



The difficulties faced by third year university students when learning English online

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Abstract

This research had one main objective which is to find out whether studying online is a good choice or not. An increasing number of students are now choosing online courses. They find it more flexible, practical and saves a lot of time. This shift in pedagogical standard is forcing academic organizations to reevaluate their ways of delivering their course content. The researcher wanted to find if there are any problems that face those students while learning online. Data were collected in qualitative ways. Thus, the researcher conducted interviews with 10 university students who are studying English. Results showed that most of the students prefer studying online as it saves time, effort and no need to go anywhere to study. Yet many others faced a lot of obstacles such as weak connection, financial issues and disturbing notifications of other application on line. Moreover, the result of this research will help the students to progress their ways of learning English online. Also the results may encourage the teachers to discover more techniques and methods on teaching English online.

Key words: Online, pedagogical standard, English, academic organizations, difficulties.

1. Introduction

Educational Online are global tools for learning and became important means for most of the knowledge all over the world. Therefore, the call for online learning is necessary in every country. Online learning has paved the way for students to learn outside the educational institutions. Students use different programs to learn different things online. It has made it possible for students with busy lives and limited flexibility to attain significance education. Since students are attached to their phones which are always online, it is necessary for teachers to push and guide their students to online learning. Yet, we all know that it still has its disadvantages such as limited communal interactions and online programs distractions. Still, online education seems to be the solutions for many students to attend lectures or even take courses. This study planned to search for the possible issues that face students while learning online.

2. Research Problem

Students at Zawia University come across issues while learning online in different English subjects courses. The interruption of social media programs while learning online, and difficulties in understanding some of the subjects as it is recorded. Low motivation to access the online courses could be some of the major reasons of the students' issues with online education.

Keeping all that in mind, challenging materials and technique used by the teachers can obstruct the students' education. Therefore, this research is conducted to help students overcome their problems while learning online.

3. Research questions

1. What are the problems that students face while learning English online?
2. What are the technical issues that students encounter with while learning online?
3. What are the social media effects on their learning online?

4. Objectives of the study

The main determination of this study is to focus on the problems that face third year students in The Department of English at the faculty of Arts at the University of Zawia while learning online. Another objective is to identify motives behind the students' issues toward online educational programs which could be reasons like low motivation and social media programs distractions.

5. Significance of the Study

This study is vital as it covers an important part in the learning process lately. Online teaching and learning seem to be one of the most significant way in helping students progress in their studying English. According to many researchers, learning online is one of the most basic resources of human learning and communication. The researcher attempts to realize the possible difficulties that face the students at the 3th year at Zawia university while learning online and the likely motives behind these problems. Finding responses to these hindrances may help both students and the teachers in the department while conducting online courses.

Students need to have the ability to use technology in learning for two purposes: to be good at their future career as teachers, translators and for the international communication. Consequently, this study is principal as it wishes to offer such help to both teachers and students. Additionally, this study will try to help other researchers to deal with the same concern from numerous ways and different surroundings to make overviews that could help educational authorities to deal with the matter which will improve learning English in the whole country.

6. Literature review

6.1 Online Education

With technological progress, learners now want quality programs they can access from anywhere and at any time. This made the demand for online education as it is more flexible and easy to access. Moreover, the multiple benefits that online learning offers is program choice and time efficiency which make it increase the appeal of distance learning. Students found the traditional classroom modality obstructive, inflexible, and impractical. The technological advancement provided effective classroom education through the Web. Students want to be able to obtain a quality tutoring without being at a specific place at a specific time (Jasmine Paul & Felicia Jefferson, 2019). Researchers come in to conclusion that students believed online learning to be a very beneficial technique of delivering education. They believed that it is an

effective process of education because of its flexibility, accessibility of informative materials, saves time, suitability and enhances knowledge acquisition (Melchor Arcenas, Jr. Precita Julie Abecia, Angel Inso, Almera Sabangan & Justine Khen Florida 2022).

Even though that previous studies showed online learning in general, this research focuses on the third year students at Department of English at Zawia University which did not have much of attention. The study points out the problems that faces third year students when learning online.

Learning online helps students to learn better and at any time. Also, it aids them to communicate with teachers, chat with colleagues, study resources, and complete task easily. Attending lectures become difficult for most of the students consequently they favor to learn online as they have other responsibilities such as family, work, or even problems in transportation. The student believe that it is much easier for them to take online course as it is more flexible study hours. Moreover, studying online made it easy for them to for reading more chapters, better quality papers, and more group project time.

6.2 The beginning of online education

This shift for online education started years ago but became very important when the pandemic hit the world and shut everything down. Students were forced to regulate their way of living, behaving, and educating during the pandemic of corona and need to change in to online classes. This forced both teachers and students to consider new ways of thinking and learning and start to study online (M. P. Fonseca & G. S. Sosab 2024). Sirimba. L. Edward (2015) claimed that the majority of teachers were not prepared to enhance teaching and learning online. Demanded student faced difficulties in lectures in the online setting as they need more high level of digital competency from the academic staff (Ralph Joseph CJ & Nikita Gopal, 2025). Researchers believed that workshops for students and parents should be held to solve the problems faced during online learning (Nazma Bibi, Gulshan Fatima Alvi, Crystal J. Davis & Muhammad Mohsan Ishaque, 2020).

6.3 Students' prospective on Online Learning

Most of the researchers tried to understand the aids and difficulties that involved in e-learning. Most of the students that are positive and excited will not experience e-learning as an obstacle to their academic success. Others felt that conventional learning varied greatly from online learning. Besides, other students felt that face-to-face learning is vital for real learning. It was hard for most of the students as it is a new idea for them to learn from home on their phones or laptops. Students who are less motivated find it hard to be committed to learn online as they postpone all of their work. Those students end eventually not attending or completing any assignment online. Ch. Mahmood Anwar & Aerni Isa (2022) claimed that the use of social media applications had dominated the whole learning processes experienced by the students. Despite the fact that the students had so many problems such as electricity cut and unstable internet connection, they were still interested to involve in online learning activities.

Moreover, when students were asked which the teaching modes would you prefer, most of them claimed that formal traditional classroom was more preferred. In addition, students were having problems in online classes because they were not able to connect the internet due to technical as well as financial issues (Abaid Ullah, Mahmoona Ashraf¹, Shanza Ashraf & Sajjad Ahmed, 2021). Online learning depends deeply on the availability of internet facilities, electricity, and

devices to work with. Still students faced problems like internet connectivity, stress and anxiety, and backache during an online class (Marina Machiya Deori and Dr. Sampreety Gogoi, 2022). Students and teachers in online education have difficulties such as technical problems, and issues related to teaching aids and difficulties of mental stress. Although online education very beneficial the technical difficulties are one drawback to the improved use of this medium (Ajeet Kumar L& Deepak Kumar Tripathi, 2021).

7. Methodology

This study used qualitative approach. A semi structured interviews were employed. The students of the 3th year at department of English language, faculty of Arts at University of Zawia were the sample of the research as they have experience of studying online most of their English subjects. They use private online courses in studying their English subjects. The researcher used these data to attain the study goals.

7.1. Interview

Students were questioned about their attitudes towards online learning in general. The researcher expected to achieve additional support method on students' replies in their background information about online learning and whether they were comfortable from the on line courses given. Also, the interview spotted light on the inspiration, the time used, and their communication with the other students and teachers.

8. Research Design

Many online courses are using the same way in teaching materials which is very long video online. This strategy of conducting courses made it difficult for students to follow and even more on the internet perception.

The students attended courses trying to follow and utilizing new ways to make the video move on faster so they get the chance to see the whole materials given. The researcher conducts the interview online to collect data to aid both the students to learn better from online courses and for the teacher to conduct a successful course.

9.0. Discussion

This study discusses the difficulties of the third year students of Zawia University while learning online. According to the results of the research, the researcher discovered that the students are divided in to two groups. Some of them liked learning online while others have complications. The two views of the students are shown in the interview discussion below. The results of the study below exemplify the difficulties of students while learning online courses.

9.1. The result of the students` interview

In the interview the students were asked to answer six semi-structured questions about studying online. Here in this table only the questions that are answered with yes or no as the other questions are discussed below.

The question	Num. S Yes	Percentage	Num. S No	Percentage
1. Do you like online learning?	4	40%	1	10%
2. Do you feel motivated to study online?	3	30%	2	20%
3. Do other applications interrupt your studying online?	3	30%	1	10%
4. Is everything clear in online courses?	3	30%	2	20%

Most of the students liked learning online. 40% of the students said they liked online learning because it is interesting and more flexible. Moreover, they said they feel motivated as one student said "I prefer learning online because it is easier and I like learning a lot". Others were shy so learning online sounds more practical. One of the students said "I like learning on line because I am very shy".

Some students faced difficulties while learning online. Internet access is an obstacle for most of the students. One of the students said that "internet is not always good enough to study online unless if they study late at night". Also, studying at night on their devices seems more suitable for them as they are free at night. The researcher found out that students have another problem which is distractions. It was found that other applications on students` devices might interrupt them and made it hard for them to continue studying online. One student said that "social media notifications distract me". Yet 10% of the students said they mute other applications or omit them when they study online.

Students were asked whether everything were clear in online learning. Most of students said that it was challenging matter as they were sometimes stuck in the middle and cannot get immediate answers for their questions. While another student said "it was not a big deal because they can ask their colleagues or ask their teachers later".

10. Conclusion

Online learning can be very beneficial to a lot of students. Although online courses can be valuable to learners who do not like the traditional way of teaching and learning, it can be inconvenient to most learners who would wish for face to face education. According to the interviewed students online courses very suitable because they have problems in transportation. Others would like it to because it saves a lot of time and money.

Many university students are equipped with technology tools and internet would prefer to study online rather than attending to classes. Yet some students find it difficult as they have challenges access to the internet due to financial problems, technical difficulties during the course etc. Thus, most of the students would like to study online as they are attached to their phones and find it more practical.

11. Recommendations

Looking at the results, the researcher would like to recommend and advise the students and the teachers for better online courses

It is highly recommended that teachers combine both online learning and traditional way of teaching and learning. This would help students to get knowledge by different ways. In addition, Students should have both ways of learning for example they can deliver tasks online, tests, and other work asked by the teachers. This will give both students and teachers plenty of time and flexibility in the studying year. Moreover, teachers must be trained on how to use the academic online platforms efficiently. Mixing teaching methods with online course can be very beneficial for the students as the time is not enough in the studying year most of the time.

12. Appendix

The students` interview

Dear student,

Thank you for accepting to participate in this interview. It is a research that is intended to investigate students' problems in online learning. The information provided will only be used for research purposes and will never be revealed to any party under any circumstances.

Student background

Name (if possible)

Age.....

Year(s) study

The interview questions

1. Do you like online courses?
Yes / No (Why)
2. Do you feel motivated to study online?
Yes / No (Why)
3. What time do you study?
In the morning / in the afternoon / at night (Why)
4. Do other applications interrupt your studying online?
Yes / No
5. What do you do if you are interrupted by other apps online?
6. Is everything clear in online courses?
7. What do you do when you have something not clear?

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