, loss, or misuse.

3.8 Expected outcomes

The outcome of the study is to implying the opportunities and challenges of the online gig market for Ethiopians. Upwork has the potential to be a game-changer for Ethiopians and the Ethiopian economy. By addressing the existing challenges, Ethiopian can unlock a world of opportunity. Improved digital infrastructure and awareness campaigns can bridge the gap, leading to a surge in Ethiopians joining Upwork and similar platforms. This increased participation will be fueled by targeted training programs that equip Ethiopians with the in-demand skills needed to compete effectively in the global freelance market. As Ethiopians secure freelance work and hone their skills, they can expect to see a significant boost in their income and financial stability. This success will have a ripple effect, fostering the growth of the Ethiopian freelance workforce. A larger pool of skilled and competitive freelancers will not only benefit individual incomes but also enhance Ethiopia's reputation as a hub for talented individuals. This improved global image, coupled with the foreign currency inflow generated by Ethiopian freelancers, can contribute to a more innovative and entrepreneurial Ethiopian economy.

Chapter Four

Result and Discussion

This chapter is devoted to presenting the information that was gathered from the respondents via a questionnaire and document analysis. To gather relevant data, individuals working on Upwork as a freelancer were asked to provide their information. The questionnaire employed in this study consisted of fifteen sets of questions that were especially developed to explore opportunities and barriers to entry in the online gig economy for Ethiopians.

For this study the total primary survey participants were 119, but 2 participants are omitted because their questionnaire were not filled properly, there were questions left unanswered. Because of 2 participants omitted, on this study response of 117 participants' used.

4.1 Respondents Characteristics

The demographic information collected in this study includes various factors such as the respondents' gender, age, education level, and years of experience on the platform, skill on Upwork and total earning on Upwork. Based on this, demographic characteristics are presented in the following sections.

Gender Distribution among Study Participants

In this study a total of 117 participants were included. Out of these, 45 participants, accounting for 38.5% of the sample were male. The remaining 72 participants, making up 61.5% of the sample were female. This information is summarized in Table 4.1.

Analyzing the overall gender distribution among the participants, the study had a higher proportion of female participants compared to male participants. These results draw attention to the sample's gender imbalance.

Table 4.1 Respondents Gender Characteristics

Respondent Gender	Count of Respondent Gender	Respondent Gender in percentage
Female	72	61.5%
Male	45	38.5%
Total	117	100%

Age Distribution among Study Participants

As shown in table 4.2 the age distribution in this study indicates that the majority of participants (52.1%) are between the ages of 26-35. The age group of 18-25 constitutes a significant portion (29.9%) of the sample. Also the age range of 36-44, accounting for 16.2% constitutes a significant portion. Lastly the age range 45 and above is represented by a smaller number of participants (1.7%). There were no participants under the age of 18.

Table 4.2 Ages of Respondents

Age (in years)	Count of Age (in years)	percentage
less than 18	0	0%
18-25	35	29.9%
26-35	61	52.1%
36-44	19	16.2%
45 and above	2	1.7%
Total	117	

Educational Background among Study Participants

As shown in table 4.3, a significant majority of the participants, accounting for 75.2% of the total attained a Bachelor's degree or equivalent level. This shows that the majority of respondents have completed undergraduate education in their respective fields. On the other hand, a smaller proportion of participants, specifically 24.8%, have attained a Master's degree. Lastly none of the participants in the study attained a “Doctoral or Higher degree” or have “Diploma or less qualification”. These results shed light on the educational background of the participants.

Table 4.3 Educational Background of Respondents

Educational Background	Count of Educational Background	percentage
Diploma or less	0	0
Bachelor's or equivalent level	88	75.2%
Master's or equivalent level	29	24.8%
Doctoral or Higher	0	0
Total	117	100%

Skill on Upwork

Table 4.4 presents the distribution of respondents based on their skill on Upwork. A notable finding is that a freelancer can work with more than one skill on Upwork. The largest proportion of participants, accounting for 64.1%, reported having a skill on Development & IT. This suggests that a significant portion of the respondents are relatively in this range.

Furthermore 29.9% of the participants indicated having a skill on Design & Creative. 24.8% of the participants indicated having a skill on Writing & Translation. These 2 groups represent a substantial portion of the sample.

Lastly, a small proportion of the participants, accounting for (0.9% each) of the total have “DBA, Data Analyst, SharePoint”, “Front end development, DBA” and “DBA, Data Analyst” skills, and also 5.1% of the participants indicated having a skill on Admin & Customer Support.

Analyzing the overall skill distribution among the participants, it is evident that there is a higher representation of Development & IT skill, comprising 64.1% of the total participants.

Table 4.4 Participants skill on Upwork

Skill on Upwork	Count of skills participants possess	Percentage
Development & IT	75	64.1%
Design & Creative	35	29.9%
Sales & Marketing	0	0%
Writing & Translation	29	24.8%
Admin & Customer Support	6	5.1%
Finance & Accounting	0	0%
Legal	0	0%
HR & Training	0	0%
Engineering & Architecture	1	0.9%
DBA, Data Analyst, SharePoint	1	0.9%
Front end development DBA,	1	0.9%
DBA, Data Analyst	1	0.9%
Total	149	

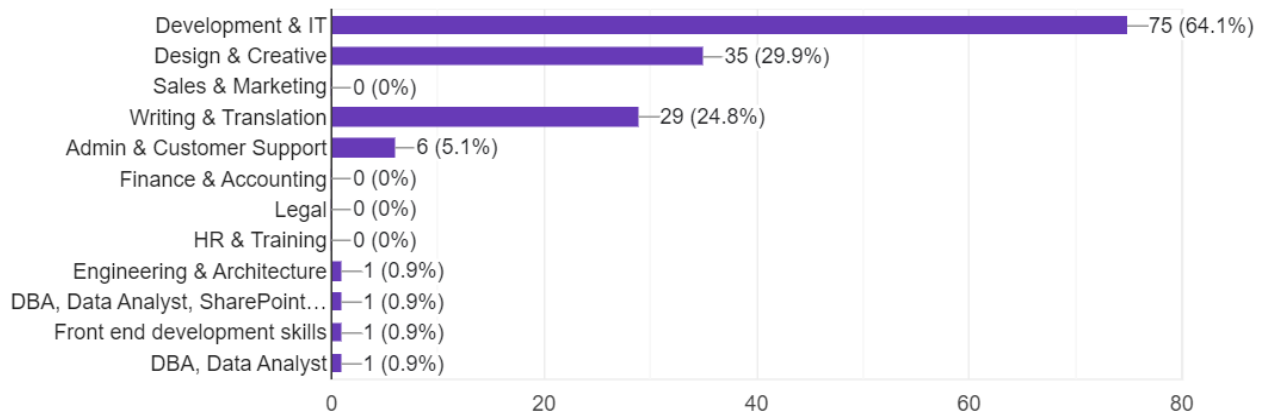


Fig 4.1 Participants skill on Upwork using bar chart

Total earning of Study Participants on Upwork (in Dollar)

The table 4.5 shows the distribution of participants across different earning ranges. The largest group (35 participants, or 29.9%) falls under the \$1,000 - \$9,999 earning bracket. A significant number of participants (21 participants, or 17.9%) reported zero earnings. Furthermore 12% of the participants fall in the range of 1 – 500 and 12.8% of the participants fall in the range of 500 – 999.

Over all most of the participant's total earning range fall between 1 to 50,000 and more excluding the 1000 – 9,999 range.

Table 4.5 Earning of Participants on Upwork (in Dollar)

Total earning (in Dollar)	Count of participant	Total earning of participant
0	21	17.9%
1 – 500	14	12%
501 – 999	15	12.8%
1,000 - 9,999	35	29.9%
10,000 - 49,999	17	14.5%
More than 50,000	15	12.8%

4.2 Quantitative data Analysis

Table 4.6 Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
FA1	117	3.54	1.270
FA2	117	3.91	1.017
FA3	117	3.31	1.374
FA4	117	4.03	.840
FA5	117	3.21	1.310
FA6	117	3.67	1.026
FA7	117	3.68	1.104
FA8	117	3.60	1.239
FA9	117	3.07	1.607
FA10	117	1.79	.954
FA11	117	2.99	1.263
FA12	117	3.09	1.557
FA13	117	3.82	1.072
FA14	117	4.43	.620
FA15	117	4.24	.739
Valid N (listwise)	117		

The above table shows the descriptive statistics for the 15 variables labeled FA1 to FA15.

- **N:** This represents the sample size, which is 117 for all variables.
- **Mean:** This shows the average value for each variable.
- **Std. Deviation:** This represents the standard deviation, which measures how spread out the data points are for each variable. A higher standard deviation indicates a wider spread of values around the mean.

Observations:

- The means for most variables are around 3 or 4.
- FA4 (mean = 4.03) and FA14 (mean = 4.43) have the highest means.
- FA10 (mean = 1.79) has the lowest mean.
- FA14 (Std. Deviation = 0.620) has the lowest standard deviation, indicating the data points are tightly clustered around the mean.
- FA9 (Std. Deviation = 1.607) and FA12 (Std. Deviation = 1.557) have the highest standard deviations, suggesting a wider range of values for these variables.

Table 4.7 Correlations

		FA1	FA2	FA3	FA4	FA5	FA6	FA7	FA8	FA9	FA10	FA11	FA12	FA13	FA14	FA15
FA 1	Pearson Correlation	1	.660*	.438**	.241**	-.430**	.391**	-.136	-.201*	-.411**	-.103	-.148	.426**	.401**	-.185*	-.047
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.009	.000	.000	.144	.030	.000	.267	.112	.000	.000	.046	.617
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
FA 2	Pearson Correlation	.660*	1	.336**	.064	-.412**	.160	-.319*	-.044	-.270**	-.110	-.289*	.419**	.435**	.051	.122
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.491	.000	.085	.000	.638	.003	.239	.002	.000	.000	.588	.190
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
FA 3	Pearson Correlation	.438*	.336*	1	.237**	.295**	.385**	-.254*	-.008	.072	.176	-.148	.205*	.313**	.107	.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.010	.001	.000	.006	.934	.438	.058	.112	.026	.001	.249	.000
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
FA 4	Pearson Correlation	.241*	.064	.237**	1	.213*	.173	.123	-.252*	-.315**	-.206*	.203*	-.187*	-.165	.137	-.027
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	.491	.010		.021	.061	.185	.006	.001	.026	.028	.044	.075	.140	.771
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
FA 5	Pearson Correlation	-.430*	-.412*	.295**	.213*	1	.039	.200*	.025	.575**	.401*	.329*	-.292**	-.219*	.072	.207*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.021		.680	.030	.792	.000	.000	.000	.001	.018	.443	.025
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
FA 6	Pearson Correlation	.391*	.160	.385**	.173	.039	1	-.018	.321*	.045	.059	.344*	.423**	.439**	-.099	-.224*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.085	.000	.061	.680		.849	.000	.627	.529	.000	.000	.000	.286	.015
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
FA 7	Pearson Correlation	-.136	-.319*	-.254**	.123	.200*	-.018	1	.385*	.017	.025	.326*	-.210*	-.566**	-.053	-.150

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.144	.000	.006	.185	.030	.849		.000	.854	.786	.000	.023	.000	.572	.107
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
FA 8	Pearson Correlation	-.201*	-.044	-.008	-.252**	.025	.321**	.385*	1	.139	.102	.268*	.241**	.062	.046	.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.030	.638	.934	.006	.792	.000	.000		.134	.275	.004	.009	.506	.624	.301
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
FA 9	Pearson Correlation	-.411*	-.270*	.072	-.315**	.575**	.045	.017	.139	1	.426*	.281*	-.013	.072	.100	.153
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.003	.438	.001	.000	.627	.854	.134		.000	.002	.892	.439	.283	.099
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
FA 10	Pearson Correlation	-.103	-.110	.176	-.206*	.401**	.059	.025	.102	.426**	1	.399*	.227*	.055	-.238*	-.086
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.267	.239	.058	.026	.000	.529	.786	.275	.000		.000	.014	.557	.010	.358
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
FA 11	Pearson Correlation	-.148	-.289*	-.148	.203*	.329**	.344**	.326*	.268*	.281**	.399*	1	.325**	-.078	-.116	-.386**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.112	.002	.112	.028	.000	.000	.000	.004	.002	.000		.000	.406	.212	.000
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
FA 12	Pearson Correlation	.426*	.419*	.205*	-.187*	-.292**	.423**	-.210*	.241*	-.013	.227*	.325*	1	.490**	-.029	-.145
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.026	.044	.001	.000	.023	.009	.892	.014	.000		.000	.754	.118
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
FA 13	Pearson Correlation	.401*	.435*	.313**	-.165	-.219*	.439**	-.566*	.062	.072	.055	-.078	.490**	1	.129	.077
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.075	.018	.000	.000	.506	.439	.557	.406	.000		.165	.412
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117

FA 14	Pearson Correlation	-.185*	.051	.107	.137	.072	-.099	-.053	.046	.100	-.238*	-.116	-.029	.129	1	.415**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.046	.588	.249	.140	.443	.286	.572	.624	.283	.010	.212	.754	.165		.000
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
FA 15	Pearson Correlation	-.047	.122	.445**	-.027	.207*	-.224*	-.150	.097	.153	-.086	-.386*	-.145	.077	.415*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.617	.190	.000	.771	.025	.015	.107	.301	.099	.358	.000	.118	.412	.000	
	N	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117	117
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).																
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).																

The above table shows the Pearson correlation coefficients between 15 variables labeled. The table also shows the significance level (p-value) for each correlation.

The analysis revealed several variables with strong positive correlations, exceeding 0.5. This suggests these variables tend to move together in the same direction. For instance, an increase in FA1 is likely accompanied by an increase in FA2, and similarly FA3 and FA6 often change in tandem. This pattern is observed across multiple variable pairs, including FA12 and FA13, suggesting potential underlying relationships between these factors. Notably, FA5 and FA9 stand out with a particularly strong positive correlation.

These correlations suggest that these variables tend to change together in the same direction. For example, if FA1 increases, FA2 is also likely to increase.

There were also instances of strong negative correlations (below -0.5). FA5, for example, exhibits an inverse relationship with both FA1 and FA9, meaning when FA5 increases, FA1 and FA9 tend to decrease. Similarly, FA7 and FA13 show a negative correlation. These contrasting relationships highlight the presence of both positive and negative influences at play between the variables.

- **Moderate Correlations:** Many of the correlations fall between -0.5 and 0.5, indicating a moderate relationship between the variables.
- **Significance Levels:** The p-values associated with each correlation coefficient indicate the statistical significance of the correlation. Correlations with a p-value less than 0.05

are considered statistically significant. In this table, significant correlations are marked with asterisks (*).

Table 4.8 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.495
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	972.595
	df	105
	Sig.	.000

Based on the KMO measure and Bartlett's test results, here is an analysis of their implication for factor analysis:

- **KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy (0.495):** This value falls between 0.5 and 0.59, which is considered mediocre for factor analysis. Ideally, a KMO value above 0.8 is recommended for robust factor analysis.
- **Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (p-value = 0.000):** A significant p-value (less than 0.05) indicates that the null hypothesis of sphericity can be rejected. In simpler terms, this suggests the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix, which is a requirement for factor analysis to assume that the variables are independent.

Interpretation:

- The KMO measure suggests that the sampling adequacy might be border line for factor analysis. There might be weaknesses in capturing the underlying structure due to potentially weak correlations between variables.
- However, the significant Bartlett's test indicates that the variables are likely not entirely independent, which is a condition for factor analysis to proceed.

Table 4.9 Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
FA1	1.000	.814
FA2	1.000	.653
FA3	1.000	.802
FA4	1.000	.838
FA5	1.000	.892
FA6	1.000	.702
FA7	1.000	.715

FA8	1.000	.819
FA9	1.000	.744
FA10	1.000	.669
FA11	1.000	.760
FA12	1.000	.734
FA13	1.000	.714
FA14	1.000	.555
FA15	1.000	.772
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		

The above table shows the Communalities results for a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with 15 factors (FA1 to FA15). Communality refers to the proportion of variance in a variable explained by the extracted factors.

- **Initial:** This column refers to the original variance of each variable before the PCA analysis. Since all values are 1.000, it suggests all variables had a variance of 1.
- **Extraction:** This column shows the communality for each variable. Values range from 0.555 to 0.892.
- **Higher Communality (better):** A higher communality indicates a larger proportion of the variable's variance is explained by the extracted factors. In this case, FA5 has the highest communality (0.892), meaning 89.2% of its variance is explained by the factors.
- **Lower Communality (worse):** A lower communality suggests a smaller proportion of the variable's variance is explained by the factors. FA14 has the lowest communality (0.555), indicating only 55.5% of its variance is explained by the factors.

Interpretation:

- This analysis suggests that most of the variables have a good proportion of their variance explained by the extracted factors. This is because most communalities are above 0.6.
- However, FA14 seems to be an outlier with a lower communality. This could indicate that this variable might not be well-represented by the extracted factors or might contain a significant amount of unique variance not captured by the factors.

Table 4.10 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.417	22.779	22.779	3.417	22.779	22.779
2	2.576	17.173	39.953	2.576	17.173	39.953
3	2.125	14.166	54.118	2.125	14.166	54.118
4	1.704	11.357	65.476	1.704	11.357	65.476
5	1.363	9.085	74.561	1.363	9.085	74.561
6	1.000	6.664	81.225			
7	.755	5.032	86.257			
8	.488	3.251	89.508			
9	.381	2.540	92.048			
10	.366	2.443	94.491			
11	.304	2.026	96.517			
12	.193	1.284	97.801			
13	.145	.969	98.770			
14	.120	.803	99.573			
15	.064	.427	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

The above table shows the explained variance by each component (factor) in a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with 15 components. Here's a breakdown of the information:

- **Component:** This refers to the number assigned to each factor extracted by PCA.
- **Initial Eigenvalues:** These values represent the variance explained by each component before rotation.
- **Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings:** These values represent the variance explained by each component after rotation.
- **Total:** This refers to the total variance explained by each component.
- **% of Variance:** This shows the percentage of the total variance explained by each component.
- **Cumulative %:** This shows the total percentage of variance explained by all components up to that point.

Key observations from the table:

- The first component (PC1) explains the most variance (22.78%) followed by PC2 (17.17%). The remaining components explain progressively smaller proportions of variance.
- The first five components together explain over 74% of the total variance (74.56%). This suggests that a significant amount of information in the data can be captured by these first few components.
- The contribution of each subsequent component to the total variance explained becomes smaller.

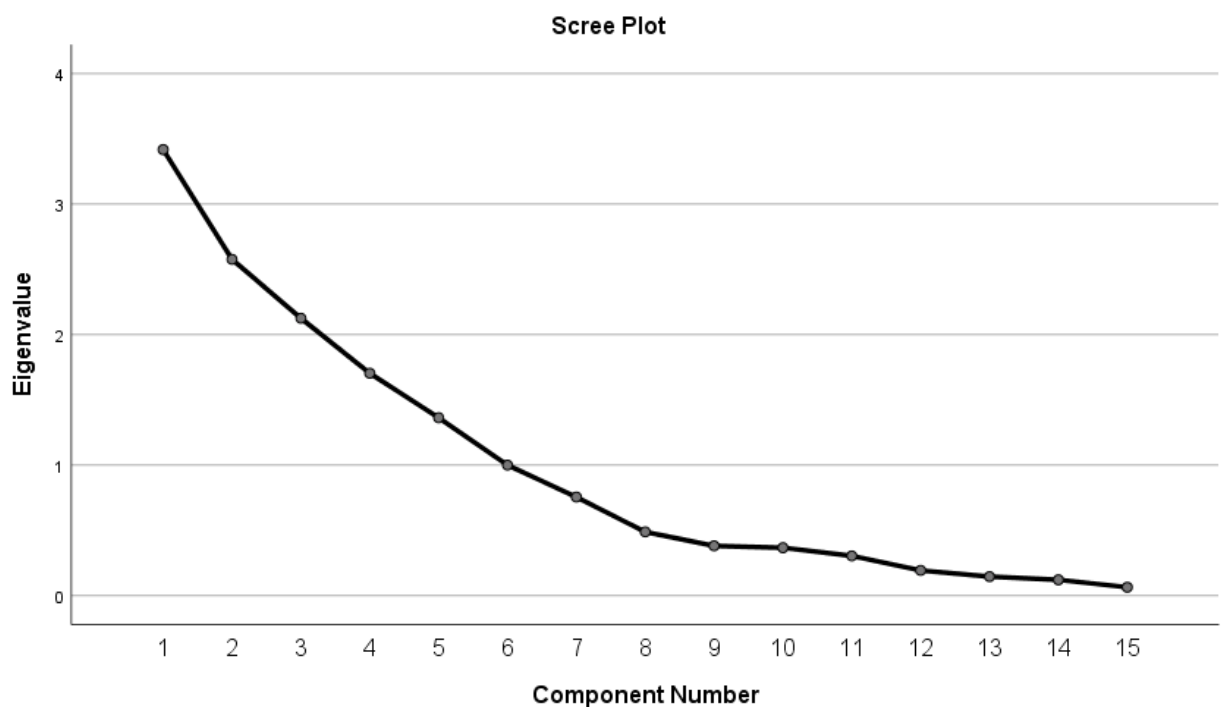


Fig 4.2 Scree plot

The graph shows a scree plot for exploratory factor analysis. A scree plot is a graph that helps determine the number of factors to retain in a factor analysis.

In the scree plot, the eigenvalues are plotted on the y-axis and the factor number is on the x-axis. The eigenvalues represent the amount of variance explained by each factor. The scree plot suggests that the first four or five factors account for the most variance in the data. There is a sharp elbow after the fourth or fifth factor, and then the eigenvalues start to level off. This suggests that the first four or five factors are the most important and that extracting additional factors would not explain much more variance.

Table 4.11 Component Matrix

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
FA1	.823	.026	-.196	.297	-.096
FA2	.803	-.053	.045	.002	.058
FA3	.465	.310	.564	.406	-.082
FA4	.066	-.104	-.035	.905	-.046
FA5	-.555	.421	.484	.364	-.201
FA6	.407	.632	-.166	.284	.168
FA7	-.528	.100	-.355	.328	.439
FA8	-.115	.465	-.084	-.179	.742
FA9	-.406	.539	.451	-.263	-.125
FA10	-.193	.656	.094	-.150	-.413
FA11	-.308	.699	-.360	.217	.015
FA12	.570	.549	-.206	-.230	.117
FA13	.694	.328	.210	-.284	-.014
FA14	.014	-.144	.529	.070	.499
FA15	.073	-.158	.813	.025	.283
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.					
a. 5 components extracted.					

The above table shows the component matrix for a Principal Component Analysis (PCA) after extracting 5 components. This matrix represents the loadings of the original variables (FA1 to FA15) on the extracted components (1 to 5).

Interpretation:

- A high positive loading (values closer to 1) indicates that the variable is strongly correlated with the component.
- A high negative loading (values closer to -1) indicates that the variable is negatively correlated with the component.
- A loading close to 0 suggests a weak correlation between the variable and the component.

In this case (with 5 components):

- **FA1:** This variable has a high positive loading on component 1 (0.823) and might be well-represented by that component.
- **FA2:** This variable also has a high positive loading on component 1 (0.803) and likely shares similar information with FA1 in that component.

- **FA3:** This variable has moderate positive loadings on components 2 (0.310) and 3 (0.564), suggesting it might be captured by both components to some extent.
- **FA4:** This variable has a high positive loading on component 4 (0.905) and seems to be strongly associated with that component.
- **FA5:** This variable has high negative loadings on component 1 (-0.555) and positive loadings on components 2 (0.421) and 8 (0.742), indicating it contributes information in opposite directions to component 1 and carries information captured by components 2 and 8.

4.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

Open ended questions and responses

The open ended questions were included at the end of the questionnaire, because the questions were optional to respond, from the total number of participants (117) only 10 of them are willing to answer the open ended questions. The open ended questions were analyzed by categorizing and coding the responses.

1. What opportunities do you see in the online gig economy (specifically on Upwork) for individuals in Ethiopia?

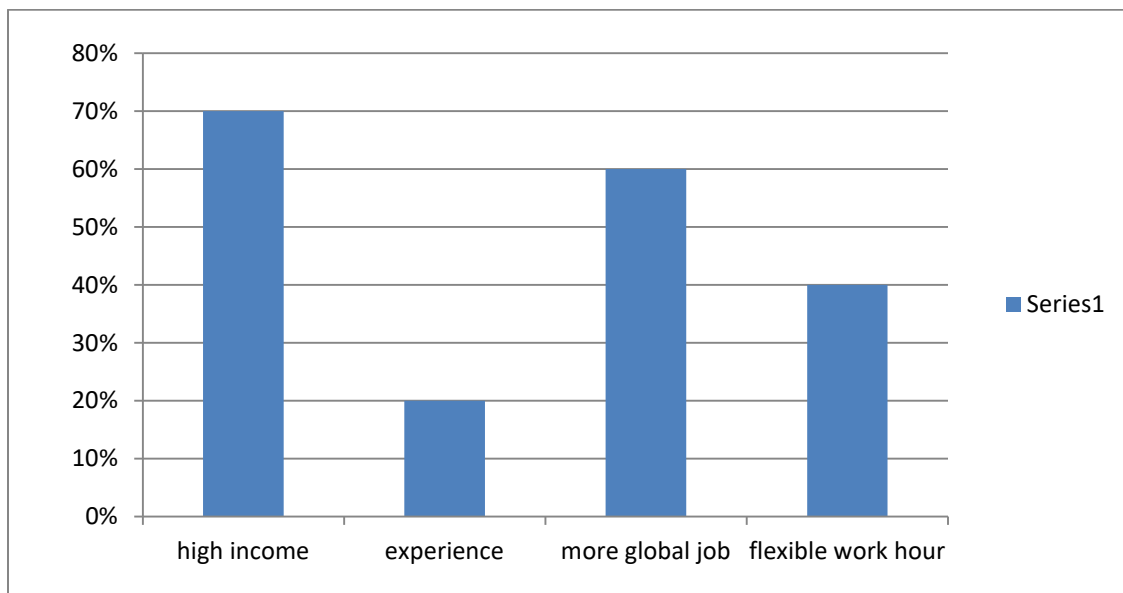


Fig 4.3 Responses about opportunities on Upwork

- **High Income:** The proportion of high income is 70%.
- **Experience:** The proportion of experience is 20%.
- **More Global Jobs:** The proportion of more global jobs is 60%.
- **Flexible Work Hours:** The proportion of flexible work hours is 40%.

Overall, the chart suggests that a significant portion of Upwork freelancers perceive there to be a high availability of opportunities on the platform (70% for high income, 60% for more global jobs, and 40% for flexible work hours).

2. What barriers do you observe that hinder Ethiopians from joining and achieving success on the Upwork platform?

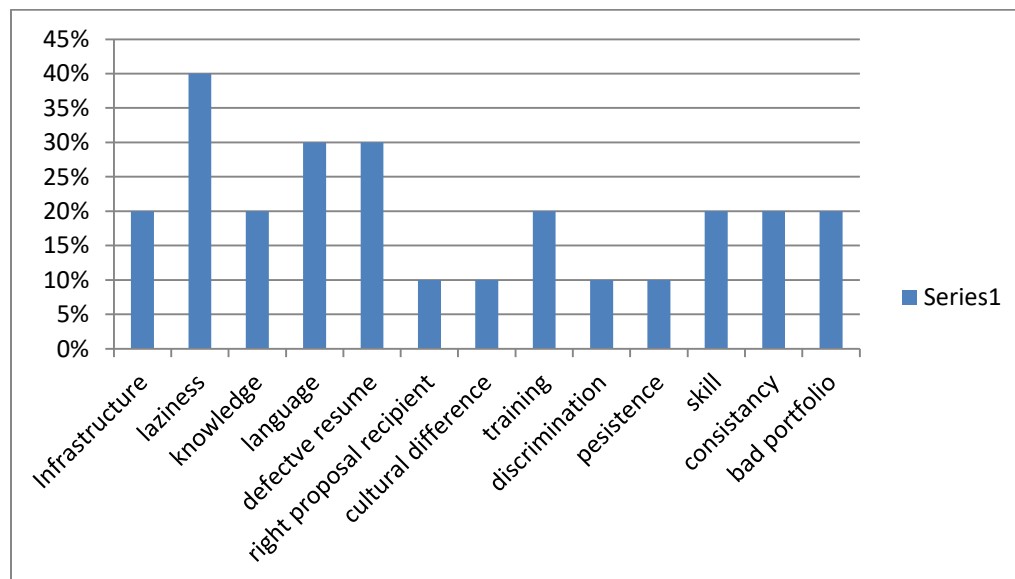


Fig 4.4 Responses about barriers

- **Right proposal recipient (10%)** This means a very small percentage of people surveyed said they will get a job offer if it was sent to the right person at the company.
- **Cultural difference (10%)** A small percentage of people surveyed said that cultural differences between themselves and the company would be a reason for not getting hired.
- **Persistence (10%)** A small percentage of people said that Freelancers are not persistence, which is one factor for not landing a job successfully.
- **Discrimination (10%)** A small percentage of people said that they would be rejected by the reason of discrimination. This is discrimination based on race.

- **Training (20%)** A small percentage of people said that the availability of training opportunities in Ethiopia is limited.
- **Skill (20%)** A small percentage of people said that Ethiopian freelancers need more skill to compete.
- **Consistency (20%)** Freelancers should be consistent to get the job offer.
- **Bad portfolio (20%)** A small percentage of people said that their portfolio may not be strong enough to get them the job they want.
- **Defective resume (30%)** A small percentage of people said that their resume may be defective to get them the job they want.
- **Language (30%)** A small percentage of people said that a language barrier would make them less likely to get the job.
- **Knowledge (20%)** A small percentage of people said that a knowledge barrier makes them less likely to get the job.
- **Infrastructure (20%)** A small percentage of people said that Infrastructure is a barrier that makes them less likely to get the job.
- **Laziness (40%)** more participants mention that laziness is the main factor that hinders Ethiopians from landing a job successfully on the Upwork platform.

Overall, the table suggests that there are a variety of reasons why people might be accepted or rejected by the client. Some of these reasons are more important than others.

3. What challenges do you believe individuals in Ethiopia encounter while engaging in the online gig economy (Specifically on Upwork)?

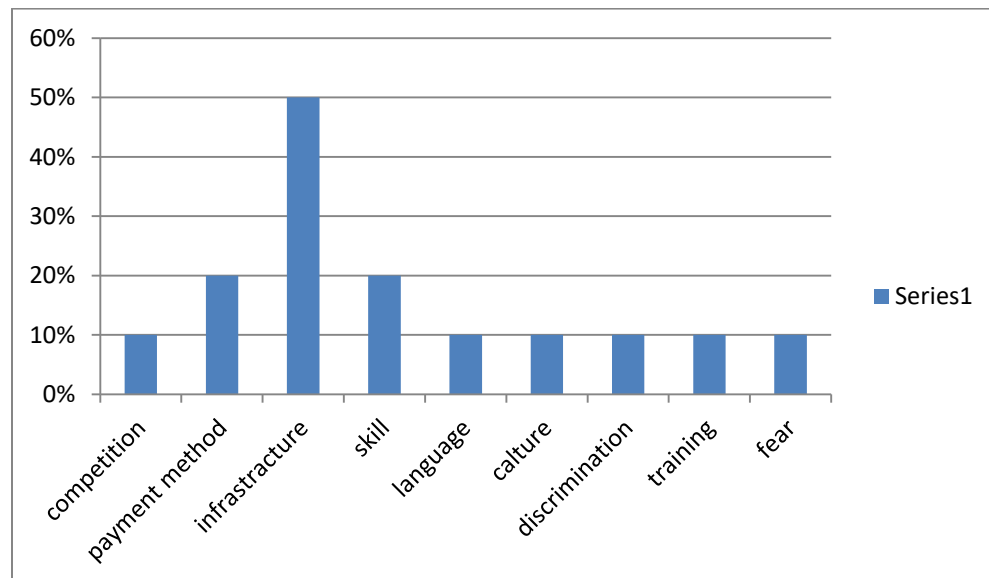


Fig 4.5 Responses about challenges

Factors Affecting Job Success

- **Communication (10%):** This suggests that a relatively small percentage (but still important) consider communication skills to be a major factor affecting job success.
- **Payment Method (20%):** A higher percentage considers payment method to be a factor in online gig job success.
- **Infrastructure (50%):** The largest percentage considers infrastructure a major factor.
- **Skill (20%):** Similar to Payment Method, a moderate percentage considers skills to be a major factor.
- **Language (10%):** Again, a relatively small percentage considers language a major factor.
- **Culture (10%):** A small percentage considers cultural factors are important for job success.
- **Discrimination (10%):** A small percentage considers discrimination as one factor affecting job success.

- **Training (10%):** A small percentage considers access to training important for job success.
- **Fear (10%):** A small percentage considers fear a factor affecting job success.

Overall:

The table suggests that infrastructure is seen as the most important factor affecting online gig job success, followed by payment method and then skill. Communication, culture, and access to training are also seen as important factors by a significant portion of respondents.

4. What are the issues that you consider to be solved in order to develop freelancing and cultivate the greater benefit out of the online gig economy?

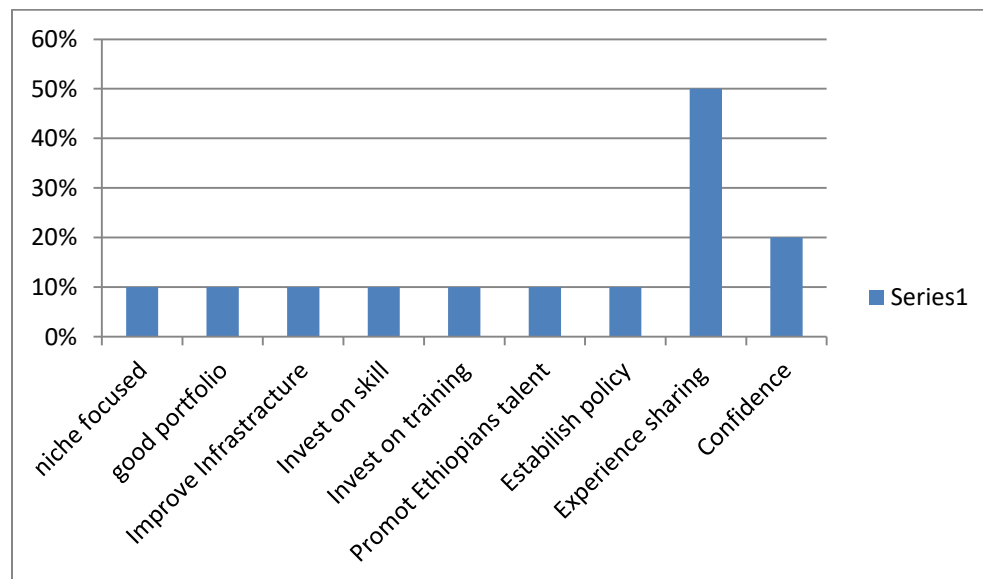


Fig 4.6 Responses about advancement

- **Improve Infrastructure (10%)** - This shows that a relatively small percentage of Ethiopians surveyed are interested in investing in improving infrastructure.
- **Invest in Skill and Training (10% each)** – A relatively small percentage of Ethiopians surveyed are interested in investing in skill and training.
- **Promote Ethiopian Talent (10%)** - Similar to infrastructure, promoting Ethiopian talent garners interest from a small portion of those surveyed.
- **Establish Policy (10%)** - Another 10% are interested in establishing policy.

- **Experience Sharing (50%)** - By far the largest portion of respondents, 50%, are interested in experience sharing. knowledge sharing between Ethiopians.
- **Confidence (20%)** - A moderate percentage, 20%, are interested in confidence building,

Interpretations:

- **Focus on Human Capital:** The fact that a higher percentage are interested in skill and training.
- **Importance of Knowledge Sharing:** The strong interest in experience sharing highlights the potential value Ethiopians see in knowledge exchange.
- **Building Confidence:** The focus on confidence building could reflect a desire for a more stable and secure investment environment.

4.4 Discussions

The results show that respondents were most satisfied with the statement about using Upwork to improve skills and develop professionally (with a mean rating of 4.03 and standard deviation of 0.84). This suggests that there is a relatively small amount of variability in the ratings for this question, and that most respondents found Upwork to be helpful for skill development.

The respondents were least satisfied with the statement about working on Upwork from Ethiopia helping them to have competitive rates (mean rating of 3.31), with a standard deviation of 1.37. This suggests that there is a larger amount of variability in the ratings for this question, and that some respondents found Upwork to be more helpful for finding competitive rates than others.

Upwork presents a gateway to a global job market for Ethiopians, brimming with opportunities that extend far beyond their local offerings. This platform allows Ethiopians to leverage their skills and gain valuable experience while working with international clients. The ability to set flexible hours further enhances the appeal of Upwork, providing financial stability and the freedom to choose projects.

Despite limited internet access (mean: 3.21), Ethiopian freelancers may find other factors more challenging on Upwork. Reliable internet could be a key enabler for success. However, the intense global competition (mean: 3.67) underlines the need for strong skills and competitive

rates. Client expectations and budgets (mean: 3.68) pose another hurdle, suggesting effective communication and project management are crucial. Finally, skill development (mean: 3.60) is paramount for Ethiopian freelancers to stay competitive in the global marketplace.

Despite the potential of Upwork, there are hurdles Ethiopians might face. Lack of reliable internet and proper equipment like laptops can be a significant barrier. Additionally, language barriers and the need for strong skills, well-crafted proposals, and polished resumes can be daunting.

The survey findings reveal that several factors pose moderate to high barriers for Ethiopian freelancers on Upwork (overall_variability). While factors like competition (mean: 3.67), client expectations (mean: 3.68), and skill development (mean: 3.60) seem more concerning. Additionally, limited training opportunities (mean: 3.07) and lack of retirement benefits (mean: 3.09) are perceived as hurdles. Standard deviation values are all above 1, indicating variability in responses. Interestingly, English language proficiency appears less significant (mean: 1.79).

The survey emphasizes strong agreement (low standard deviation) on the importance of several factors for thriving as a full-time Upwork freelancer. With a high mean rating (3.82), mental preparedness is seen as crucial. However, building a support network (mean: 4.43) appears to be the most valued factor, followed closely by targeted training programs (mean: 4.24).

Upwork offers a promising path for Ethiopians, but success requires focus and dedication. Building a strong portfolio that showcases their niche skills is crucial. Additionally, fostering a supportive community for experience sharing and self-development can empower Ethiopians to overcome challenges and thrive in the online gig economy.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of findings

This analysis explored the relationships between 15 variables (FA1-FA15) using Principal Component Analysis (PCA). Here's a summary of the key findings:

Correlations:

- **Strong Positive Correlations:** Several variables exhibited strong positive correlations (above 0.5), suggesting they tend to change together in the same direction. These correlations were observed between variables like FA1 and FA2, FA12 and FA13, and FA3 and FA15.
- **Strong Negative Correlations:** A few variables showed strong negative correlations (below -0.5), indicating opposite trends. For example, FA5 increased when FA1 and FA9 decreased, and FA7 showed an opposing trend to FA13.

Explained Variance:

- The first five components explained over 74% of the total variance in the data. This suggests that a significant amount of information can be captured by these first few components.

Component Loadings (with 5 components):

- The analysis of loadings on the extracted components can help identify which variables contribute most to each component.

KMO and Bartlett's Test:

- The KMO measure (0.495) indicated a mediocre sampling adequacy, suggesting potentially weak correlations between variables.
- Bartlett's test (p-value = 0.000) rejected the sphericity assumption, implying the variables are not entirely independent.

Overall:

- The analysis revealed both positive and negative relationships between the variables.
- While the explained variance seems promising, the KMO measure suggests limitations due to potentially weak correlations.

5.2 Conclusion

The data suggests a complex interaction between opportunities, barriers, challenges, and support systems for freelancers on Upwork. There seems to be an abundance of opportunities, but also significant barriers that need to be overcome. While challenges are faced, they might be perceived as less daunting than the initial hurdles. There's a positive view of potential advancements that could help freelancers and a perceived link between such advancements and the availability of opportunities.

Online freelancers discover ways to improve their job flexibility while also addressing the platform's heightened precarity (Sutherland et al., 2020). The online freelance landscape presents a double-edged sword. Freelancers must navigate the increased precarity caused by platform structures. However, this very environment also offers opportunities for work flexibility. By honing their tech skills, collaborating with each other, and potentially pushing for policy changes, online freelancers can carve a path towards a future that maximizes both control and security in the gig economy.

The gig workers must possess strong technology skills. The government still needs to address certain gray areas, like giving gig workers primary social security benefits. Gig platforms also need to address the issue of their bad payment structure (Behl et al., 2022). In conclusion, while strong tech skills are becoming increasingly important for success in the gig economy, challenges remain. Gig workers deserve social safety nets, and governments need to address these gaps. Additionally, fair treatment of workers' demands that gig platforms improve their often criticized payment structures. By working together, these stakeholders can ensure the gig economy thrives for everyone involved.

5.3 Recommendation

For Ethiopian Freelancers:

- **Focus on skill development and niche expertise:** Invest in training and resources to develop in-demand skills relevant to Upwork's freelance market. Having a strong specialism will make you more competitive.
- **Build a strong portfolio:** Showcase your skills and experience through a well-crafted portfolio that highlights your best work.

- **Develop communication and marketing skills:** Learn how to write compelling proposals that effectively market your services to potential clients. Mastering clear communication is essential for success.
- **Embrace the online freelance community:** Seek out online communities and forums where Ethiopian freelancers can connect, share experiences, and offer support to each other. This can help overcome feelings of isolation and provide valuable guidance.

For Ethiopian policymakers and organizations:

- **Invest in digital infrastructure:** Improve internet access and affordability across Ethiopia to ensure widespread participation in the online gig economy.
- **Develop skills training programs:** Create programs focused on developing the specific skills Ethiopians need to be successful on Upwork platforms. Consider online or blended learning models to reach a wider audience.
- **Promote awareness and support systems:** Raise awareness of Upwork and other online freelance platforms as viable income-generating opportunities. Develop support systems to assist Ethiopians with navigating the platform, proposal writing, and marketing themselves effectively.

By addressing these challenges and recommendations, Ethiopians can leverage Upwork's potential and thrive in the global online freelance market.

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Appendix

Survey questions

Part 1: Demographic Information

General questions regarding the participant's profile are given.
Please select your choice.

Gender *

- ☐ male
- ☐ Female

Age *

- ☐ less than 18
- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26-35
- ☐ 36-44
- ☐ 45 and above

Highest educational level obtained *

- ☐ Diploma or less
- ☐ Bachelor's or equivalent level
- ☐ Master's or equivalent level
- ☐ Doctoral or Higher

Have active account on the Upwork platform (in years) *

- ☐ less than 1
- ☐ 1 - 3
- ☐ 4 - 6
- ☐ 7 - 9
- ☐ 10 and above

your skill on Upwork (you can select more than one skill) *

- ☐ Development & IT
- ☐ Design & Creative
- ☐ Sales & Marketing
- ☐ Writing & Translation
- ☐ Admin & Customer Support
- ☐ Finance & Accounting
- ☐ Legal
- ☐ HR & Training
- ☐ Engineering & Architecture
- ☐ Other...

Total earning on UpWork(in Dollar). *

- ☐ 0
- ☐ 1 - 500
- ☐ 501 - 999
- ☐ 1K - 9,999
- ☐ 10K - 49,999
- ☐ more than 50K

1. Upwork has provided me flexible work hours with no login hour restrictions. *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

...

2. There are a variety of jobs on the UpWork platform. *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

3. Working on UpWork from Ethiopia helps me to have competitive rates. *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

4. Using Upwork has helped me improve my skills and develop professionally. *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

5. Limited internet access and reliability in Ethiopia limits my work on Upwork. *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

6. I face significant competition from freelancers in other countries on Upwork. *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

7. Clients on Upwork often have unrealistic expectations or low budget constraints. *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

8. Lack of specific skills or experience makes it difficult to compete on Upwork. *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

9. There are limited training and skill development opportunities for freelancers in Ethiopia. *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

10. My level of English language efficiency hinders me from getting jobs. *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

11. There are cultural influences holds back from being a full time freelancer. *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

12. UpWork does not provide retirement benefits, which makes it difficult to work as a fulltime ^{*} freelancer.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

13. Before deciding to become a full-time freelancer, mental readiness is essential for success ^{*} in freelancing work.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

14. Building a network of support for freelancers could be highly beneficial. ^{*}

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

15. There's a need for targeted training programs to equip Ethiopians with the specific skills needed for successful freelancing on platforms like UpWork. *

- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly Agree

1. What opportunities do you see in the online gig economy (specifically on UpWork) for individuals in Ethiopia?(optional)

Long answer text

2. What barriers do you observe that hinder Ethiopians from joining and achieving success on the Upwork platform?(optional)

Long answer text

3. What challenges do you believe individuals in Ethiopia encounter while engaging in the online gig economy(Specifically on Upwork)?(optional)

Long answer text

4. What are the issues that you consider to be solved in order to develop freelancing and cultivate the greater benefit out of the online gig economy?(optional)

Long answer text