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Learners' Perceptions of Web Applications Use in Learning EFL during a Digital Transition Stage of the Pandemic

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Abstract:

The COVID-19 virus outbreak has curtailed instruction in various global universities. It obliged higher educational institutions to evaluate their ability to cope with such an unexpected dilemma. Throughout the virus widespread in Palestine, virtual education has become the primary teaching mode. After two semesters of virtual teaching, the researcher distributed an online poll and conducted virtual semi-structured interviews with students majoring in English. The study included 395 undergraduates from various local universities. The survey results showed that English majors held a positive attitude towards using online education platforms. Males outnumbered females by a statistically significant margin. The Students' level was statistically significant in favor of new students. There were no discernible differences between students based on place of living. The Pearson correlation value was extremely high, indicating a positive relationship between students' perceptions and motivating factors. Students frequently reported obstacles like poor internet connectivity, time, knowledge of using educational web platforms, boredom, familiarity with the applications, distraction, electricity cut, and students' comprehension of the material and technical expertise. Students postulated various solutions to existing challenges, including increasing internet speeds, delivering needed training sessions, and allotting students enough time to access the network.

Keywords: English majors; virtual education; COVID-19; perceptions; local universities.

ادراك المتعلمين لاستخدام تطبيقات الشبكة العنكبوتية في تعلم اللغة الإنجليزية كلفة أجنبية خلال التحول الى التعلم الالكتروني اثناء الجائحة

المخلص:

أدى تفشي فيروس كوفيد-19 إلى تقليص التدريس في العديد من الجامعات العالمية. لقد ألزم مؤسسات التعليم العالي بتقييم قدرتها على التعامل مع مثل هذه المعضلة الغير المتوقعة. أصبح التعليم الافتراضي الاسلوب الاساسي للتدريس طوال انتشار الفيروس في فلسطين. وزع الباحث استبانة بحثية عبر الإنترنت وأجرى مقابلات افتراضية شبه منظمة مع الطلبة من تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية بعد فصلين دراسيين من التدريس الافتراضي. شملت الدراسة 395 طالباً جامعياً من مختلف الجامعات المحلية. أظهرت نتائج الدراسة توجهات ايجابية لدى طلبة تخصص اللغة الانجليزية تجاه استخدام منصات التعليم عبر الإنترنت. فاق عدد الذكور عدد الإناث بهامش ذي دلالة إحصائية. كان مستوى الطلبة ذو دلالة إحصائية لصالح الطلبة الجدد. لا توجد فروق ملحوظة بين الطلبة على أساس مكان الإقامة. كانت قيمة ارتباط بيرسون عالية للغاية، مما يشير إلى وجود علاقة إيجابية بين تصورات الطلاب والعوامل المحفزة. أشار الطلبة في كثير من الأحيان عن عقبات تواجههم في عملية التعلم ومنها ضعف الاتصال بالإنترنت، والوقت، ومعرفة استخدام منصات الويب التعليمية، والملل، والإلمام بالتطبيقات التعليمية، والمشتتات، والانقطاع في التيار الكهربائي، واستيعاب الطلبة للمواد التعليمية وافتقار الخبرة الفنية. قدم الطلبة حلولاً مختلفة للتحديات الحالية، بما في ذلك زيادة سرعات الإنترنت، وتقديم الدورات التدريبية اللازمة، وتخصيص وقت كافٍ للوصول إلى شبكة الانترنت.

كلمات مفتاحية: طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية، التعليم الافتراضي، كوفيد-19، الإدراك، الجامعات المحلية.

1- Introduction:

1.1. The background of the higher education network platform

Many educational institutions were forced to switch to digital learning due to the Covid19 pandemic. Palestinian universities were no exception. The study investigates students' perceptions of the use of web technology in EFL classroom instruction during a transitional stage of the pandemic. It is critical to think deeply about the use of digital learning platforms to empower colleges, universities, and local governments to fortify the benefits of digital learning platforms in case of future emergencies and forward sound and practical solutions to deal with the challenges that hinder students' academic achievement.

University teachers had to use various educational platforms to carry out many educational activities that assisted in getting learners involved in the learning process (Zheng, M., Bender, D. & Lyon, C. 2021; Bao, 2020). However, with the case of universities in Palestine, this type of experience was never implemented before. The current transitional situation with the spread of COVID-19 made it inevitable for teachers to use communication technology tools to manage teaching activities smoothly and effectively (Zhu, & Liu, 2020). Thus, the aim of using educational platform applications in teaching was to uplift students' academic performance and carry out educational programs that were not presented in the traditional mode of learning (Agarwal S, Kaushik JS. 2020; Khalil et al., 2020; Amir et al. 2020). With this type of shift in teaching and learning, there was an urgent need to empower instructors' knowledge in implementing learning situations using communication technology (Al-Taweel et al., 2021; Ali, 2019). The technical team at Palestinian universities worked hard in empowering both students and instructors with practical experiences and how they could use educational web platforms in the academic domain (Shraim, K. 2018; Affouneh, Salha, & Khlaif, 2021). Hence, tremendous efforts were accelerated to improve the learners' and instructors' abilities to start and contribute to using educational applications in the teaching and learning process. Edmodo, Moodle, Google Classroom, Google Meet, and ZOOM were among the web applications utilized by instructors to promote various learning activities (Fitria, 2019; Ghouname, 2020). Teachers and students were required to be over-trained in using these sites for teaching and downloading applications that help process courses online (Patricia, 2020). In addition, instructors and students had to create accounts on educational platforms and download applications on their devices that helped handle the academic progress (Cooperman, 2017; Ali, 2019). Instructors were required to design an interactive teaching environment that was rarely used in traditional classes (Ali, 2019; Chang, & Lin, 2019). This requirement was challenging for instructors to apply because they had no prior knowledge about but with the support of the technical staff at the universities, in each step of performing classes; it became enjoyable and motivating for both instructors and students in applying a modern way of teaching (Lassoued, Alhendawi, & Bashitialshaaer, 2020; Singh, Adhikary, Gupta, & Singh, 2010).

Due to the impact of the Corona Virus outbreak in almost all countries, the current world education situation is critical, which caused the closure of all academic institutions (Abidah. et al., 2020; Fitria, 2020; Alchamdani, 2020; Bao, 2020). There is an urgent need to proceed with the learning and teaching process, which can't be performed without using educational platform applications. These applications help students to move forward in achieving progress in the topics they are

learning at the academic institutions (Alchamdani et al., 2020; Chang & Lin, 2019). The motivation of students to continue their education has a significant impact on their educational output. Instructors believe that learners' quest for knowledge affects their educational efforts in building new experiences. Moreover, learners' motivation for learning plays a crucial role while acquiring knowledge because there is a shift from traditional classes to a modernized learning norm by utilizing educational platforms in knowledge acquisition (Mishra, L., Gupta, T., & Shree, A. 2020). Besides, students' motives may affect the learners' continued learning during the closure of academic institutions.

1.2. Theoretical framework

Many educational platforms, such as Google Apps and Google Docs, are freely available to instructors and learners. These platforms are effectively used for teaching and learning at the Palestinian National Universities. A large portion of the literature on this topic stated that effective applications can be used vigorously and creatively in beneficial learning and teaching activities (Jæger & Blaabæk, 2020; Ali, 2019; Ayu, 2020). Reasonably, learners and instructors must equip themselves with the necessary technical skills using these applications, which they found difficult at first. This fact maximizes their eagerness to use digital educational content (Handayani, & Aminatun, 2020; Affouneh, Salha, & Khlaif, 2021). Moreover, using academic platforms in learning activities, educators must think innovatively. Besides that, researchers have shown that students who used educational websites in the classroom recommended them over traditional pedagogies (Wahyudin, 2018; Affouneh, Salha, & Khlaif, 2021). The effective use of these applications may also help bridge the gap between formal and informal education ((Jæger & Blaabæk, 2020).

Online learning complements traditional learning methods. It is a modernized method that aims to share general educational objectives while empowering educated learners with skills and cognitive experience (Jin et al., 2021). Consequently, it meets the requirements of everyday life marked by using excessive technology in every sphere of life. However, the pedagogies and digital tools required to achieve this goal may change over time. Those recommended in the twentieth century partially or completely contradict those desired in the twenty-first. This concept is related to the personal efforts of some lecturers who run information network technologies to publish their learning activity plans on their websites or through websites that offer free publishing services (Ali, 2020; Chang & Lin, 2019). Visits to these sites increased dramatically because of the global pandemic's impact on the closure of academic institutions. The information on these websites is valuable because it supplements the information provided in university courses. Furthermore, instructors post course lectures and supplementary materials to the web, which adds to the comprehensiveness of the teaching environment (Ayu, 2020; Jæger & Blaabæk, 2020).

It is worth noting that using academic platforms in implementing learning situations benefits both learners and instructors because they can promote the abilities development of both learners and instructors (Ayu, 2020; Affouneh, Salha, & Khlaif, 2021). These are related to using online websites to provide course materials to students, such as whether there is a computer at home and showing materials on the web that students can access offline. Slow or unreliable Internet connections are another issue that is common in rural and small-town areas. Consequently, the

researcher's keen inquisitiveness in virtually utilizing web applications is reflected in learners' perspectives of using them to enforce learning output, which informs the focus of this study.

1.3. Web applications and smooth teaching

Using educational platforms to support university teaching and learning is one way to improve the abilities of both individuals and institutions. Universities recognize the value of using educational platform applications in the service of lecturing and learning at a phase when many professionals in the area of educational technologies are optimistic about the role they will play in the educational process. Academics instruct their classes using various apps to carry out learning activities and content, such as virtual pedagogical sites, online meeting tools, and social media apps (Vasiliadou, 2020; Zhang, Wang, Yang, & Wang, 2020; Fauzi et al., 2020). Instructors can use virtual teaching portals such as Google Classroom, Moodle, and Edmodo to share articles and audiovisual materials related to their core topics with the class. Online academic sites also enable students to flip in tasks and academics to evaluate educators' performance. Platforms for video streaming, such as Google Meet, Edmodo, and Moodle, help with online performance sessions and conversations. Presentations and a chat box are remarkable features of such apps. Many academic institutions also disseminate content courses through their websites (Chatterjee & Chakraborty, 2020; Peters et al., 2020; Beaunoyer, Dupéré, and Guitton 2020).

There are several merits for using digital educational tools to serve university education. They create a comfortable environment for learning, particularly for reclusive students who feel more at ease participating in discussion forums. Teaching over the Internet opens up new avenues for learning (Chatterjee & Chakraborty, 2020; Zhang, Wang, Yang, & Wang, 2020; Fauzi et al., 2020; Carroll & Conboy, 2020). There is no doubt that such applications provide an electronic learning environment, numerous sources of information, and a great deal of information so that students can develop innovative and problem-solving abilities when facing problems from classmates or tutors. Another compelling factor is the use of the web for teaching, connecting academic staff from all over the world, stimulating their ideas, opening up new learning perspectives, rational debate, and highlighting different cultures. Similarly, the proliferation of distance learning programs provides universities with competitive tools in foreign markets. In addition, they provide financial resources for higher education institutions to support the teaching process and provide academic staff with advanced technical skills (Chatterjee & Chakraborty, 2020; Zhang, Wang, Yang, & Wang, 2020; Fauzi et al., 2020; Carroll & Conboy, 2020).

2. Literature Review:

2.1. Educational web-based applications in running teaching and learning activities

Notably, the threat of a new species of (Covid-19) pandemic has emerged as the human race's greatest serious menace to national and international wellbeing (Arora et al., 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic impact is now propagating to the academic arena. Lecturing and the whole educational activities were terminated inside higher institutions switching to an urgent shift to digital learning (Alchamdani et al., 2020). It was the case with all universities and colleges in Palestine. All government agencies have put forward practical plans to ensure safe and productive education for the younger generation. The only option is to begin using all available web applications, which educators previously used, to promote educational technology and keep the learning environment

changing. There were many implemented investigations by researchers at this specific arena to pinpoint educators' and learners' handling of technological tools in education. Here, the researcher highlights the most relevant research investigations that can help improve the quality of research and turn them into reference resources for future studies.

Tira (2020) focused on the importance of using digital applications in running educational situations to cover the skill of writing from instructors' viewpoint. The study found that academic institutions supported the digital use of educational tools in the educational process. As well, 83.5 of the academic instructors are with the web tools implementation in conducting learning situations. The study also showed that 40% of educators use Google Classroom, while other instructors use other applications such as Moodle and Zoom. The researcher benefited from the research so far the use of digital educational tools is concerned. However, the present study provided recommendations for running electronic classes with the help of web tools which Tira did not cover in her investigation.

During the regional and global quarantine imposed by the COVID-19 virus outbreak, Raheem and Khan (2020) investigated how e-learning is a reliable and practical, interactive, and accessible platform for improving educators' English language competencies, along with many other preliminary core subjects on various facets of skills and knowledge. Basilaia and Kvavadze (2020) implemented an empirical project in Georgia to facilitate the adoption of online learning activities during the COVID-19 outbreak. The inclusion of Google Meet to selected digital education and investigative learners has resulted in a rapid transition to the network communication paradigm. The process of education was proficient, and the expertise gained seemed promising. When educators fail to conduct on-site guided exercises and participants attend interactive courses, a viable solution is to convert academic achievements from a traditional to a digital model.

Elbatayna (2010) investigated the effectiveness of digital educational platforms to teach writing skills to English students. The study aimed at all English students at local universities. The study sample consisted of 62 students enrolled in Writing Course 1 during the first semester of the 2006-2007 academic year. Students were divided into two groups: the control group, which included 33 students, and the experimental group, which included 29 students. The experimental group's performance was tracked and evaluated using a website, whereas the control group submitted their assignments in the traditional manner (paper and pen). The findings revealed a disparity among the control and experimental groups in the post-test, with the experimental group outperforming the control group. Consequently, the researcher asserted the use of digital platforms to teach writing and other language skills.

Aljraiwi (2017) investigated a web-based environment for promoting teaching and learning in classrooms. According to the survey, female students were more enthusiastic about participating in the main application areas. What is more, these applications enabled them to obtain appropriate educational assistance. It also assisted teachers and students in handling and directing educational activities both inside and outside the school environment. The present study differs from Aljraiwi's study as the study deals with the challenges that learners face in using web educational platforms in an environment that is quite typical and hard in Palestine especially when the article highlights the challenges related to the Internet and electricity failures.

Vate-U-Lan (2020) investigated the psychological impact of a correlation analysis between attitudes toward e-learning on social media platforms and students' life satisfaction with their e-learning

experience. It was based on an online questionnaire with 607 correct answers and e-learning experiences from 896 survey participants. According to the survey results, students who had e-learning experience on social networking sites scored higher on the Life Satisfaction Scale. Both male and female students have a positive attitude towards e-learning. According to the research findings, there was a significant positive relationship between females' and males' perceptions of e-learning and life satisfaction. The present study differs from Vate-U-Lan's study since it focuses on the performance of learners using educational platforms.

2.2. Web educational pedagogies

The virus outbreak compelled many educational institutions to abruptly change their learning process paradigms and incorporate new technology tools. Most of the time, these academic institutions did not have ample time to consider how new pedagogies and supportive digital platforms should be implemented and aligned into their conventional layouts (Bojovic et al., 2020). Globally, academic institutions were forced to apply digital tools in handling the teaching process. The MOODLE, Edmodo, Google Classroom, and Kahoot were the major tools that many educational institutions applied in the process of handling learning situations. It is a marked shift from the traditional way of handling academic setups to an advanced stage where technological learning platforms were at the core of the whole process (Carroll & Conboy, 2020). Undoubtedly, educational institutions and students were unprepared for the complete transformation of the newly adopted digital educational process (Bojovic et al., 2020). Many studies have found that traditional learning methods, rather than digital tools, help students learn better in educational settings (Patricia, 2020). Concerning the pedagogies which were employed in the traditional classroom setting, students firmly believed that they were more effective in turning knowledge into a life-practical experience. Learners lost access to authentic learning environments in educational colleges and universities or the assistance they received from their classmates in lecture halls and labs (Patricia, 2020). Still, learners felt that learning via technological tools was the only way with the help of which they could proceed in the process of education during the pandemic (Mishra et al., 2020). The shift in how academic institutions handled the educational process compelled them to equip their faculty with innovative pedagogies to continue the learning process for students in a viable manner (Zhu & Liu, 2020).

Studies revealed that just before the COVID-19 epidemic, there was a technological divide between urban residents and remote areas, and learners in small towns frequently lacked acceptable direct information connections and interactive technical means (Lembani et al., 2020). Poor people and rural residents, according to observations, frequently lack access to advanced networking technologies. Persistent connectivity to virtual platforms is a prerequisite for virtual classrooms. Students who have limited access to virtual technologies and those who are less able to advance in these technologies have difficulty adapting to virtual classrooms (Grishchenko, 2020). Many studies claimed that the technology gap existed before the health crisis, but the pandemic has exacerbated it. Similarly, some students live in cramped dormitories and find it hard to join digital courses at home (Patricia, 2020).

The studies discussed above emphasize the relevance of incorporating online education applications into the teaching process. Conversations with students revealed that consolidating online applications in teaching and learning modern languages during the pandemic was an

overarching goal for students. However, interactions with students online and observations of their lectures revealed little evidence of involving educational platforms in practice. This situation has prompted a search investigation to look into cases of students who have implemented and experienced e-learning, identifying challenges and revealing the inner motivations for using e-learning.

3. Methods and materials:

3.1. Research questions and hypotheses

The study addresses the following four research questions and five research hypotheses that underpinned the researcher's inquiry:

- 1. What perspectives do students hold for using educational platform applications to learn language skills during the online transitional of the learning phase?*
- 2. What perspectives do students hold of their motivations for using classroom platform applications?*
- 3. What challenges do students face when using network educational applications in their learning?*
- 4- What proposed solutions do students recommend when using the network educational application?*

The researcher conducted a study on the research questions in academic institutions affiliated with the Modern Languages Program.

3.2. Research Hypotheses

- 1. There are no significant differences in students' perspectives toward using educational platform applications during e-learning in a transition stage due to gender variables.*
- 2. There are no significant differences in students' perspectives toward using educational platform applications during e-learning in a transition stage due to the place of the living variable.*
- 3. There are no significant differences in students' perspectives toward using educational platform applications during e-learning in a transition stage due to students' level variables.*
- 4. There are no significant differences in students' perspectives toward using educational platform applications during e-learning in a transition stage due to the GPA variable.*
- 5. There are no discernible differences in students' attitudes toward and motivations using educational platform applications during the transition stage of e-learning.*

These questions and hypotheses provide a foundation for understanding students' perspectives, motivations, hurdles, and proposed solutions.

3.3. Research methodology

The researcher designed one questionnaire and collected 395 responses, closed-ended questions, and voluntary open-ended questions. He used the Likert five-point scale to clarify the responses to the Likert survey. The questionnaire items were designed to determine students' perspectives and beliefs about technological applications during web-based learning during a transition stage due to gender, place of residence, level, and GPA variables. Apart from open-ended voluntary questions, all Five-point scale items had the following responses: "strongly disagree," "agree," "neutral," "disagree," and "strongly agree."

The researcher developed the survey and administered it following the suggestions from colleagues in the department. Experts examined the questionnaire and provided valuable recommendations

which were taken into consideration in developing it. The researcher designed the questionnaire in English because the main focus is on English majors. The survey was divided into three sections: (1) participant information (gender, GPA, level, and place of residence); (2) survey domains; and (3) survey interview questions. Section two includes the following elements: points to assess students' perspectives, participants' beliefs concerning their motivations for using educational platform applications, and open-ended questions. To analyze the data quantitatively, the researcher used SPSS Version 21. The researcher used descriptive statistics, t-test, and M analyses to present participants' characteristics (gender, GPA, level, and place of residence), their perspectives, and motivations for using educational platform applications. The interview consisted of four open-ended questions allowing participants to explain their views. The researcher used the NVivo program to analyze qualitatively the data obtained from the interview.

Computed data indicated that 395 participants responded to the distributed questionnaires and completed them fully. The response rate was 98.75% as the researcher distributed 400 questionnaires and collected responses from 395 students. To provide answers to the questions of the study, the researchers used (SPSS) to analyze participants' responses. The mean, frequency, standard deviation, t-test, and one-way analysis of variance of independent samples are used to find descriptive statistical analysis.

The participants in this study were 220 male and 175 female college students (N=395), which constituted the object of this study. The researchers used a stratified random sampling technique. Concerning the choice of the sample, the researcher made a list of the students enrolled in the local universities. The total study population was 1,200 students, of which 400 students were selected using stratified random sampling. The researcher used multiples of the number 3 to choose the study sample from the study population.

The figures below show the sample distribution of the study variables.

Table 1. The sample and population

Variable	Level	Frequency
Gender	Male	220
	Female	175
Total		395
Place of living	City	65
	Town	80
	Village	200
	Camp	50
Total		395
Level	Freshman	125
	Sophomore	79
	Junior	130
	Senior	61
Total		395
GPA	60-69	36
	70-79	194
	80-89	150

	90 and above	15
Total		395

Context

Participants in this study are university English majors at various stages of their program. Respondents voluntarily completed an online questionnaire.

4. Results:

In the following section, the researcher will present the findings for each research question and hypothesis. The survey data was analyzed concerning the study questions, yielding the following findings:

4.1. Students' perceptions of web applications

During the transitional period of this health crisis, students were polled to determine their true feelings about the educational web application. Table 2 displays the results.

Table 2. Results of a survey of students' attitudes toward web-based applications during the pandemic's transition stage.

	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Level of Students' Responses
1	Using educational platform applications in learning empowers students' knowledge retention.	3.81	0.62	Positive
2	Using educational platform applications in learning helps students gain access to content materials.	3.94	0.70	Positive
3	The process of online learning courses while away from COVID has made me feel relaxed and relieved.	4.00	0.70	Positive
4	Using educational platform applications in learning helps me store and recall data.	3.91	0.66	Positive
5	I use online tools, including Google applications, to access documents and files.	3.79	0.79	Positive
6	I use coordination apps like Edmodo and Zoom to get relevant information about my assignments and class schedules.	3.84	0.60	Positive
7	Using web applications facilitates communication with English profs and peers.	3.17	0.72	Positive
8	In comparison to the face-to-face method, I prefer using ICT for learning.	3.78	0.82	Positive
9	The use of educational platform applications in learning inspires me to	3.82	0.76	Positive

	work hard.			
10	Using educational platform applications is consistent with language/literature academic courses.	3.67	0.82	Positive
	Total score	3.75	0.80	Positive
Students' responses to their motives for using technological educational apps				
11	I can extend my knowledge and efficiency by using the web in general.	3.93	0.66	High
12	I believe that searching for information online helps students learn more effectively.	3.58	0.87	Medium
13	I believe that practical training using online-based digital applications helps in language education.	2.17	0.67	Medium
14	The availability of adequate information facilitates using tasks of study.	3.81	0.84	High
15	I can locate appropriate technical support that facilitates using specific technological tools in the online classroom.	2.72	0.99	Medium
16	In my study, information acquired through the web surpasses the one gained through traditional ways.	3.63	1.11	Medium
17	I am satisfied with using the comprehensive Google application to send and receive courses over the web.	4.29	0.70	Very High
18	Compared with other courses, I am satisfied with the tasks and project execution of the English courses.	3.89	0.67	High
19	Educational platform applications help me in developing language skills of speaking and listening	4.07	0.59	Very High
20	There is continuous coordination between students and lecturers on the projects to be studied through educational websites.	4.05	0.47	Very High
	Total score	3.69	0.31	High

Table 2 shows that the total score of students using educational web apps during the COVID 19 pandemic is 3.75, revealing that students from national universities have a positive attitude toward using educational platforms during the pandemic. The results also indicate that the highest average (4.00) of perspectives of the importance of using technology applications is assigned to the item

'The process of online learning courses while away from COVID has made me feel relaxed and relieved,' which is considered a positive response. Using education platform applications in teaching to help students access the content material is very positive. Item 1 illustrates this point. Surprisingly, the item "Using web applications facilitates communication with English profs and peers" received the least mean of (3.17). Despite this, their views are positive, but some students feel it is necessary to communicate more with Profs.

In terms of students' motivations for using web applications in online learning, the overall score was a high 3.69. Item number 17: "I am satisfied with using the comprehensive Google application to send and receive courses over the web" got the highest as its mean is 4.29. Item No 19 "Educational platform applications help me in developing language skills of speaking and listening," comes then as its mean is 4.07. On the other hand, item number 13 "I believe that practical training using online-based digital applications helps in language education," scored the lowest mean of 2.17. This outcome indicates that students urgently need training on using online educative programs and educational platform applications.

4.2. Gender and students' perspectives toward the use of educational platform applications in learning online

There are no significant differences in students' use of educational platform applications during online learning in a transition stage due to gender variables.

Table 3. T-test for Independent Samples results of the students' perspectives toward educational platform applications due to gender variable.

Domain	Gender	N	Means	St.Dev.	t-value	Sig*
Perceptions	Male	220	3.76	0.360	2.013	0.048
	Female	175	3.61	0.23		

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 3 shows statistically significant differences at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ in students' perspectives toward using educational platform applications *due to gender variables*. The differences were in favor of male students as the means = 3.76 and SD =0.360. The significant value for this variable is (0.048) in favor of males.

4.3. Place of living and students' perspectives toward the use the educational platform applications in learning online

There are no significant differences in students' perspectives toward using educational platform applications during online learning in a transition stage due to the place of the living variable.

Table 4 results of One-Way ANOVA of students' perspectives toward using educational platform applications due to place of living

	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.385	3	.128	1.273	.290
Within Groups	7.560	75	.101		
Total	7.945	78			

*The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

According to table 4, no statistically significant evidence at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ in the variable students' perspectives due to place of living as the significant level was less than 0.05.

4.4. Students' level and perspectives of the use of educational platform applications in learning online

Due to student-level variables, there are no significant differences in students' perspectives of using educational platform applications during online learning in a transition stage.

Table 5. One-Way ANOVA for Dependent Variable of the Students' level

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.880	3	.293	3.113	.031
Within Groups	7.065	75	.094		
Total	7.945	78			

Table 5 shows statistically significant evidence at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ in the variable students' perspectives due to students' level. To identify between which levels the difference is, an LSD test was conducted. Table 6 shows the results.

Table 6. Results of LSD test

(I) year of study	(J) year of study	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Freshmen	Sophomore	.28586*	.10851	.010	.0697	.5020
	Junior	.01997	.09619	.836	-.1716	.2116
	Senior	.09043	.10414	.388	-.1170	.2979
Sophomore	Freshmen	-.28586*	.10851	.010	-.5020	-.0697
	Junior	-.26588*	.09619	.007	-.4575	-.0743
	Senior	-.19543	.10414	.064	-.4029	.0120
Junior	Freshmen	-.01997	.09619	.836	-.2116	.1716
	Sophomore	.26588*	.09619	.007	.0743	.4575
	Senior	.07045	.09123	.442	-.1113	.2522
Senior	Freshmen	-.09043	.10414	.388	-.2979	.1170
	Sophomore	.19543	.10414	.064	-.0120	.4029
	Junior	-.07045	.09123	.442	-.2522	.1113

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 6 clearly shows that differences in student-level took place in favor of freshmen over sophomores. There are also significant differences between sophomores and juniors, which benefits juniors.

4.5. Grade point average and students' perspectives towards the use of educational platform applications in learning online.

Table 7. One-Way ANOVA for Dependent Variable of the Students' GPA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.223	3	.074	.723	.541

Within Groups	7.722	75	.103		
Total	7.945	78			

Table 7 above shows no significant differences at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ in students' perspectives due to students' GPA.

4.6. Students' motives and perspectives of using educational platform applications during online learning

There are no significant differences in students' perspectives of using educational platform applications during online learning in a transition stage and their motives to use these applications.

Table 8. Person Correlations among students' perspectives of using educational platform applications during COVID 19 Pandemic, and their motives to use these applications

		Person Correlation	Significance*
Students' perspectives toward using educational web-applications during COVID 19 Pandemic	Students' responses to their motives for using technological educational apps	0.530	0.000

Table 8 shows that the total score of Person Correlation is (0.530), with a significance value of (0.000). Such value is highly significant, indicating a positive relationship between students' perspectives and motivations.

The other part of the poll deals with open-ended questions. The researcher asked participants to complete four open-ended survey questions. The questions focused on their perspectives, motivations, challenges, and solutions that reflect a better understanding of the platform educational application.

4.7. Students' perspectives of using educational platform applications in learning language skills.

Table 9. Students' perspectives of using educational platform applications in learning language skills.

Response	Themes	Frequency
Positive	simpler, fun for students, interaction, helps to improve language abilities, encourages speaking, simple during the COVID-19 pandemic, helpful	600
Negative	Many unpredicted issues, poor network internet access, not practical, require improvements.	140
Neutral	Have no idea	500
Other responses	Flexible, comfortable at home,	

Clearly, 300 out of 395 participants stated that educational platform applications are beneficial to their education because they facilitate learning, language skills learning, and the ability to communicate, as one participant remarked:

"In my opinion, using educational platform applications is the best way to communicate information. Unlike traditional books, you can save the information in a permanently saved folder. Also, as students, we are learning

English. For [us], learning via web applications is the best option. To us, where we can improve our speaking and listening skills through videos prepared or sent to us by the doctor for the course. We can also learn to write to improve our writing and speaking skills of grammar and vocabulary. Applications provide dictionaries for languages as well as English grammar that we can use."

Data further illustrate why respondents' perspectives of educational platform applications are unfavorable to their learning. Respondents' negative perceptions were stated clearly by the relapse of specific themes as many unpredictable events, poor network connectivity, not practical, require improvements.

One respondent stated that:

From my perspective, I enjoy studying through these sites. However, I encounter various unexpected issues, such as the weakness of the Internet connection, which is not always available, and the difficulty of dealing with these applications due to a lack of prior digital knowledge. Finally, face-to-face instruction is superior.

A similar theme surfaced during the interview, namely, that students need to develop technology to keep up with all of the development of the world. According to one respondent, learning technology is necessary because the world is changing, technology is taking over, and it will be a big part of our life. It will be the only thing you will be doing later on.

4.8. Students' beliefs of their motives to use classroom web applications.

Table (10). Students' perspectives and motives of using the educational platform applications.

Response	Themes	Prominent Motives	F
Useful	Adaptability (learning at home), students receive information, get help, clear, have a lot of learning resources, a new way of learning that feels comfortable, provides opportunities, is more attractive and exciting, and retrieves data.,	To attain academic achievement from the comfort of one's own home, To improve your speaking abilities, To find out more, To save data. To enhance learning, To improve one's skills, to boost my performance	275
			80
Useless	Technical issues, a lack of web knowledge, insufficient time, a lack of a user manual, an inability to identify individual differences, and learners' carelessness		
Other responses	N/A		40

*F: Frequency

Many respondents believe that educational platform applications help them learn better. Digital educational platforms allow students to pursue education from home, develop speaking skills, look online for more information, process data, improve learning quality, consolidate more skills, and

improve performances. Other prevalently common challenges included technical issues, a lack of web knowledge, enough time, a user guide, an inability to pinpoint individual differences, and learners' callousness.

4.9. The challenges of using educational platform applications in the learning process as students perceive them.

Table (11). Challenges in online learning from students' perspectives

Response	Themes	F
Challenges	Dull, online connection, lack of expertise with applications, distracting students, textual conceptual understanding, power failure, exam schedule, students perplexed	315
Other responses	No problems	80

The third open-ended question focuses on the difficulties that students face when using online educational applications. Most respondents agreed that the recurring themes of challenges were boring usage, online connection, lack of expertise with applications, distracting students, textual conceptual understanding, power failure, exam schedule, and students being perplexed. Students expressed a positive attitude toward using educational platform tools as revealed from the analysis of the questionnaire because they were experiencing a new way of dealing with knowledge sharing and gaining. However, the challenges connected with electricity supply, Internet connection, textual presentation, and home environment are forces that reflected students' negative attitudes. With the absence of these challenges, learners hold a positive perspective with the employment of web applications in the learning process.

4.10. The perceived solutions for the challenges that students face when using educational platform-tools

Table (12) suggested solutions for the difficulties that students face when using educational platform applications.

Response	Themes	F
Suggested solutions	Provide time for learners to study, repair systems, training students how to use educational platform applications. University administration should assist students in resolving problems, increase network connections, and ensure that the university has adequate equipment.	296
Other responses	I am not sure, and I do not require it.	85
Did not respond	NA	14

- F: Frequency

Students proposed solutions to the difficulties they encountered when using educational platform applications. Table 12 explains that these solutions include: providing time for students to study, repairing systems, and teaching students how to use educational platform applications. The university administration should assist in resolving student issues, expanding network connections, and providing adequate equipment.

5. Discussion:

The researcher used a three-section questionnaire and a virtual semi-structured interview to investigate students' perceptions, challenges, and recommended solutions for the critical issues they encountered when switching to online learning. It is vital to comprehend these perceptions and challenges for authorities and decision-makers to create and implement solutions to the factors that impede students' academic progress.

According to the findings, students had favorable attitudes toward the use of educational web platforms. Learners felt at ease and secure as they progressed through the learning process. This idea is manifested in the study of Aljraiwi (2017). Attending virtual classes gave them the impression that they were not in danger of being infected by the deadly virus. Considering the applied digital educational tools in the educational process, students were pleased with them. They could receive and interact with the learning courses. The positive side of educational platforms reflected learners' motivation to use these sites by empowering their speaking and listening skills. Previously, students were hesitant and lacked confidence in speaking English in traditional classroom settings. They were motivated to express their ideas freely through online learning because they did not feel embarrassed or stifled by making mistakes in the language. This is reflected in the research work of Vate-U-Lan (2020). Learning from home upgraded learning quality achievement, consolidated language abilities, and enhanced productive skills for students. Students stated that they are armed with vast knowledge because they were able to access various sources of information through educational websites. This aspect was not available in the traditional method of teaching because the instructor was the only source of information and they were not motivated to collect subordinating materials to the ones discussed in classes. The result here echoes the findings of (Ayu, 2020; Jæger & Blaabæk, 2020). Another finding from the study is the effectiveness of web educational tools such as Moodle, Edmodo, and Google classrooms in facilitating learner autonomy. Furthermore, the interactive tasks of these sites aided students in developing language skills, particularly those related to the structure of the language.

The study did, however, reveal that university students had difficulty communicating with professors. Students could previously contact instructors directly during the lecture or office hours. Students could ask for help during this time, which is not possible with virtual learning. The students' only opportunity to interact with the online educational professor is during their scheduled learning time. Virtual classroom mediators have recognized that texting by e-mail can be hectic for students because they cannot access timely support or feedback (Singh, Adhikary, Gupta, & Singh, 2010). Some students have not engaged in lessons due to a lack of communication with the distance learning instructor. Another prevalent issue is the application of educational tools in the classroom. Students found it difficult and occasionally confusing to use these digital learning applications, which could be traced to a lack of actual exposure to these sites since it was the first time they were compelled to use them in their educational process. According to the findings of the semi-structured

interviews, students felt confused and bored when using web applications. They were concerned about power outages, slow Internet connections, economic factors, students' carelessness, and the timing of scheduled classes. Students faced numerous challenges, ranging from personal and financial difficulties to technological and logistical hurdles. The results are in agreement with Peters et al., (2020), who highlighted a prevalent hindrance to running e-Learning in the United States as a lack of technical training. In other studies, the lack of professional online training has been ascertained as a challenge to distance education (Peters et al., 2020). Students should be familiar with technology (Jæger & Blaabæk, 2020). Technology is useless if students are unable to engage in their distance learning classes due to the failures or weakness of internet connectivity and accessible technical devices (Lassoued, Alhendawi, & Bashitialshaaer, 2020). The key to successful virtual classrooms is relying on reliable devices to enhance the digital transmission of the virtual classroom using partaking in distance pedagogies (Mahmood, 2020). University students recognize how technology can enhance their digital educational experiences (Singh, Adhikary, Gupta, & Singh, 2010). It is important to note that more than 55% of the participating students reported that a lack of experts to help them acted as a barrier in the transitional stage (Mahmood, 2020).

Finally, the research reveals that financing digital learning is another challenge that schools encounter because purchasing devices for distance learning lessons and the expenses of doing the lectures via the web can result in financial stress (Patricia, 2020). This is similar to other studies, which found that students who use web-based learning, those who do not use distance learning, and those who have used distance learning in the past all recognized financing as a challenge to online learning (Patricia, 2020; Grishchenko, 2020). Students do not have computers, do not have access to the internet, and do not have access to technology experts (Patricia, 2020; Grishchenko, 2020). Furthermore, the requirement to purchase webcams for virtual meetings raises the cost of online classes (Beaunoyer, Dupéré, and Guitton 2020).

6. Conclusion:

The researcher reached a significant conclusion derived from the findings presented above. To start, it is noteworthy that students' perceptions and motivations for using educational platform applications at universities are positive. Second, when they transition to the online learning stage, they face many challenges regarding technical resources and the inability to use emerging web-based learning applications. Students must use these tools effectively and efficiently successfully integrate these applications into their university studies. Third, there is no significant difference in residence, but there are significant gender differences and student levels. Students face numerous challenges when using these applications, including boredom, poor internet connectivity, unfamiliarity with the applications, student distractions, power failures, insufficient test time, and confusion.

Some changes are needed to minimize these challenges, such as locating methods to connect with university faculty and students online. By minimizing these impediments, university students' perspectives of virtual learning may improve. This COVID-19 key message will compel the authorities and stakeholders to create new policies, guidelines, digital tools, and proposals for future situations. This key message will teach students how to use free apps to transition from customary lecture methods to digital education in the future after the COVID-19 outbreak has ended so that

they can be essential for future effective teaching. Excellent preparation for web-based learning will necessitate additional initiative to cope with the challenges that students face during digital learning. The research poses vital questions regarding the technical knowledge of both instructors and students. It is found that teachers and students lack the experience and knowledge to handle and employ interactive learning activities by using educational tools such as Moodle, Edmodo, and Kahoot. In this reference, stakeholders at the local universities need to revise the plans for different programs and introduce a compulsory course for all students which empowers students with ICT skills. Moreover, there should be practical workshops for instructors on designing and implementing interactive learning activities to empower instructors with practical experience using ICT tools in handling virtual learning situations.

Recommendations

There is an urgent need to develop the infrastructure of academic institutions that will lead to a practical application of digital learning platforms. This response is due to a lack of adequate infrastructure, up-to-date devices, and ample opportunities for students to train online learning applications. Second, employees' and students' continuous professional development with new computer knowledge and skills are critical to the success of the online educational application integration process. Third, students and teachers must be involved in the planning and standardization of education platform applications.

Opportunities for future research

More research is needed to understand the perspectives of stakeholders, parents, faculty, and students on the integration of university network application technology.

Conflict of Interest

I declare no conflict of interest.

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