

STUDENTS' ENGLISH COMPETENCE, TRANSFORMATIVE THINKING, CREATIVITY, AND WORK READINESS IN THE GIG ECONOMY ERA

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Abstract: *As the gig economy era reshapes the global workforce, job readiness demands more than technical skills. Therefore, transformative thinking, creativity, and English competence become crucial. This study aims to explore how students from various backgrounds perceive the importance and the role of English competence, transformative thinking, and creative thinking in the gig economy era. Furthermore, this study also analyzes the relation between students' socioeconomic background and their level of English competence toward their job readiness. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through a reflective instrument based on open-ended questions designed to explore students' views and strategies in facing the challenges of the gig economy era. Fifty-one students with different characteristics, including high and low achievers and socioeconomic backgrounds, volunteered for the study. Thematic analysis was used to identify mindsets and work readiness that emerged from their narratives. The findings revealed that English competence is strongly related to self-confidence, professional communication effectiveness, and the ability to build global connections. Meanwhile, transformative and creative thinking encourages students to think critically,*



adapt to change, design creative solutions, and think outside the box. Furthermore, developing work readiness requires motivation, engagement, and reflective thinking because these qualities enable students to adapt, learn, and perform well regardless of their financial situation.

Keywords: *English; GIG; transformative thinking, work readiness*

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of diminishing job opportunities, which is caused by automation and the emergence of the gig economy era in the current time, is becoming more intense. With the advancement of technology and its automation, many jobs which are previously performed by humans are now gradually replaced by machines. Moreover, it is estimated that in 2025, around eighty-five million jobs are predicted to be displaced (Talmage-Rostron, 2024). That deceleration of the global economy truly contributes to the increase in unemployment. According to the World Bank, global economic growth is projected to reach only 2.6 percent in 2024 (Group, 2024). This indicates that many developing countries, including Indonesia, will face difficulties in creating new jobs. This phenomenon automatically reduces job stability and long-term benefits for workers. A similar worsening situation is likely to happen in Indonesia due to the increasing rate of layoffs.

From the academic perspective, Indonesia's economic condition, which is facing challenges, can be solved by preparing students to master English and transformative thinking. By mastering English, students will get a good chance to access the global market as well as to improve their international competitiveness. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), communication proficiency is one of the top four professional qualities that employers respect the most (James & Nunamaker, 2021). Over the years, both written and spoken communication skills have consistently been rated highly, including in the 2019 Job Outlook Survey. Additionally, McGreavy et al. (2022) stressed that effective communication is crucial in the twenty-first century, especially when it comes to creating inclusive settings and interacting with a variety of stakeholders. It is becoming more and more important to be able to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences. English communicative competence can contribute to addressing these issues.

By mastering it, students can communicate effectively with colleagues from different countries, understand global information, and access international resources (McKay, 2018). Some studies have highlighted the importance of English proficiency in determining incomes and supporting employment are Gazzola 2023; Gazzola, Wickström, and Templin (2019); Hahm and Gazzola (2022); Muhawenayo, Habimana, and Heshmati (2022).

Additionally, other essential skills that need to be considered are transformative thinking and creative thinking. When mastering those skills, students will be more flexible in adjusting to changes and challenges, as well as be more mature in making decisions. Transformative thinking as an association of soft skills can foster job readiness (Ritter et al., 2018). It is other aspects that should be considered in supporting students to be more well prepared for a job. Nghia, Anh, and Kien (2023) stated that soft skills have become more important in enhancing graduates' quests for lifelong personal development. Transformative thinking and creative thinking are the keys to encouraging students to prepare themselves to be more prepared in this unstable condition or job uncertainty. Several studies have emphasized the importance of those skills. Transformative and creative thinking must be mastered by graduates; otherwise, they will face significant challenges in securing jobs and advancing their careers. Almada, Bramlett, and Ramírez (2018) and Nugroho et al., (2024) explored cross-sector employability competencies regarding professional competencies for job preparedness, job experience, and soft skills, which are important for improving graduates' employability. Transformative thinking and creative thinking can serve as a foundation for fostering employability competence, which is vital in the global workforce. Yildiz and Scharaldi (2015) highlight that transformative thinking and critical pedagogy can support global competencies. Janairo (2024) also examines the impact of transformative learning on identity formation. Castro-Carracedo (2024) integrated 21st-century pedagogical competencies and critical pedagogy to enhance linguistic and pedagogical competencies, critical consciousness, and cultural empathy; and Teoh, Wang, and Kwek (2024) revealed that transformative travel experiences are significant to social and economic sustainability.

Despite the large number of studies on English competence, transformative and creative thinking, those that interconnected them to the issues of socio-economic and job readiness problems in the gig economy era are still very few. Research that explores English, transformative, and creative thinking used as the fundamental aspects to help students prepare for their job readiness is almost nonexistent. Indeed, students' English competence and job readiness are diverse and tend to be unready to face the workplace (Rodríguez Aboytes & Barth, 2020; Stephens & Francis, 2018). The low level of these aspects, English competence, transformative and creative thinking, impedes their readiness to enter the workforce, especially in the context of the gig economy era. Although many universities

have offered English courses in their departments, a gap between the skills taught and the real needs in the job market remains a big issue. In addition, a lack of understanding of transformative and creative thinking makes it difficult to adapt to rapid changes in the work environment (Teng et al., 2019).

Given the rising unemployment rate, skills mismatch, and the increasing difficulties graduates encounter in finding employment that matches their abilities (Adely et al., 2021), this research is essential to cope with these problems. Rapid industrial transformation and changing labour market needs necessitate both technical and effective English communicative competence (Rehman et al., 2024). Additionally, students need to be creative and have transformational thinking to adjust to the fast-paced, ever-changing workplace (Ahmad Tajuddin et al. 2022; Du et al. 2021). This research offers a new understanding of how English proficiency, transformative thinking, and creativity relate to support students' work readiness in the gig economy era. This study not only addresses a gap in research related to English, transformative and creative thinking in supporting flexibility in thinking and acting, but also provides practical contributions to job preparation and education. Accordingly, this study aims to explore how students from various backgrounds perceive the importance and the role of English competence, transformative thinking, and creative thinking in the gig economy era. Furthermore, this study also aims to explore the relationship between students' socioeconomic background and their level of English competence toward their job readiness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "gig economy" refers to a trend toward increasingly skill-intensive employment that calls for cooperation between remote teams and digital literacy (Lin et al., 2021). It is characterized by revolutionary thinking and shifting labor relations. Thus, it is crucial for understanding the evolving dynamics of flexible, technology-driven, task-based employment (Joshi et al., 2024). In contrast to conventional perspectives, labour now connects its responsibilities with personal, social, and environmental values and is more flexible. The shift to gig-based careers emphasizes the value of lifelong learning and ongoing skill improvement (Jiaojiao & Lifei, 2023) while addressing labor shortages through flexibility and worker autonomy.

Effective English is important in the gig economy era. In a flexible work system based on short-term projects, effective communication is highly needed because English is often used as the medium of instruction in various industries (Curran, 2020). Effective English communication becomes the key to success and expanding job opportunities in the global market. Moreover, the growth of digital businesses also demands proficiency in

English because business communication in many multinational companies is conducted in this language (Joglekar et al. 2022; Suprayogi et al. 2024). Students and job seekers must realize that proficiency and communicative skills in English open access to broader job opportunities and global connections (Dewi and Setiadi 2018; Fitriati and Wardani 2020). The increasing number of freelance platforms that connect workers and clients from various countries makes English proficiency key to securing projects, completing tasks well, and building professional networks (Auld et al. 2022; Vega et al. 2024).

Based on the identified problem, this study aims to explore how students from various backgrounds perceive the importance of English competence, transformative thinking, and creative thinking. What are their roles in shaping students' job readiness in the gig economy era. Furthermore, this study also analyzes the relation among students' socioeconomic background, their level of English competence, transformative thinking, and creative thinking.

METHOD

To analyze how university students from a variety of backgrounds including high achievers, low achievers, and socioeconomically diverse groups, perceive the contributions of English competence, transformative thinking, and creative thinking to their job readiness in the gig economy, a qualitative research approach was used. The qualitative approach was the most appropriate to obtain a deeper understanding of students' individual experiences, opinions, and views about these three interrelated constructs. This approach provides rich, intricate storylines and ticks that would be missed by strictly quantitative assessments. This study involved 51 university students from various geographic backgrounds living in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. They voluntarily answered an open invitation to participate in the study. The participants' diversity was purposefully considered to ensure that the study represents a wide range of student experiences and viewpoints. The data is more reliable because of their voluntary involvement, which indicates a degree of intrinsic drive and willingness to express sincere ideas. The questionnaire in this study was distributed via a Google Forms link. There were two procedures for filling out the questionnaire. First, it was distributed through English language lecturers, and students who were willing to participate were given the opportunity while the lecturers provided assistance if there were any difficulties. Second, the Google Form link was shared in several WhatsApp groups and social media accounts belonging to the researchers, inviting students to fill it out voluntarily. In the questionnaire, the researchers included items asking about the students' identities, specifically their geographical background, socioeconomic status, and their level of English proficiency based on their course grades and TOEFL scores.

Five reflection questions that were in line with the study's research aims were included in the open-ended survey. They were mostly administered using a Google Form. Regarding English language competence, transformative thinking, creativity, and their job-readiness for gig economy era, these questions prompted participants to go into further detail about their knowledge and personal experiences. To capture nuanced understandings of how each dimension of English competence, transformative thinking, and creative thinking contributes to students' perceived job readiness in the gig economy era, the researchers chose this approach, which gives students the freedom to express their ideas freely and reflectively. Effective data collection was made possible using an online form, which also protected participant anonymity.

A thematic analysis was used to analyze and present themes that showed up in the gathered data. There were six steps that were conducted in doing the thematic analysis as suggested by Braun & Clarke (2024). They are data familiarization, making pre-coding, searching for the themes, validating the selected themes, defining, and naming the themes based on the research questions. MAXQDA qualitative software, was used in the process of themes management and it was used in identifying process as well as cluster students' narrative responses. The open-ended answers collected from participants indicate rich information. Through features of keyword extraction, topic modeling, and semantic clustering, the tool assisted the researchers in uncovering linguistic patterns, cognitive tendencies, and expressions of creativity reflected in students' discourse. The analysis focused on exploring the interconnection between English competence, transformative thinking, and creative thinking in relation to job readiness in the gig economy era.

2.1. Trustworthiness of the Data

Direct participant quotations served as the foundation for themes in an open and methodical analytical approach that increased the findings' trustworthiness. Cross-referencing new themes with previously published works on transformational learning and job preparedness allowed for the trustworthiness of the data. Additionally, the open-ended questions and answer anonymity were designed to reduce social desirability bias and encourage candid communication, which enhanced openness in responses. With voluntary and direct participation as well as open-ended questions, the attempt can increase the openness and depth of the responses, thus contributing to data credibility, although it does not guarantee representativeness.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Before demonstrating the role of English communicative competence, transformative thinking, and creative thinking in supporting students' job readiness, detailed information about the students is presented. These include students' gender and socioeconomic status.

The relationships among these three aspects are then discussed to understand students' job readiness, especially in the gig economy.

4.1. Students' Gender

The number of female is bigger than male. The data shows that the total number of female is almost 16% and the male is only less than 4%.

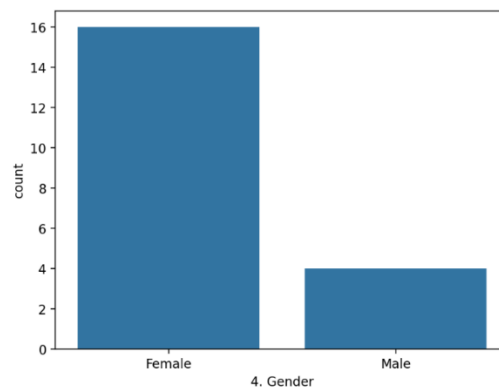


Figure 1. Students' Gender

4.2. Students' Socioeconomic Status (SES)

Students' socioeconomic status (SES) includes their monthly income from regular allowances and/or part-time work income (excluding tuition fees). The income levels are categorized into same ranges, '< Rp2.500.000' until '> Rp6.000.000'. However, most of them fall into < Rp2.500.000 with fewer in higher income. Figure 2 and 3 visually summarizes the distribution, showing a clear concentration in the lower SES range.

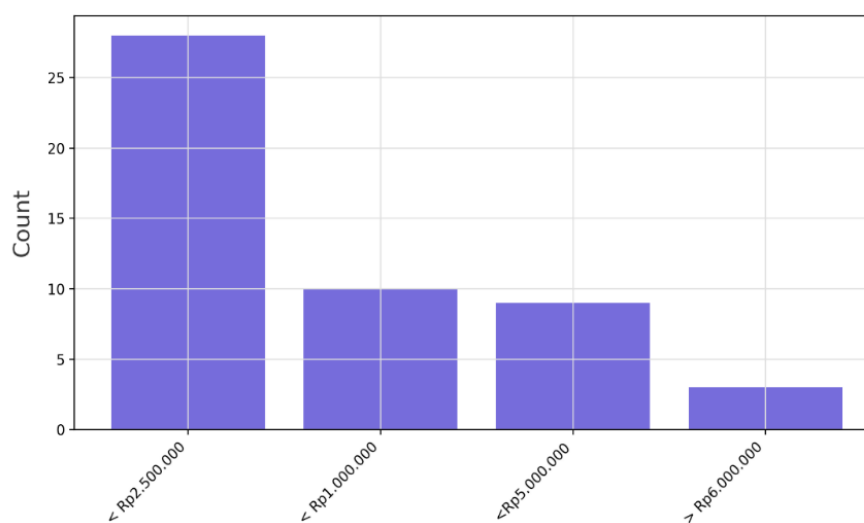


Figure 2. Regular Allowance from Parents or Part-Time Work Income in a Month

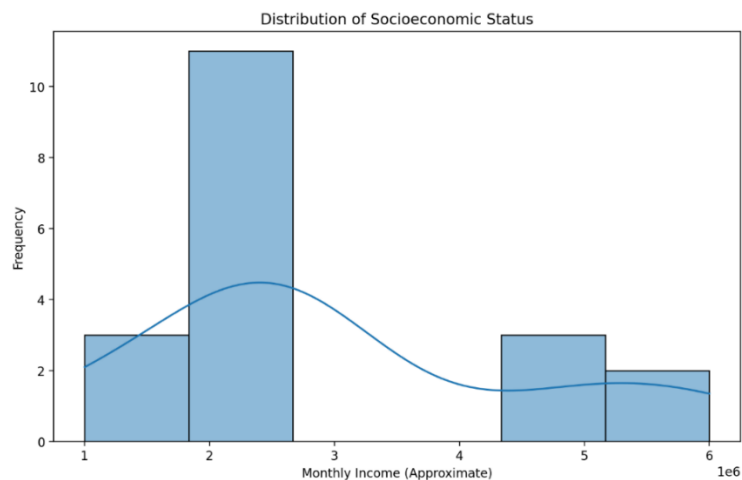


Figure 3. Distribution of Socioeconomic Status / Monthly (Approximately)

4.3. More Prominent Themes based on Students' Responses

Males' students show notably higher mentions of creativity and also emphasize adaptability as well as collaboration. In addition, females' students mention challenges and English language competence more frequently. However, both genders similarly emphasize job readiness preparation.

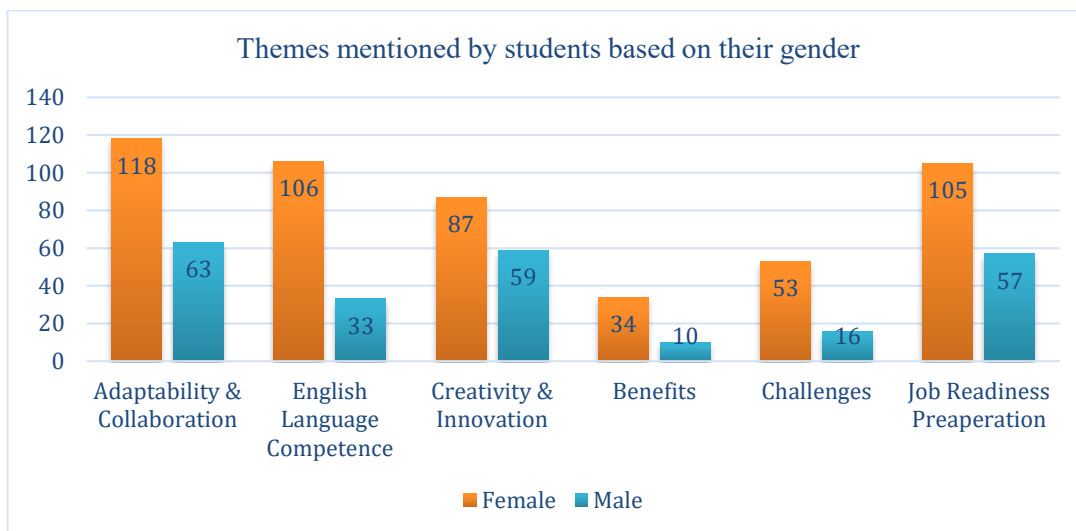


Figure 4. Themes Mentioned by Gender

4.4. The Importance and Role of English Competence

The importance of mastering English competence is obviously recognized by the students' responses. They admitted that they understand that the gig economy requires them to be both highly adaptable, communicative, and collaborative. Many students provide

the role of English competence with detailed examples from their own understanding and experience. The following quotations show students' perceptions of their English competence. Furthermore, Students' perception toward the role of English in the gig economy is classified and depicted in Figure 5.

"Because of the many freelance job opportunities and global digital platforms, I believe that my English will become the primary language for next communication, collaboration, and business transactions". (Student 1-20year old)

"The level of English proficiency, especially in terms of communication skills, clarity, tone, and grammar, those will greatly affect my performance and interactions on global digital platforms". (Student 3-21year old)

"My English language competence directly impacts how well my communication, collaboration, and performance in a digital workspace". (Student 6-21year old)

"Strong English language skills in communication, clarity, tone, and grammar not only increase my professionalism but also will improve my chances of success, making more effective freelancer and employee on global digital platforms". (Student 12-23year old)

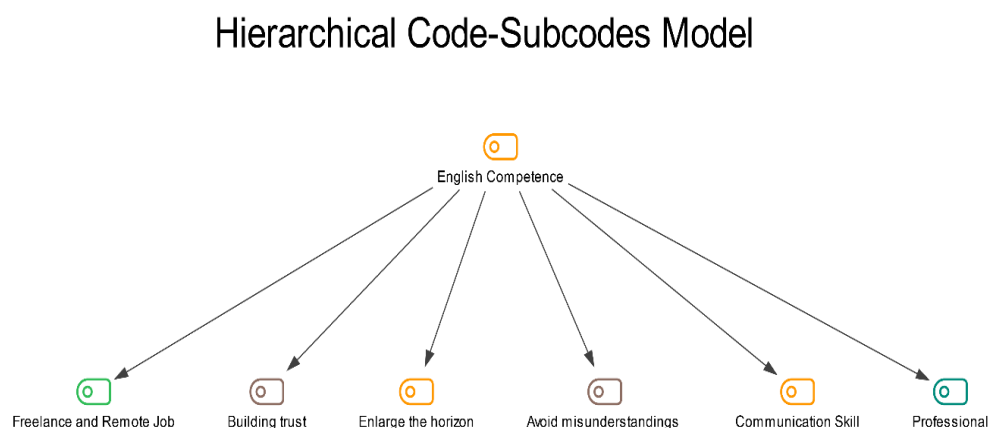


Figure 5. The result of code-Subcodes

4.5. The role of transformative thinking

Regarding transformative thinking, students perceived that by having it, they can make a decision, set good problem-solving skills, and be able to cope with the crisis in their lives. In addition, transformative thinking can enhance their competence in enhancing job readiness. This thinking emphasizes critical and creative thinking, which are essential skills that allow students to adapt to rapidly changing job requirements and environments. The following quotations show students' perceptions about the role of transformative thinking and its classification, which is depicted in Figure 6.

“... embracing transformative thinking, I will be able to turn a challenging situation into a learning opportunity and strengthen my relationship with the client.” (Student 50-23 years old)

“I was working on a group project where we were stuck using a traditional approach back in high school. Realizing it wasn’t working, I suggested we rethink our strategy and try new tools. This shift in thinking helped us find a more effective solution. I learned that challenging assumptions and being flexible can lead to better results.” (Student 45-21year old)

“This transformative thinking helped me respond effectively, and I learned the importance of questioning assumptions and staying open to new perspectives, especially when adapting to change.” (Student 22-24year old)

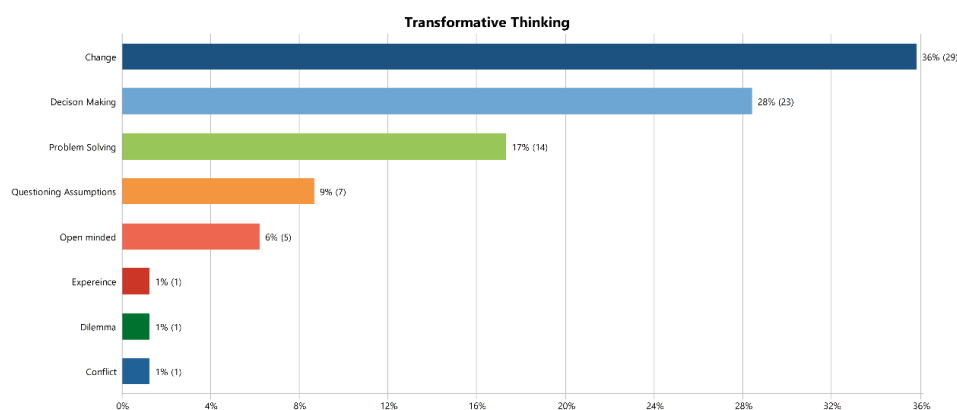


Figure 6. Transformative Thinking-themes

4.6. The role of creative thinking

Students also acknowledge that creativity becomes a critical quality, emphasizing the necessity of coming up with fresh concepts. By using creative thinking, they can be more competitive. The following quotations show students’ perceptions about creative thinking. Furthermore, their perception of the role of *creative thinking* in the gig economy is classified and depicted in Figure 7.

“Creativity plays a big role in how I will handle professional challenges. Whether it’s finding new ways to approach tasks or adapting to unexpected changes”. (Student 13-23year old)

“I try to think creatively to solve problems. When I hit a block, I usually step back, analyze things from a different angle, or seek input from others. This kind of innovative thinking helps me stay effective and adaptable in any professional setting.” (Student 17-22year old)

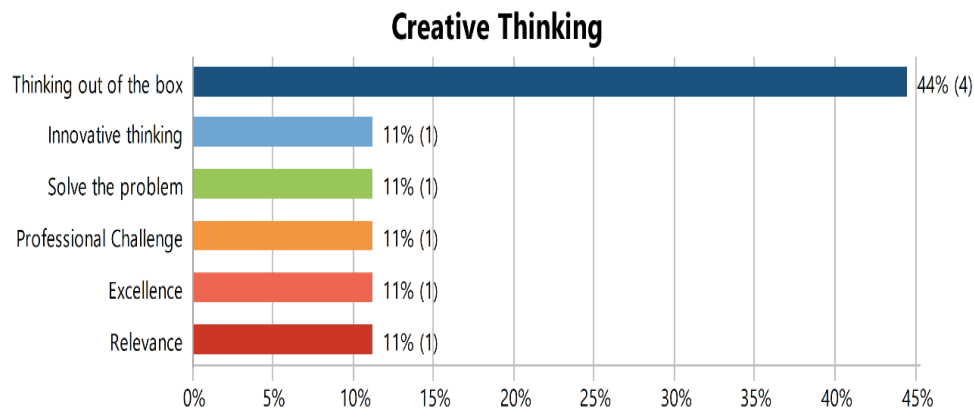


Figure 7. Creative thinking-themes

4.7. The Gig Economy Era Perceived by Students: The need of adaptability and collaboration

Flexibility is recognized by the students as an important aspect in supporting success in an internationally interconnected workplace. In today's dynamic and globally interconnected work environment, they recognized the need to swiftly adapt to changing tasks, responsibilities, and technological advancements. Students recognized the need for adaptability, focusing on the ability to quickly adjust to varying projects, roles, and technologies. Flexibility in navigating different work settings and swiftly learning new systems is seen as essential.

Collaboration also plays a central role, with strong teamwork, digital communication, and remote collaboration skills highlighted as key competencies, especially when working with diverse teams and clients. To navigate this landscape, job readiness assessment tools are valued for helping individuals identify strengths and areas for growth, assess adaptability and collaboration skills, and demonstrate professional preparedness to employers. Students are also increasingly aware of the evolving nature of work, characterized by gig-based, short-term, and digital tasks that demand continuous learning and development. Moreover, the responses provided in both English and Indonesian reflect an awareness of cultural and linguistic diversity, underlining the importance of cross-cultural communication and the challenges of operating in a global workforce. The following quotations show students' perceptions about the gig economy era. Their perception toward it then is classified into some general themes which are depicted in Figure 8.

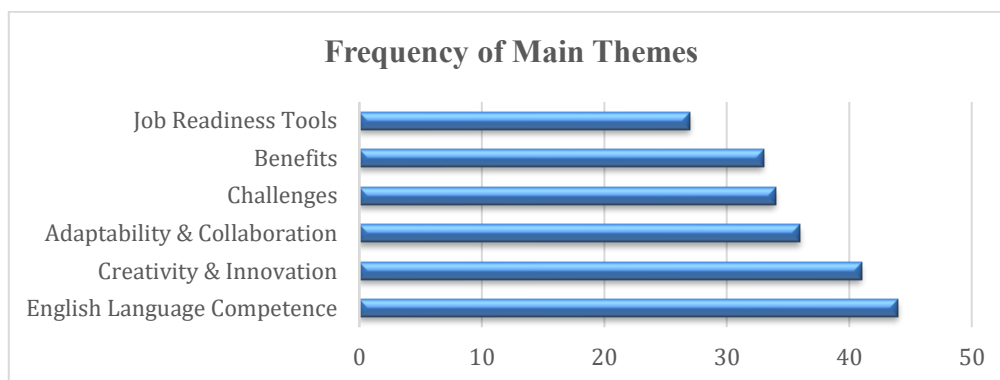


Figure 8. General theme appears across all students' responses

Based on the students' responses, there are six main issues in the gig economy that must be prepared. The most frequently general themes are served in Figure 8. With a total near 44, English Language Competence is the most often stated. With around 41 references, creativity & innovation comes next. Next, with about 37 citations, is adaptability & collaboration. With frequencies of around 35 and 34, respectively, challenges and benefits are represented nearly equally. With about 28 mentions, Job Readiness has the lowest frequency. According to this distribution, the qualities that are most valued in this study are English language proficiency, creativity and innovation, and adaptability and collaboration. On the other hand, Job Readiness is the lowest. Furthermore, some specific themes are classified and are depicted in Figure 9.

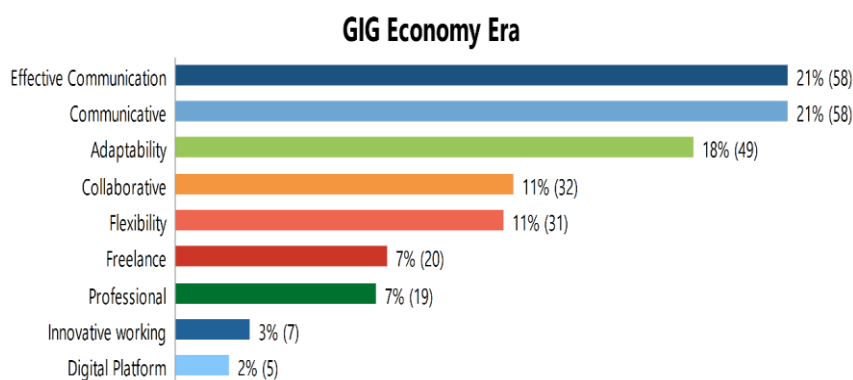


Figure 9. Most frequently appearing specific themes discussed by the students

Students stress the value of flexibility and teamwork in managing the ever-changing gig economy. They understand that adaptability and interpersonal skills are critical for handling unforeseen obstacles and ongoing change. Because they aid in the identification and development of these soft skills, tools such as Job Readiness Assessments are highly regarded for their ability to improve professional development and job matching. Additionally, proficiency in the English language, particularly in communication, clarity, and

grammar, is seen as essential as it leads to more chances, especially when working remotely or as a freelancer with customers across the world.

4.8. The relation among English Competence, Transformative-Creative Thinking, and Job Readiness in the Gig Economy

Figures 10 and 11 present the findings of the thematic analysis of students' understanding of the value of English proficiency, transformative thinking, creative thinking, and job readiness in addressing challenges in the gig economy era. Every node stands for the primary ideas that the students felt were important. The connecting lines show how closely these ideas are related to one another based on how often and strongly these ideas were acknowledged in the data that was gathered. The intensity of the data is reflected in the node size and line thickness; larger and thicker nodes show that students are more likely to discuss and relate the notion in relation to being prepared for the flexible and digital work world.

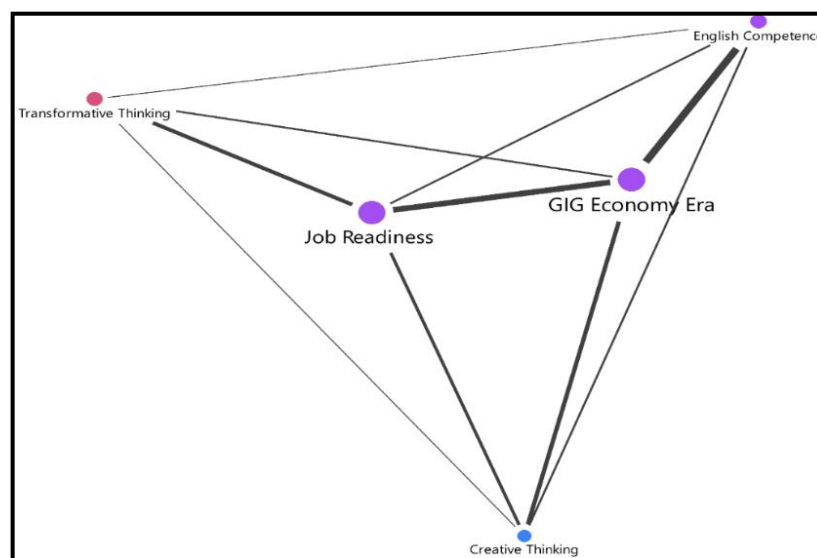


Figure 8. The general relation among English, Transformative-Creative Thinking, and Job Readiness

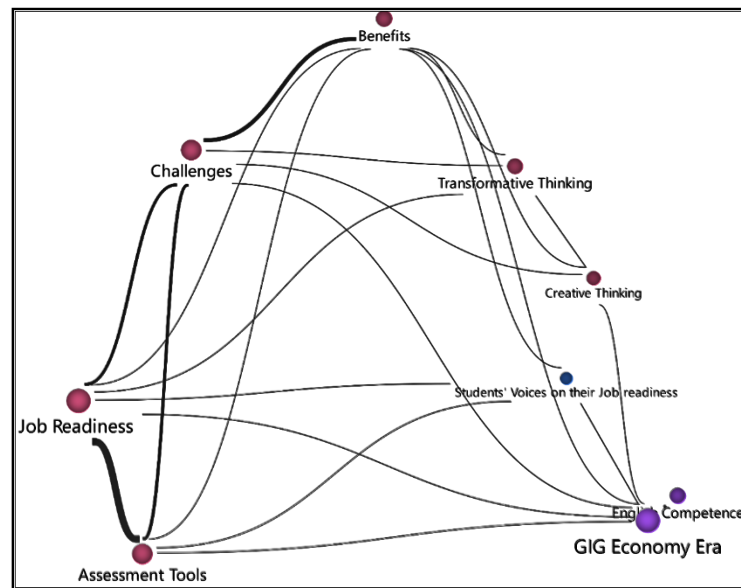


Figure 9. The more complex relation among English, Transformative-Creative Thinking, and Job Readiness

According to the illustration of Figure 11, Job readiness is the primary focus of students, with the strongest correlations to the gig economy era, transformative thinking, and creative thinking. This indicates that the importance of students' work readiness is not limited to technical proficiency. They are also influenced by their ability to communicate in English, their ability to be creative, and their ability to adapt to changes over time. This visualization serves as an example of how students consider the elements as crucial building blocks for a career in the constantly evolving digital economy.

4.9. Students' Job readiness in the Gig economy based on their socioeconomic status

Students generally show good awareness of what it takes to be job-ready in the gig economy era, but there are varying levels of preparedness. Their responses indicate a realistic understanding of both the opportunities and challenges they might face, particularly regarding how their English language skills might impact their success in this environment. Students from different SES categories demonstrated different responses in lengths, yet middle SES students showed the most variation. Response length by socioeconomic status is presented in a boxplot (Figure 12) showing the relationship between socioeconomic status (SES) and the average length of their written responses to questions about the gig economy era. While students in the "Medium" SES group have the widest range of response lengths, including some very long answers, on the contrary, the "Low" and "Very Low" students have more consistent which are generally shorter responses. Surprisingly, the "High" SES group has the fewest students, so its box is less representative, but their responses are generally shorter and less variable.

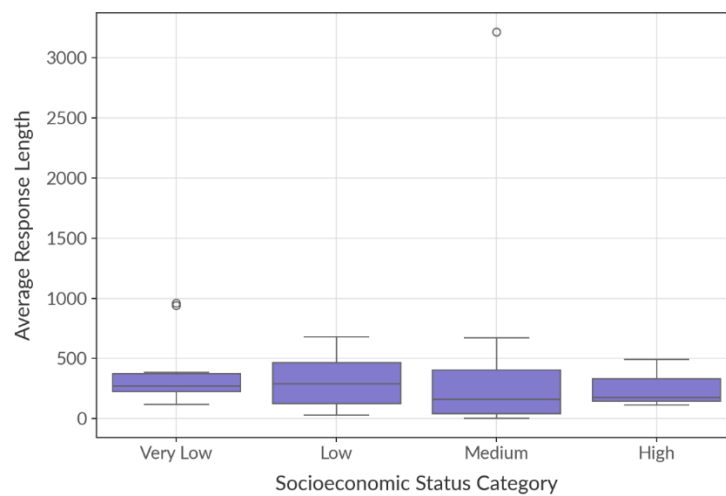


Figure 10. Response length based on socioeconomic

Discussion

In this study, English competence was considered to support students to get freelance, remote jobs, and enable them to build trust. With English, they can enlarge their horizon and avoid misunderstanding. Building their communication skill can support their professionalism in the gig economy which has many advantages, including flexibility, a variety of revenue streams, and project autonomy. This finding is in line with the research result shared by Warschauer (2000) that by mastering English literacy and communications skills, students can adapt and adjust to the demands of the transformational era, including globalization, economic, and employment trends. However, students also realize that when they do not have sufficient transformative and creative thinking, the gig economy will only give them significant drawbacks, such as unstable income and a lack of social protection. In order to address these problems and enhance job readiness resources, students believe that more flexible training programs, enhanced talent assessments, ongoing skill development, and improved laws are needed to ensure social and economic stability.

It is worth noting that flexible work and the gig economy are closely related. Other crucial issues that are recognized by the students are the importance of transformative thinking, creative thinking, and English competence. For career readiness, they are essential. English competence is now required for efficient communication, teamwork, and negotiation in a variety of job contexts rather than just being a benefit. Communicative skills in English are becoming more and more necessary in professional contexts, especially in fields affected by digitization and globalization. This result is consistent with Yosintha & Arochman's (2020) research, which found that businesses are looking for applicants who can communicate in English, express themselves, and work with international teams. Strong English competence increases employability, which is directly related to work competency and overall career competitiveness.

The most important result was that students perceived English competence, transformative and creative thinking are interrelated which can support job readiness. This finding supports Cogo & Yanaprasart's (2018) research that English competence is an essential element in an increasingly globalized world of work that automatically prioritizes

cross-cultural communication and international collaboration. Having transformative and creative thinking, students believe that they will experience profound changes in the way they think and act, supported by reflective and critical thinking. The belief is in line with the research done by Liu & Ball (2019), Singh & Jaykumar (2019), and Satpathy et al., (2020) that transformative and creative ways of thinking can give students the opportunity to broaden their horizons, including the mastery of English needed for adaptation and innovation in their future work environment.

Consistent with the literature, this research found that students strongly believe that work readiness must include technical abilities and soft skills, including the competence to communicate in English effectively and adaptively, and to make the right decisions. The synergy between the three concepts can enhance career opportunities and the ability to compete in the global job market. In line with the finding, Cottafava et al., (2019) stated that when transformative thinking is connected with creativity, it can stimulate students to adapt to the rapid changes in the workplace, develop innovative solutions, and increase productivity. English, transformative thinking, and creativity can be assumed as the key to improving students' performance and readiness in the modern world of work. Therefore, in today's globalized society, transformational thinking, creative thinking, and English competence can be connected to support work preparedness in the gig economy era which is becoming more and more important. Roshid & Kankaanranta (2025) suggested that transformative thinking should be well understood as it encompasses critical thinking and adaptability which are essential for negotiating the changing nature of modern work. Furthermore, Akyıldız & Çelik, (2020) also highlighted that English is largely acknowledged as a fundamental skill for gaining access to greater career prospects, and creativity supports students' thinking out of the box.

Based on the students' perspective, this research demonstrates that creativity is a critical element of work preparation as it surpasses conventional ways of thinking and empowers students to come up with original solutions in unclear circumstances. In line with the students' acknowledgment, Leasa et al., (2023) and Rahayu & Indriyanti (2023) found that project-based learning can provide an atmosphere where students come up with innovative ideas and help them develop their creative thinking. In the gig economy, students who improve their creative thinking will automatically improve their problem-solving and adaptability skills. This shows the connection between creativity and practical job skills. Fostering creativity is essential for preparing students for future work scenarios, including stimulating transformative thinking, which are increasingly important in various disciplines.

A richer and more complex set of findings emerges from additional research linking writing proficiency with work preparedness, in contrast to the first descriptive findings based on students' general replies in the open-ended survey. The findings show an intriguing correlation between students' socioeconomic background and their preparedness for the workforce. This study demonstrates that students with greater subsidies or allowances from their parents do not always exhibit superior job preparedness, despite the widespread belief that they have much better access to educational resources and facilities (Mahoney et al., 2021; Kisker et al., 2023). As seen by the variety of ideas, narrative structure, and material relevance, students with moderate permissions have higher writing talents. These writing skills indicate critical thinking and communication

qualities that are essential in the job. This current research finding differs from the existing research reported by Agussalim et al. (2024), which states that economic status significantly contributes to the students' work success. Other studies that contradict this finding are from Sengonul (2022) who claimed that the level of socioeconomic status, including parental involvement, can greatly influence the students' academic achievement and King & Trinidad (2021) who reported that students from higher social backgrounds have a better growth mindset and have higher achievement.

Furthermore, this study also shows that students who receive smaller allowances typically exhibit less idea growth, which might be related to a lack of access to additional learning materials or intellectual stimulation. This finding is in line with Williams et al., (2025) statements that students from low socio-economic backgrounds find cultural mismatch in the workplaces, and find it difficult to adapt to the dominant norms. It's then interesting to note that, even if they have more potential, students with high allowances are frequently less prepared for the workforce. This might be because they feel more at ease or aren't under as much pressure to achieve, which would otherwise promote cognitive maturity. Instead, depending just on economic situations, this finding emphasizes the significance of motivational variables in determining work preparedness. To close this gap and guarantee that all students, regardless of socioeconomic background, have equal opportunity to be ready for the profession, they also stress the necessity of enhancing contextual and reflective writing abilities in schools. This postulate is in accordance with the studies reported by Sholikah (2021) that there is no significant correlation between socioeconomic status and students' career readiness.

This study supports research done by Haslam et al., (2019) that socioeconomic background is not the only factor influencing writing ability and job preparedness; motivation, engagement, and reflective thinking are all important. However, this finding is different from research done in neuroscience by Noble et al., (2007), and in social settings done by Suna et al., (2020). They claimed that greater socioeconomic is an important predictor of neurocognitive performance and in other aspects. This research adds Nuance by demonstrating that, under some motivating and contextual circumstances, students from middle socioeconomic backgrounds may do better than their classmates from low and high socioeconomic backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

English competency is strongly related to self-confidence, professional communication effectiveness, and the ability to build global connections. Meanwhile, transformative and creative thinking encourages students to think critically, adapt to change, design creative solutions and thinking outside the box. All three aspects are important foundations in navigating the world. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening curricula that integrate English, transformative-creative thinking, and understanding of the modern world of work in supporting holistic and contextual work readiness. This research contributes to the development of educational strategies that are more adaptive to the needs of the future workforce. The role of English competence,

transformative thinking, and creativity significantly influences job readiness in the gig economy. As the nature of work continues to evolve, equipping students with these competencies is crucial for meeting employer expectations and ensuring personal resilience and adaptability in a dynamic job landscape. Developing work preparedness requires motivation, engagement, and reflective thinking because these qualities enable students to adapt, learn, and perform well regardless of their financial situation.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no potential conflict of interest.

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