

ESP Undergraduates students' Perception towards E-learning during Covid-19: A Case Study at the College of Political Sciences, Al-Nahrain University

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Abstract:

The study focuses on describing the ESP undergraduates' students' perception towards the use of E-learning during the covid-19 pandemic. A descriptive quantitative design method was conducted in this study. The sample of this study was (331) undergraduates students at Al-Nahrain University in the college of political science. The instrument of this study was a structured questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first Part collecting personal information of students,, and the second part a questionnaire which consists of 17 items disrupted into five main domains (Use of E-Learning, Approach to e-learning, Self-Efficacy of Using E-learning, Benefits of using E-learning and Behavioral Purposes of Using E-learning) by using a 4- points likert scale was send to the participates through e-mail.. The result of the study showed that the ESP undergraduates' students' perception towards using e-learning has a positive impact.

Keywords: Covid-19, E-learning, ESP Students' Perceptions.

1. Introduction:

The spread of COVID-19 pandemic has held the whole world and caused prevalent public health concerns; restrain economics and education system vastly. The pandemic has led to disruption in the teaching/learning process globally.

Many countries have a lockdown of all the educational institutions, and most countries are ordered by their government to change learning from direct teaching to electronic learning. Moreover, teachers and learners make use of technology for educational purposes over time.

Technology enhanced learning environments by offering the prospect, to help students productively in the structure of their individual motivational strategies (Swan, 2003).

E-learning has led to transformations in some strategies and methods in the field of education. It is one of the modern methods that contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of the learner and enable him to bear the responsibility more compared with traditional education, as the learner becomes more discoverable, analysis, synthesis, and the acquisition of high-level learning skills.

According to the UNESCO report which refers that "more than 1.37 billion students (80% of the global student population) have been affected by the crisis" (UNESCO, 2020).

2. The Problem:

In March 2020, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has caused an unprecedented crisis in all areas, and the education system is one of them. It forced all colleges, and schools around the world to stop face-to-face learning activities, so several countries have closed all the educational institutions to control the spread of disease, which is originate a direct effect on students, learners, and universities.

During this time, most countries have established ways of continuing to supply students with teaching material and direct them through e-learning strategy. (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020)

Education in Iraq is particularly concentrated around textbooks and blackboards, rather than dynamic or blended learning techniques. In fact, until recently online examinations were not acknowledged or given credibility and little effort or funding has gone into regenerating these tired practices.

Problems associated with the transition from conventional learning (face to face) to online learning (e-learning) in the educational system are well documented. With this unexpected transfer away from the classroom in many parts of the globe, some are surprising whether the adoption of online learning will continue to continue post-pandemic, and how such a shift would impact the worldwide education market.

The COVID -19 outbreaks had a very important influence on worldwide education systems. (Keller & Cernerud, 2002)

3. The Significant:

More than 90 percent of the world's students have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (UNESCO, 2020).

E-learning has become increasingly important learning and teaching mode in recent decades and has been recognized as an efficient and effective learning method. The rapidly rising number of Internet users with smartphones and tablets around the world has supported the spread of e-learning, not only in higher education and vocational training but also in primary and secondary schools.

Online media can ensure multiple benefits for both students and teachers in supporting teaching and learning (Graham & Misanchuk, 2004).

Technological development became one of the most important measures of the progress of nations. Nowadays technology is played an essential role in reinforcing the teaching and learning process, it's used to improve and facilitate learning in schools and universities.

3. The Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to determine the perceptions of ESP undergraduates' students regarding e-learning at the University of Al-Nahrain based on the Google Classroom Model during the lockdown period of the COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Research Questions:

The study answers the following questions:

1. What are the perceptions of ESP undergraduates' students of using e-learning through Google Class Room model in the ESP program?
2. How much do ESP students prefer to use e-learning through goggle class room model in the ESP program?

5. Limits of the Study

The study focuses on the perception of ESP undergraduates' students at A- Nahrain University in the college of political sciences for the academic year 2019-2020.

2. The Literature Review and Related Studies

2.1. Perception

Perception is defined as the natural ability to understand or notice things quickly. It is concerning to psychology of the human, It is a process where the information gets into the human brain.

Perception is one of the most essential parts that supported and enhanced effective teaching and learning. It can be different from one

person to another according to the persons' point of view toward something that they have accomplished. (Jacob & Gawe, 2004)

It is the process of choosing, planning, and interpreting of stimuli by someone to be a consistent and meaningful picture of the world. In other words, by crossing the perceptual process, people can interpret their idea significantly based on their senses.

Students' perception is very significant for evaluating teaching efficiency and to measure the result of learning process. Chen & Hoshower (2003).

2.1.1. An Overview of E-Learning

The origin of the term 'e-learning' has been suggested during the 1980s. Elliott Maisie uses the term "eLearning" in 1999, coding the first time the phrase was used professionally.

E-learning referred to electronic learning or 'virtual learning', (Moore, Dickson-Deane & Galyen 2011). It is a structured course and the acquisition of knowledge delivered through electronic technologies and media. It also refers to learning that enables the learners to gain information electronically. Dublin (2003)

It is a structured course and the acquisition of knowledge delivered through electronic technologies and media, it refers to any learning that enables the learners to gain the information electronically. Liu and Wang (2009) however asserted that the advancement of communications technologies, especially the internet, did change distance learning into e-learning.

E-Learning depends on teaching in or out of the classrooms by using computers and the Internet. It is the process of sharing knowledge, and the material through different channels such as e-books, CDs, videos; slideshows, word documents, and PDF format. (Mayer & Gazé, 2014)

2.1.2. What is the Value of E-Learning?

E-learning is the most important development in education that have happened since the set of the internet. It transformed the way of learning and teaching from the traditional method to a simple, easier, and more effective method for students than the old one. This indicates that the time required the learning is shortening what is required in traditional learning.

An e-learning system is considered a fundamental factor in implementing the activity of universities and schools it promotes the learning process and to keep speed with the needs, desires, and requirements of students.

The idea of e-learning is to empower learners to absorb personal achievement, basic schooling or to gain a degree certificate, without actually presenting to the school or university, it reinforces and support both teaching and learning. (Popovici, A, Mironov, 2015)

2.1.3. E-learning in Education

E-Learning has an enormous amount of uses towards all factors of society. It is a form of new learning technique being increasingly followed in educational institutions across the world. E-learning is becoming more and more popular and accepted as a legitimate method of education as well as becoming an important part of our educational landscape.

It is an educational tool and technique which is conducted through online platforms and electronic devices with the help of technologically advanced software, services, and products.

E-learning has considerable advantages, it makes education easy for everyone and everywhere anywhere in their preferred time.

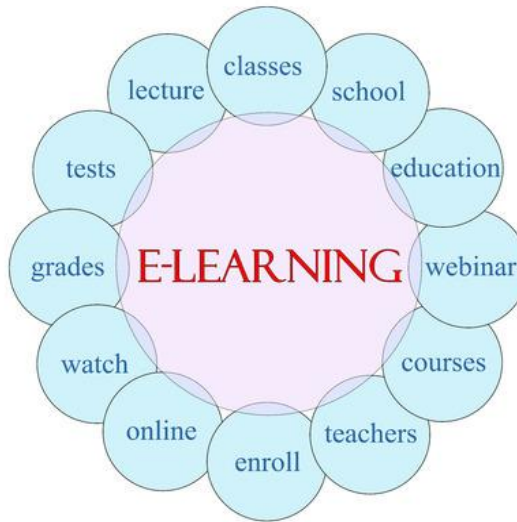


Figure 1 E-Learning concept

2.1.4. Advantages and Disadvantages of E-Learning

A. Advantages of E- learning

There are probably many advantages for using e-learning here are the most advantages.

1. E-learning saves time and money
2. E-learning promotes active independent learning.
3. E learning encourages active independent learning
4. E learning leads to better retention for most training topics
5. E learning improve learners' technical skills
6. E-learning offers you a variety of courses and programs
7. E-Learning offers a comfortable learning environment. It is an eco-friendly way of educating.
8. E-Learning is more flexible and convenient. Learning content is usually made available in short modules and can be paused at any time.
9. E-Learning allows for global collaboration.

10. E-learning ensures capacity, consistency training consistency, and standardization. All learners receive a united level of training.
11. E-learning reduces impacts on the Environment
12. E-learning provides opportunities for relations between learners by the use of discussion forums. (Urdan and Weggen, 2000; Marc, 2002; Klein and Ware, 2003)

B. Disadvantages of E-Learning

These are the disadvantages of E-Learning:

1. E-learning causes social isolation and cannot offer human interaction.
 2. E-learning cannot cope with thousands of students that try to join discussions.
 3. E-Learning can be difficult for certain disciplines that involve practice.
 4. E-learning makes cheating is unavoidable.
 5. E- learning instructors tend to focus on theory rather than practice.
- (Akkoyuklu &Soylu, 2006; Lewis, 2000; Scott et al. 1999; Marc, 2002)

2.2. Related Studies

Many studies on students' perceptions of e-learning have been carried out across different contexts and educational levels. Mulyani; Fidyati; Suryani; Murnia Suri; Halimatussakdiah (2021) attempted to investigate the students' perceptions and preferences on English instruction through e-learning implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. The researcher applies a qualitative approach in a descriptive method design. 106 English class students were participating in the study. The findings of the study show that some of the students impress negative features concerning the internet network, and the majority of the students have a positive impact on electronic learning

D. A. Akuratiya, D. N. R. Meddage. (2020) aimed to examine the students' perception of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic period at the ATI in Dehiwala, Sri Lanka. Some learners had little experience

with online learning before the coronavirus crisis, others they prefer traditional learning, while the rest agree with e-learning, they considered it as effective as direct learning, enjoyable, able to learn at own pace, easy access to online material, and active participation.

Kasyfur Rahman. (2020) tries in his study to investigate the tertiary EFL students' overall perception of the use of fully online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic A survey to 125 students of the English Language Education Program in a State Islamic University in West Nusa Tenggara was applied through using . a questionnaire which consists of 26 items with a five-point Likert scale. The finding of the study demonstrated that while the students perceived online learning as useful during the pandemic, they also thought that online learning was ineffective.

3. Methods

3.1. Study design and subjects

This study is based on the quantitative research approach. It employs a cross-sectional descriptive design was carried out.

3.2. The Participants

The study participants were 331 undergraduates' students who study English for specific purposes at the University of Al-Nahrain of the college of Political Sciences during the first term of the academic year 2019-2020. The participants' ages ranged from 19-25 years old.

3.3. Research Instruments

The researcher used an online self-administered questionnaire survey to measure the ESP students' perceptions in using e-learning. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first Part collecting the personal information of students .They have to put down their demographic details (age, gender, year of study) Frequencies and percentages were calculated,, while the second

part a questionnaire which consists of 17 clear and understandable statement related to the teaching-learning process to measure the perception of 'students in respect to the effectiveness of e-learning during COVID-19 in 2020.

3.4. The Procedures

On January 12th, 2020, the Ministry of higher education in the Iraqi government announced that learning in all universities during the Covid 19 pandemic will be on-line.

To conduct the study, a course plan was designed to implement the ESP undergraduates' students for four departments in the college of political science. The course plan was implemented for eight weeks. It started on the 2nd of February to the 29th of March 2020.

The researcher uses Google classroom as one of the methods in teaching. The questionnaire was sent to each participant via email at the end of the semester. Each student was asked to complete all the questionnaires' items once. They were strongly encouraged to fill out the questionnaire, the responses based on a 4-point Likert scale, namely: Strongly Agree; Agree; Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The researcher gave 30 minutes to complete answering the questionnaire without mentioning their names. The results were collected and analyzed accordingly.

3.5. Validity and Reliability

Before the questionnaire was layout to the students, a pilot test was carried out on 30 undergraduate students to measure the validity and reliability of the students' perceptions. The pilot is used to estimate the required time for each participant to fill in the questionnaire. They were out of the study sample.

Validity is the degree to which an instrument precisely measures what it intends to measure. (Robson,, 2011). All the electronic

questionnaires' items were examined and checked by experts in this field. Their comments on some items were considered and amended.

Reliability refers to the consistency of the score gained. (Creswell, 2012) It means when the students do test should be in the same conditions. The researcher used Cranach's alpha to measure the reliability of the questionnaire, which was estimated at %0.76. This indicated that the test is reliable.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

The goal of the present study is to examine the ESP students' perception of the use of e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Descriptive statistics were performed to analyze the students' perceptions. A total of 331 ESP undergraduates' students participated in the study. The demographic factors were analyzed according to the years of study; gender and age as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Distribution of Undergraduate students' characteristics of (N=331) participants

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage%
Years of study		
1st year	140	(17%)
2nd year	121	(15%)
3rd year	167	(21%)
4th year	158	(19%)
Gender		
Female	197	69.0
Male	134	32.0
Age		
19-21	130	37.5
21-23	86	26.9
23-25	6	6.9
Mean SD 19.9 ± 2.46		

Table 1 shows the students' perception toward e-learning according to their year of study, gender and age. It's found that the frequency and percentage were 140(17%) for first year students and 121(15%) for second year students, while third year students were 167(21%) and the fourth year were 158(19%).The gender for participants was, 197 (96.0%) female, and 134 (32.0%) were male. The age of the students ranged from 19 -25 with percentages 37.5%, 26.9%, and 6.9%, respectively. The mean of the students' age was 19.9 and SD was 2.46.

Table 2 Students' perceptions towards e-learning

Question	Answer frequency				
	SA	A	D	S D	Total Responses%
I. Easy Usage of E-Learning					
1. The use of e-learning helped me to do my homework perfectly through Google classroom.	35	45	5	0	85%
2. The use of e-learning makes the connection between me and other students easily.	30	40	4	1	75%
3. The use of e-learning makes the materials very easy and interesting.	39	50	0	0	89%
4. The use of e-learning is very enjoyable and not boring.	35	55	0	0	80%
II. E-learning as a new method					
5. The use of e-learning makes teaching more active than the traditional way.	35	40	3	1	79%
6. The use of e-learning has improved my communication and. allows me to interact and exchange ideas freely with other students.	35	45	1	1	82%

7. The use of e-learning helps me to find the necessary information quickly	38	50	0	0	88%
III. Student's attitude towards the use of e-learning					
8. The use of e-learning has increased the interaction with other students and teachers.	30	40	5	1	76%
9. The use of e-learning attracts student's attention and motivation.	33	44	3	0	80%
10. The use of e-learning increases student's creativity.	35	45	2	1	83%
IV. Students satisfaction of using E-learning					
11. The use of e-learning has improved my capabilities to solve problems that faced me through the teaching course.	30	40	2	1	73%
12. The use of e-learning encouraged me to think critically and allows me to interact and exchange ideas freely	33	39	2	1	75%
13. The use of e-learning improves the learning process and productivity.	30	40	1	0	71%
14. The use of e-learning allow me to acquire new knowledge	36	46	0	0	82%
V. Benefits of using E-learning					
15. The use of e-learning enhanced and increased my knowledge on how to use technical skills	35	40	0	0	75%
16. The use of e-learning saved the teachers and students time	37	45	1	0	82%
17. The use of the e-learning can access information easily regardless the time and place.	40	50	0	0	90%

*SA= Strongly Agree, A=Agree, N=Neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree

Table 2 shows the analysis result on the students' learning perception towards e- learning during the pandemic according to the questionnaire items.

1. Easy usage of E-learning

Most of the students had positive responses towards the usage s of e- learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, and they were highly satisfied with the new method. The students for item 1, show that (35 %) strongly agree, (45. %), agree, and (5%) disagree and strongly disagree. For item 2, (30 %) strongly agree, (40. %), agree, and (4%) for disagreeing and (1%) strongly disagree.

For item 3, the response shows that (39 %) strongly agree, (50. %), agree, and no one for disagreeing and strongly disagree.

For item 4, the response shows that (35 %) strongly agree, (55. %), agree and no one for disagree and strongly disagree.

II. E-learning as a new method

The majority of our students agreed that they were satisfied with e- learning as a new method. For item5, (35 %) strongly agree, (40. %), agree, and (4%) for disagree and (1%) strongly disagree. For item 6, (30 %) strongly agree, (40. %), agree, and (4%) for disagree and (1%) strongly disagree.

For item7, (35 %) strongly agree, (45. %), agree, and (1%) for disagree and (1%) strongly disagree.

III. Student's attitude towards the use of E-learning

For item8, (30 %) strongly agree, (40. %), agree, and (5%) for disagree and (1%) strongly disagree.

For item9, (33 %) strongly agree, (44. %), agree, and (3%) for disagree and no one for strongly disagree.

For item10, (35 %) strongly agree, (45. %), agree, and (2%) for disagree and (1%) for strongly disagree.

IV. Students satisfaction of using E-learning

For item11, (30 %) strongly agree, (40. %), agree, and (2%) for disagreeing and (1%) for strongly disagree.

For item12, (33 %) strongly agree, (39. %), agree, and (2%) for disagreeing and (1%) for strongly disagree.

For item13, (30 %) strongly agree, (40. %), agree, and (1%) for disagreeing no one for strongly disagree.

For item14, (36 %) strongly agree, (46. %), agree, and no one for disagreeing and strongly disagree.

V. Benefits of using E-learning

For item15, (35 %) strongly agree, (40. %), agree, and no one for disagreeing and strongly disagree.

For item16, (37 %) strongly agree, (45. %), agree, and (1%) for disagreeing, and no one for strongly disagree.

For item17, (40 %) strongly agree, (50. %), agree, and no one for disagreeing and strongly disagree.

4.2. Discussions

Due to these results, the students had a positive experience with educators' pedagogical role, and the students were highly satisfied with the impact of the educators' guidance.

The use of e-learning is considered a real solution for all educational universities and institutions to enable the learners to continue and improve the learning process and acquiring new skills through e-learning.

The majority of ESP undergraduates' students agreed that e- learning is very effective, and they have an appositve impact on this method. We found that 90% of students were satisfied with online learning and they found it saved time and place, and 85% agree that the use of e-learning helped them to do their homework perfectly through Google classroom and they found it not boring and enjoyable.

The lowest percentage was (71%) they considered that the use of e-learning improves the learning process and productivity. The remaining

percentages revealed that most of the students are satisfied with e-learning as new method during the down break.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

5.1. Conclusion

Based on the questionnaire results, it can be concluded that the perceptions of ESP undergraduates' students at the college of political science of Al-Nahrain University towards e-learning are effective. It served as an alternative educational method to facilitate the teaching and learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a solution taken by most of the educational institutions and universities in Iraq.

The students were satisfied with e-learning it's a helpful method and considered as an alternative method to their learning during the Covid-19 outbreak. It has a positive impact on the use of technology. Addition e-learning makes learning more comfortable as it enables the student to get the knowledge and lectures at any time-anywhere. The students agree that the e-learning process gives some benefits to students; it's easy to use, save paper for the assignments, and motivates student's knowledge.

E-learning is a powerful tool for teaching ESP students. However, successful implementation of online learning into the curriculum requires a well thought-out strategy and a more active approach.

5.2. Suggestions

1. The E -learning should be prepared in such a way that student can find it more interesting
2. Instructors must have to learn more creatively so that their students don't feel bored of using E-learning process.
3. Additional studies can be suggested to measure the students' perception towards E- learning for postgraduates' learners.
4. Additional studies can be suggested to examine the students' perceptions about difficulties and challenges of media for E-learning.

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