Usability Evaluation of Freelancing websites a case of Fiverr using SUS

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Abstract: Fiverr.com is one of the biggest freelancing websites in the world. It provides a platform to clients and freelancers. In Fiverr, buyers pay in advance for the "gigs" created by sellers. A "gig" on Fiverr shows a specific service or set of skills of any type of freelance service, ranging from copywriting to social media marketing, to web design. This website is used by all types of users. Many people face problems regarding its interface. For many novice and intermediate users, this website is complicated. In this study, SUS is used to measure the usability of the Fiverr.com website. The main focus of this paper will stay on the SUS survey done on Google forms after performing some tasks. Results from the Google forms survey will be used to get the usability of this website whether people are satisfied with the website or not. Usability evaluation of Fiverr is conducted by evaluating it with many parameters like efficiency, effectiveness, and the satisfaction of users. Another objective of this research is to improve the interface of this website. A system usability scale (SUS) is a quick and effective approach to evaluate the usability of a product. It is a low-expense usability scale that can be employed for the assessment of interactive systems. The SUS questionnaire is widely used to measure the usability of e-commerce websites. In this study, novice, intermediate and expert users, a total of 30 participants' feedback was combined to improve its design. Results from Google forms show a 63.3 mean SUS value. It shows that the Fiverr.com website has minor issues that need to be resolved. If these problems are resolved it will help new clients and sellers in the future.

Keywords: System usability scale; Fiverr; usability; efficiency; effectiveness; user satisfaction;

I. INTRODUCTION

As covid 19 spreads and affects the whole world, work from home become a new standard for the first time in modern history. Many people share the same concerns about the instability of their jobs. Leaving them to wonder is freelancing the future. It is a big concern nowadays that, will future work entirely shifts towards work from home. It is possible as clients are getting quality projects from freelancers and the results are amazing. According to the Payoneer.com survey from 1000+ freelancers over 100 countries, freelancers believe that their workload is increased during covid up to 15 – 20% [1]. If we talk about freelancing in Pakistan, Pakistan is among the top 5 countries in the world. Pakistani freelancing community has earned up to \$0.5 billion from freelancing platforms. In 2017, Online Labor Index was published by Oxford Internet Institute (OII) in which Pakistan was ranked 4th most popular country in the world for freelancing [2]. In this study usability evaluation of Fiverr.com is done. Fiverr.com website is taken as it is one of the biggest freelancing websites; it was founded by Micha Kaufman and Shai Wininger. This website was deployed in February 2010. The founders of this website proposed the idea of an online marketplace. By using this two-sided platform, people can buy and sell a variety of digital services typically offered by freelance contractors. There are many services offered on the website.

These services include graphic designing, writing, translation of provided material, editing videos, and programming. Services at fiverr.com start from \$5, and according to order rates can go up to thousands of dollars. Sellers showcase their skills and offer services, these services are called "gigs". Fiverr.com was deployed in early 2010. In 2012 this website was hosting over 1.3 million Gigs. Now transaction volume of this website has grown 600% since 2011. In the United States, this website has been ranked in the top 100 most popular websites [3]. Technology is spreading very quickly, and it has become essential to develop a quality model. However, how do we examine the quality of a system or product? The answer is Usability.

The system usability technique's key purpose is to improve the user interface (UI) for a better end-user experience so that the user gets maximum outcomes of the system [4]. Poorly designed systems may result in stress, frustration, and waste of time [5]. Usability is defined as "The extent to which a product can be used by specified users to achieve specific goals with effectiveness, efficiency, satisfaction in a specified context of use" (ISO, 1998)". Usability is a crucial feature of product design [6]. In this study, the Fiverr.com website is taken for usability testing. Usability is considered one of the most important parameters

in the field of web designing and development. A system or website is considered good if it attracts users by providing accurate information. If the interface of any system is good, it will make users comfortable and they will visit it again. Fiverr is a freelancing website where experts provide multiple services to clients from all over the world. This website is one of the biggest websites for freelancing. This is the reason its usability is being tested to see if there is any space for improvement.

The main focus of this paper is to conduct a usability evaluation of the fiverr.com website. There are many usability testing methods available, but one of the most commonly used testing methods is using a questionnaire. Questionnaires are an easy and cheap method to test Usability. The questionnaires provide a way to understand the user's perspective clearly [7]. Likert-type questionnaires are used to measure subjective user attitudes. They give results through a standardized statistical process [8]. They interpret how exactly a user likes or dislikes a system. There are some standardized usability measurement questionnaires such as Computer System Usability Questionnaire (CSUQ), Questionnaire for User Interface Satisfaction (QUIS), System Usability Scale (SUS), and so on [9].

In this study System Usability Scale (SUS) is taken. Brooke developed SUS in 1986. SUS is a Likert-type scale, consisting of 10 questions (Brooke, 1996). Odd numbers represent positive statements and even numbers represent negative statements. Each question further has five rating points from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." It is a customizable scale that can be supervised through survey tools like Survey Monkey, Google Forms, Qualtrics, and many others. As compared to other questionnaires, it is short and has high reliability of 0.91 [10]. This usability scale is free to use and can be easily accessed to get valid results. It produces acceptable results even with a less number of samples.

II. METHODS AND MATERIALS

A. Usability

As defined by the ISO, the usability of a system can be measured by keeping in mind a few things—i.e., who is using the system, why they are using it, and also in which environment they are using the system. Furthermore, the usability of any system is a measurement to see the following aspects.

• Effectiveness shows that users can complete the tasks with accuracy

• Efficiency shows much time, effort and resources is spent by the user to complete its tasks

• Satisfaction shows either user experience with the system is satisfactory or not

When a user interacts with a system, its quality experience with the system is defined as Usability [11]. The usability of any system provides the quality attributes that help to judge how easy the user interface is to use [12]. Usability of any system tells about 3 major quality components, i.e. i) effectiveness, it shows how easy it is for users to complete a specific task when they are using the

system for the first time; ii) efficiency, it shows how quickly users were able to complete the given tasks after they know the system; iii) satisfaction, it shows the satisfaction level of users after using the system or product and how pleasant their experience is about that system [13]. With the above-mentioned quality component, usability has three principles. These principles are learnability, flexibility, and robustness. Learnability shows, for new users how easy it was to learn the system. Flexibility shows, through how many ways the users can interact with the system.

B. Usability Evaluation

Usability evaluation of any system is conducted to see how easy it is for a user to learn and adopt the system to perform their task [14]. 12 steps are followed to conduct a usability evaluation of any product or system. 1) specify why usability evaluation is being conducted; 2) specify the UI aspects that need to be evaluated; 3) identify targets of interacting person; 4) choosing the usability metric that will be used for usability evaluation; 5) choose which evaluation method will be used; 6) specify the tasks that will be given to participants; 7) Experiment is planned to conduct usability evaluation; 8) collect usability evaluation data from participants; 9) data that is collected from the users in analyzed; 10) criticize UI of the system and give suggestions; 11) usability evaluation process is repeated if there is need; 12) results from usability process are presented. Usability results predict the success of any product in the market. It is also used to compare the systems falling in a similar domain and provide feedback about their usability [15].

C. System Usability Scale (SUS)

Brooke developed SUS in 1986. SUS is a Likert-type scale, consisting of 10 questions (Brooke, 1996). Odd numbers represent positive statements and even numbers represent negative statements.

TABLE I. SYSTEM USABILITY SCALE USED FOR FIVERR.COM

No	Statements
1	I think that I would like to use the fiverr.
2	I found the fiverr unnecessarily complex.
3	I thought the fiverr was easy to use.
4	I think that I would need the support of a technical person to be able to use the fiverr.
5	I found the various functions in the fiverr were well integrated.
6	I thought there was too much inconsistency in the fiverr.
7	I would imagine that most people would learn to use the fiverr very quickly.
8	I found the fiverr very cumbersome to use.
9	I felt very confident using the fiverr.
10	I needed to learn a lot of things before I could get going with this fiverr.

To assess the usability of any product, System Usability Scale is used widely [16]. Recent studies show that SUS can be divided into usability scale and learnability scale.

Questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 provides information about usability, and question 4 and 10 give information about learnability [17]. The SUS consists of 10 questions; the odd questions represent positive items and even questions represent negative items. The participants are asked to rate SUS for a product on a 5-point scale. Where number 1 represents "strongly disagree" to 5 represents "strongly agree". For positive questions, the user response is minus with 1 and for the negative questions; the user response is minus by 5. The overall SUS score is the sum of all the 10 questions and multiplying it by 2.5, ranging from 0 to 100. If a product scores above 68, it is considered to have good usability [18].
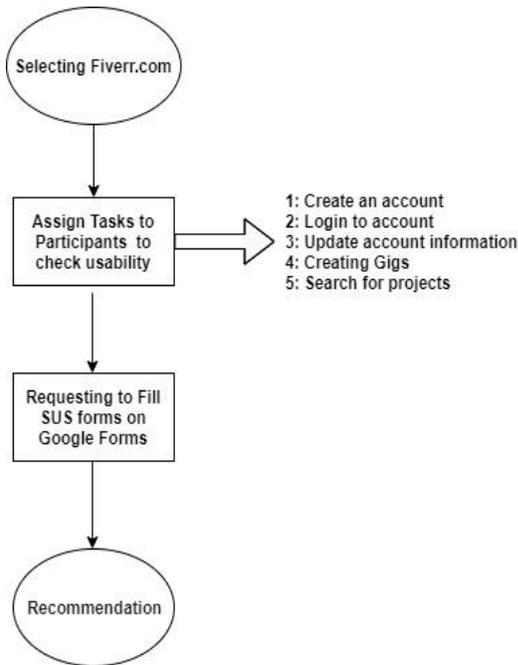

Figure 1.   Procedure

Figure 1 shows the procedure of this study. Fiverr.com was selected due to mentioned reasons.   5 tasks were assigned to participants and they were requested to fill out the SUS questionnaire on Google Forms. Recommendations are given at the end of this study.

III.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A.   Participants

30 participants were taken for this study and they participated voluntarily. All participants in this study are over 18 years old. Of 30 participants, 25 were male and the other 5 were female. Below given graphs further, explain the participants.
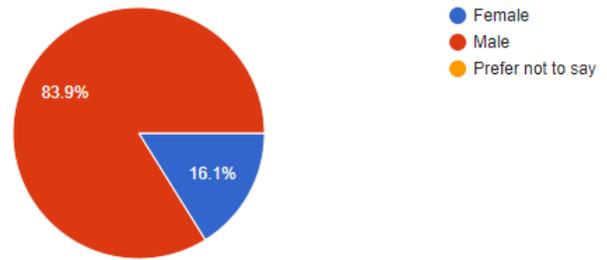
1) *Gender:*

Figure 2.   Graph showing male and female participants

In this study, both males and females participated voluntarily.

Of a total of 30 participants, 25 were male and 5 were female.
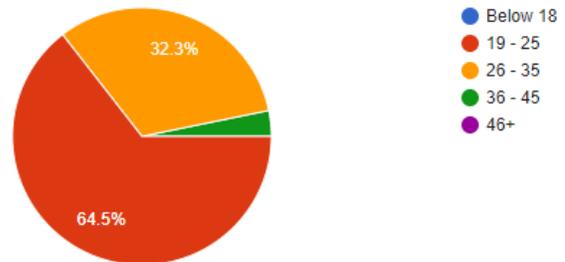
2) *Age Group:*

Figure 3.   Graph showing participants age group

In this study, people were from 3 age groups. 19 participants were from 19 – 25 age groups. 10 participants were from the 26 – 35 age group. 1 participant was from the 36 – 45 age group.
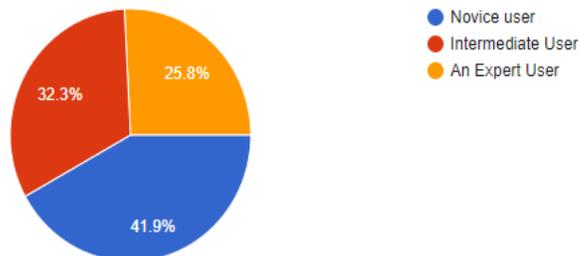
3) *Participant type:*

Figure 4.   Graph showing the percentage of user type

We generally cauterized users in 3 types: novice, intermediate and expert type. In this study 12 users were a novice, these users use the Fiverr website once in months. 10 users were intermediate; these users visit this website many times as a client. 8 users were experts; these users often use this website on daily basis.
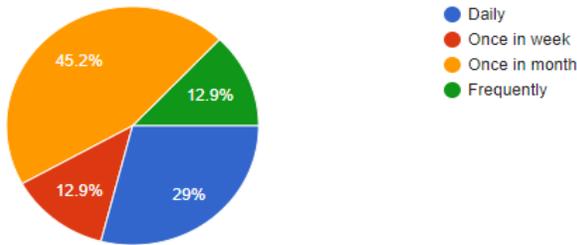
4) Frequency:

Figure 5.   Graph showing frequency of visiting the website

Of 30 participants, 13 participants visit fiver once a month. This type usually shows novice users. 9 participants use this website on daily basis. 4, 4 participants visit this website frequently or once a week.

A.   Data collection tool

In this study, Google Forms were used to get feedback from the participants. These forms were created and shared with users on individual bases as well as on group bases.

B.   Usability Questionnaire

In this study, to evaluate the Fiverr usability System Usability Scale (SUS) was used. It is consists of 10 questions in specific order to measure the usability of any system. 30 participants provided their feedback. After performing a few tasks, they were asked to give their feedback on Google Forms where System Usability Scale questions were posted. Ten statements about the Fiverr.com website were given to the participants. Participants fill up the forms and show how to agree or disagree they are with the system (from 1 to 5; 1 shows strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree).

C.   Task analysis(tasks performed by participants):

To test the usability and fill up the system usability scale form, multiple scenarios were kept in mind. These tasks were performed by the users and based on these tasks the users filled up the Google forms. Many users were already familiar with the website and the tasks they were asked to perform. Novice users were asked to perform random tasks and then fill up the form.

1.   Create an account

Creating and making changes to an account was not a difficult task for users. In Fiverr this page is very easy to understand and well integrated.
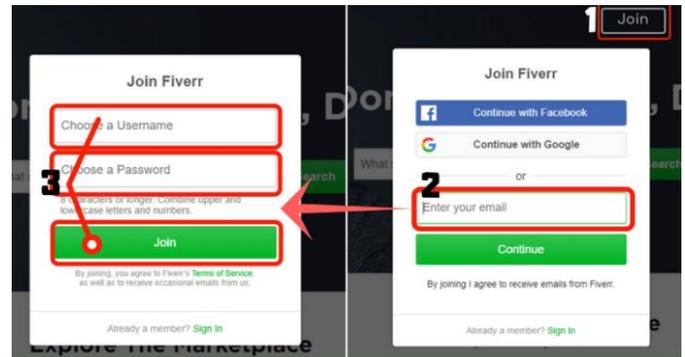

Figure 6.   Fiverr signup page

2.   Log in to account

All 3 types of users were easily able to log in after completion of the signup process. Login steps are also visible and well integrated.

3.   Update account information

Except for a few novice users, others were able to update their profile image. Making username changes, adding another email address for security purposes. Users were also able to add a profile picture or to update it.

These steps were also well visible to users. Updating the user profile, making changes in the email address, and adding the profile picture process was easy for all types of users. This task is visible and well-integrated with proper feedback from the system while users update their profiles.
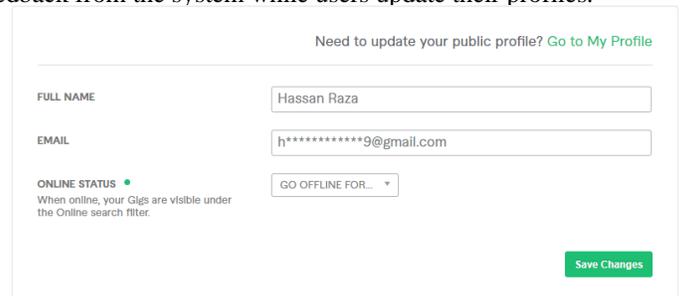

Figure 7.   Fiverr update profile section

4.   Creating Gigs

Creating gigs on Fiverr is one of the most important tasks. In fiver.com gig is the service that a person offers and sells within the marketplace. The gig is an opportunity to showcase the seller's talent to potential customers, as well as to provide all the information they may need before placing an order.

Orders are placed on relevant gigs, that's why it is most important to make a perfect gig so that when a buyer search for a specific task the gig must rank in search results.

Almost 95% of sellers face the problem that their gigs are not ranked. This problem is related to search engine optimization, old sellers are getting orders but new sellers are struggling to get their first order. This is also a visibility issue because the new sellers don't get a proper guide of how to build their gigs properly, which thumbnails are needed, how to write the keywords, and what to write in its description so that new sellers gigs are ranked in search results.

5. *Search for projects*

There is a big usability issue with searching project module in fiverr.com. This option is not visible and not even on the header of the website. Orders are placed by buyers and sellers don't do bidding on fiverr.com but they have the option where sellers can request for projects but about 40 – 50 % of sellers don't know about it.

This is a big section but it is not even written in main headings but the "more" option. When the seller clicks "more" then it shows the project request. It must in the header so that all sellers must know about it and take advantage to get extra orders. And also heading name is "buyer request" which is not easy to understand. It must be written in easy words e.g. "search projects"
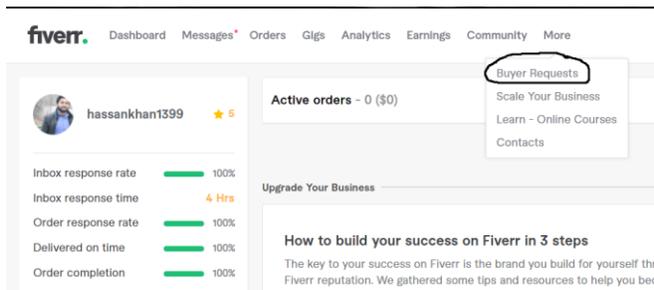

Figure 8. Buyer requests section

D. *SUS MEAN VALUE*

TABLE II. SUS MEAN VALUE

Factors	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Mean SUS score
Gender	Male	25	83.9%	63
	Female	5	16.1%	59.4
Age	19 - 25	19	64.5%	63
	26 - 35	10	32.3%	58
	36 - 45	1	3.2%	52.9
Type	Novice	11	41.9%	53.96
	Intermediate	10	32.3%	60.91
	Experts	9	25.8%	74.8
Use	Daily	9	29%	70
	Once in week	4	12.9%	64
	Once in month	14	45.2%	59
	Frequently	4	12.9%	63

Table II shows the mean SUS value of participants by different categories. SUS points were calculated as
Odd questions = user response - 1
Even question = 5 – user response
Final score = total point * 2.5

The table shows that 25 males score an average of 63 SUS points and 5 females got 59.4. By age group 19 participants in 19 – 25 years old got 63 SUS score, 10 participants 26 – 35 age group got 58 and 1 participants 36 – 45 age group scored 52.9. 11 novice, 10 intermediate got 53.96 & 60.91 respectively. Research shows 9 experts score an average of 76.8 which is above 68 who use Fiverr on daily basis and deals with clients. For the novice and intermediate participants, the average SUS score is always below 68 shows that the usability of Fiverr.com is not that good. There are usability issues that need to be sorted out.
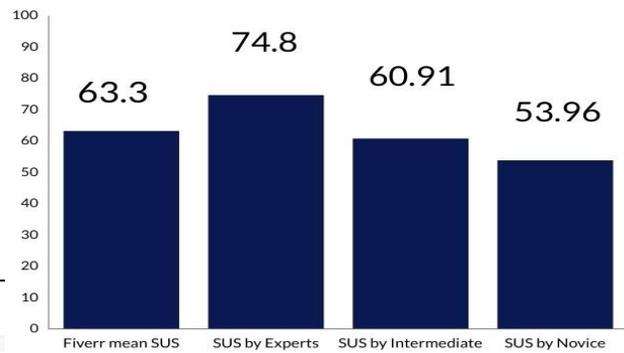

Figure 9. Fiverr SUS score by user type

Figure 9 shows the mean SUS score of Fiverr.com. These graphs are generated from the data collected on Google forms. 3 types of users participated as mentioned above. The graph shows that the mean SUS score of 9 experts' participants is 74.8 which is above 68. The mean SUS score of 10 intermediate participants is 60.91. The mean SUS score of 11 novice participants is 53.96. The overall mean SUS score of all 3 types of users is 63.3.
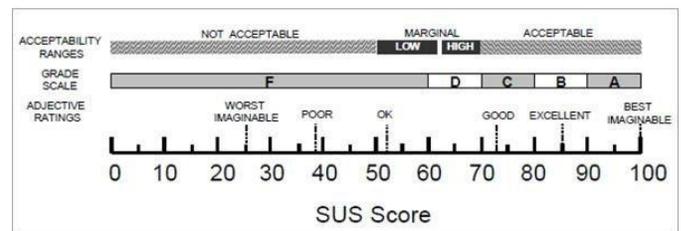

Figure 10. SUS score

As Figure 10 shows, for any system, a 68 SUS score is considered good. It shows that the system usability is good. For Fiverr.com, only experts manage to score 74.8 which is above 68. We can say that for experts, Fiverr's usability is good. But the problem is for intermediate and novice users. Both of these types score below 68 which shows that Fiverr usability is not good for normal users. Also, the fiverr.com website's overall SUS score is 63.3 which is also below 68.

Users were asked to perform some tasks on the fiver.com website then fill up Google forms. Tasks were

1. Create an account
2. Log in to account
3. Update account information
4. Creating Gigs
5. Search for projects

Participants were easily able to perform the first 3 tasks. These modules were visible, well-integrated, and provide proper feedback to users while they were filling out the forms or updating their profile information. Creating a Gig task is the most important task in Fiverr because it shows seller skills and the service that he is providing.

But due to a lack of proper information, many sellers are not able to make perfect gigs where they can get orders. They create the gigs but their gigs never show up in search results. Search for project tasks is also poorly visible. This option is not even written in the fiver.com header. Many of the sellers don't even know that this option is available on fiverr.com.

IV.   RECOMMENDATIONS

Two problems were faced related to the usability of fiverr.com. 1st one is providing proper information on how a new seller should create a perfect gig. There must be detailed information at each step. The seller must be informed in easy words of how to write gig Title, what type of thumbnail helps to attract buyers, there must be the suggestion of the most suitable keywords so that the gig can rank in search results. All these forms are not properly visible and well-integrated. 2nd problem is searching for a new project. This task is very poorly added to the website. This option is 2nd most important task for freelancing but this option is not even written among other heading in the header. This option must be added to the header of fiverr.com and must be written in easy words like "search projects" instead of "buyer request". The usability of fiverr.com can be further improved if these issues and some relevant issues are resolved. These problems must be resolved as many young sellers especially colleges and university students are trying to provide their services and skills.

V.   CONCLUSION

In this study usability of Fiverr.com was evaluated. 30 participants were taken for this study and they participated voluntarily. 5 tasks on fiverr.com were performed by participants and based on their experience they fill up Google forms. System Usability Scale(SUS) was used in Google forms to get feedback from users. Their mean values were calculated to get Fiverr's usability. Results show that the SUS score of experts is 74.8 which is good. But for novice and intermediate users, the SUS score was 53.96 and 60.91 respectively. It is below 68 points which indicate that for novice and intermediate user, there are some usability issues. 63.3 mean SUS value of overall website was also calculated, it is below 68 and shows that there is a problem

in Fiverr.com usability. From 5 given tasks participants face problems in "creating gigs" and "search project". Suggestions were also provided above. Proper information must be provided during gig creation and a search project option must be added in the header so that sellers can easily access and take advantage of getting some extra orders. If the usability of the Fiverr.com website is improved it will attract more clients and sellers in the future.

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