

Gender and Type of Freelancer: AI Anxiety, AI Self-efficacy, and AI Usage Among Freelancers

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Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is progressing day by day and is causing wonders in every field that it revolutionizes. Like most of the other professions, freelancing is also being revolutionized by AI. As Pakistani freelancers are contributing to a significant amount of the countries' economy through their field, it is crucial to investigate about the psychological perspective of freelancers regarding AI. This study explored differences among gender and types of freelancers on AI anxiety, AI self-efficacy, and AI usage among freelancers using independent sample *t*-tests. The sample consisted of 300 freelancers from Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Significant gender differences were found on AI anxiety and AI self-efficacy, while full-time and part-time freelancers differed across all variables. The findings highlight the need for training programs to reduce AI anxiety and enhance freelancers' adaptability to advancing AI.



Introduction

Artificial intelligence is advancing rapidly and creating remarkable changes in every field it transforms. As AI is increasing productivity, providing growth and new opportunities to industries and individuals, it is also changing the dimensions of workforces requiring employees to reevaluate the demand of their skills. Statistics from a recent report show a 21% drop in freelancing job posts since a new tool of AI was introduced (Rostron, 2024). As freelancers are an asset to Pakistan, research is required to assess the psychological perspective of freelancers regarding AI like AI anxiety and AI self-efficacy. AI anxiety means the fear of adopting AI while AI self-efficacy means the belief in one's own capability to adopt AI.

Method

Objectives

1. To study the relationship of demographic factors (gender and type of freelancer) with AI anxiety, AI self-efficacy, intention to use AI and current usage of AI among freelancers.

Hypothesis

1. Male freelancers will rate less on AI anxiety and more on AI self-efficacy, intention to use AI, and current usage of AI as compared to female freelancers.
2. Full-time freelancers will rate more on AI anxiety and less on AI self-efficacy, intention to use AI and current usage of AI as compared to part-time freelancers.

Sample

A sample of 300 freelancers was collected from training institutes, incubation centers, and coworking spaces in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. This data was collected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques.

Inclusion Criteria

- Active freelancers who had completed at least one project on freelancing platforms
- Freelancers who had a minimum of one month of freelancing experience.

Rigorous criteria ensured only dedicated freelancers were included.

Exclusion Criteria

- Freelancers with no knowledge of AI,
- Freelancers who were currently working on their first project, or in their first month of freelancing were excluded from the study.

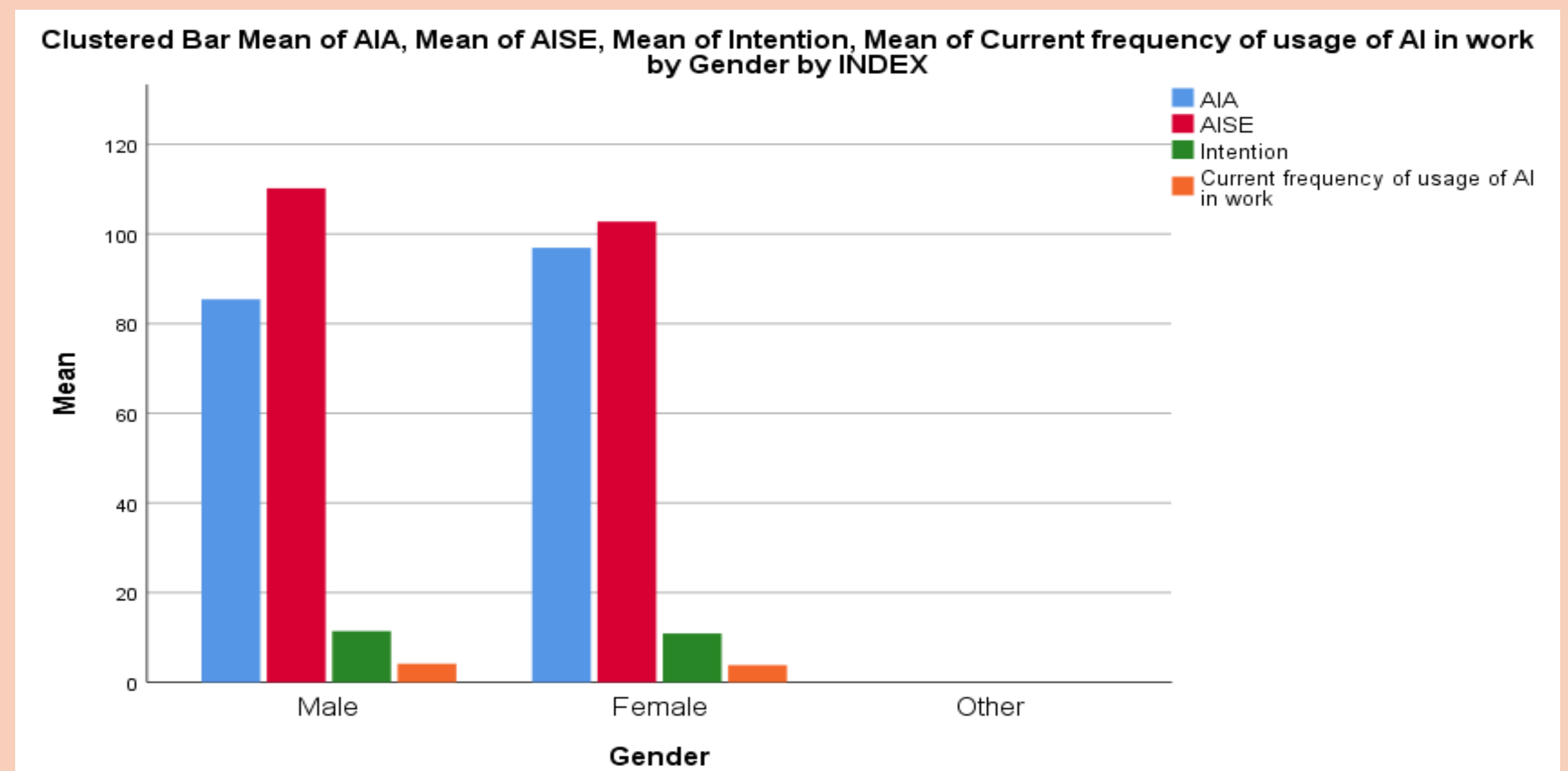
Instruments

AI anxiety was assessed using AI Anxiety Scale (Wang & Wang, 2022) while AI self-efficacy was assessed by AI Self-efficacy Scale (Wang & Chuang, 2023). AI usage was assessed by two dimensions current usage of AI and intention to use AI. These two dimensions were assessed by adding 4 items in the demographic sheet.

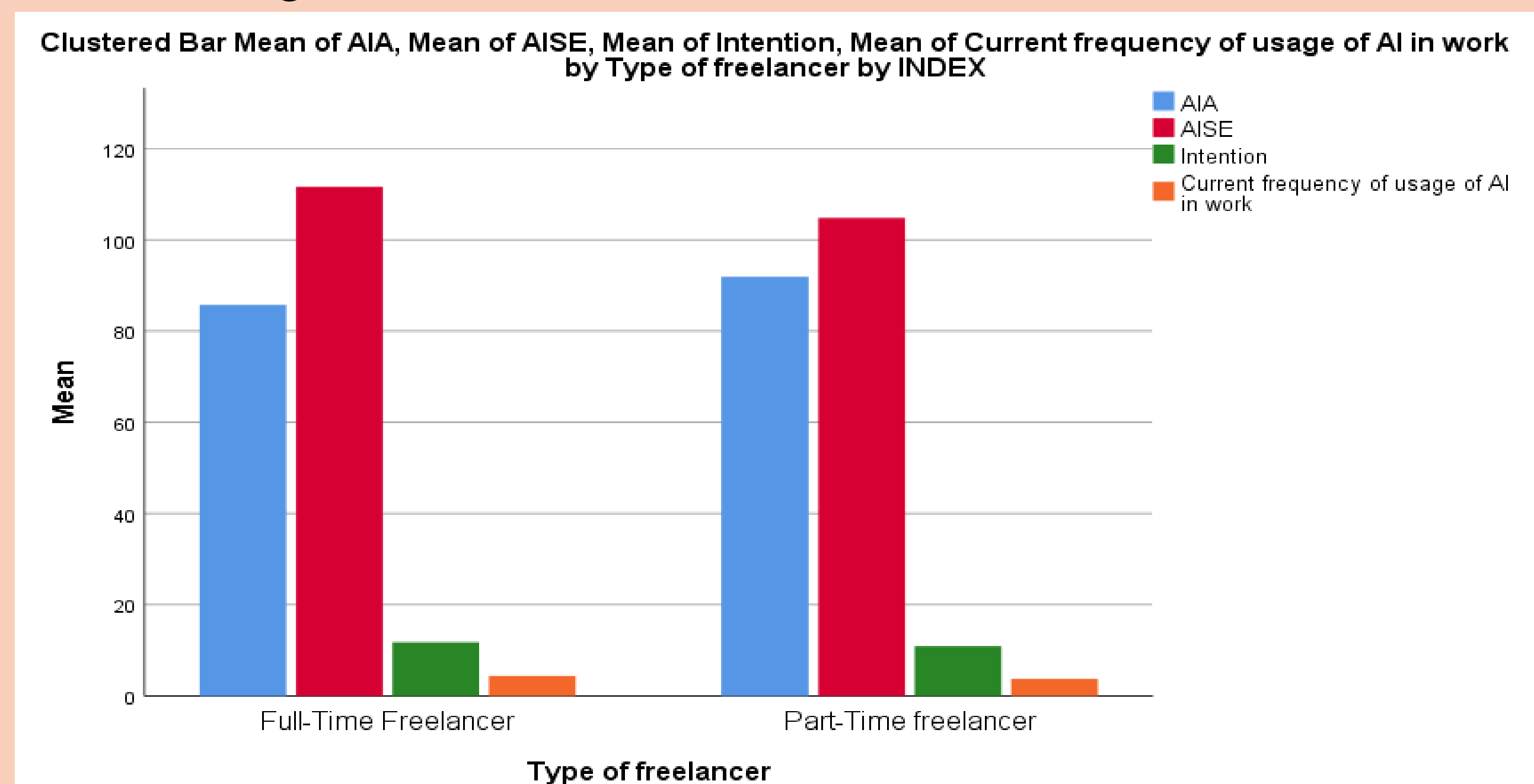
Procedure

The researcher explained the study to the participants, obtained informed consent, addressed participant questions, and guided them to complete a 10-minute questionnaire while ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation.

Results



Significant mean differences were observed on AI anxiety, AI self-efficacy, among male and female freelancers. While non-significant mean differences were observed on intention and current usage of AI.



Significant mean differences were observed on AI anxiety, AI self-efficacy, intention and current usage of AI among full-time and part time freelancers.

Discussion

1. Male freelancers reported lower AI anxiety and higher AI self-efficacy compared to female freelancers, with significant mean differences supporting this hypothesis. These findings align with prior studies indicating that males are more positive about AI, while females perceive it as a greater threat and are less likely to adopt or use it in the workplace (Grassini & Ree, 2023; Parsakia, 2023). Also, non-significant differences were found on intention and current usage of AI.
2. Full-time freelancers reported lower AI anxiety but higher AI self-efficacy, intention to use AI, and current AI usage than part-timers, with significant mean differences supporting this hypothesis. These findings align with prior research, suggesting full-timers are more confident and reliant on AI for skill development, productivity, and competitiveness in their primary careers (Segal, 2024).

Conclusion

The study examined differences among gender and type of freelancers on AI anxiety, AI self-efficacy, and AI usage among 300 freelancers from Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Significant mean differences were found for AI anxiety and self-efficacy across both demographics.

Limitations and Suggestions

1. Data collection was limited to Rawalpindi and Islamabad, reducing generalizability; future research should include freelancers from across Pakistan.
2. Freelancers affiliated to an institute were mostly reached. So, online data collection is recommended to reach freelancers working exclusively from home.

Implication

Identifying these study variables can guide authorities in developing training programs to reduce AI anxiety and enhance freelancers' skills for adapting to advancing AI.