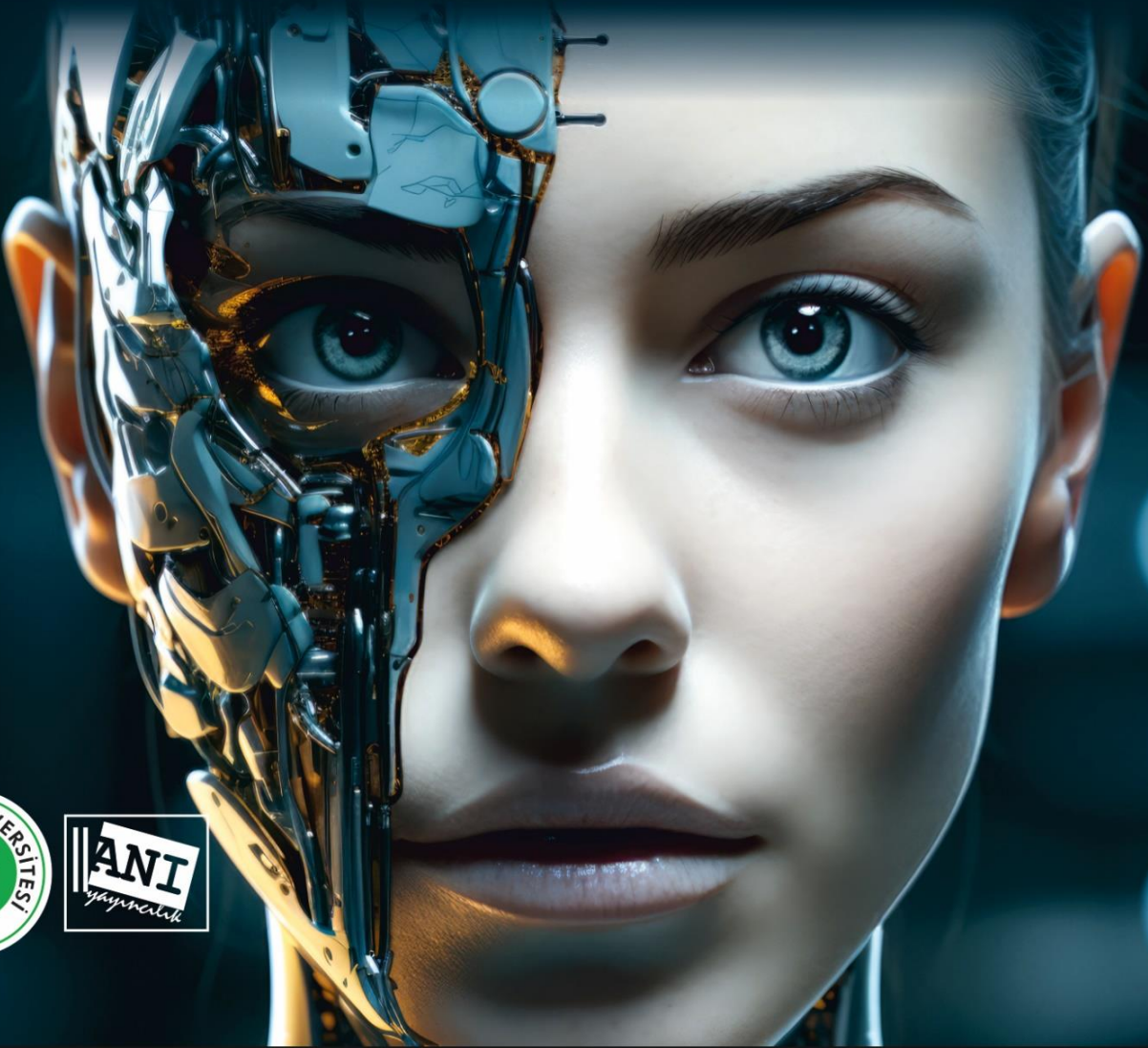


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EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH CONGRESS

EJERCONGRESS 2024
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May 21-24, 2024/ Kocaeli University - Türkiye

Editor

Distinguished Professor Şenel POYRAZLI,
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Main Theme

“Designing the Future: Changing Paradigms and Transhumanism with Artificial Intelligence in Education”

Sub-Themes

- Academic freedom, autonomy, and social responsibility in education
- Artificial intelligence and educational applications
- Augmented reality applications
- Barriers to learning
- Blended learning
- Computer-assisted measurement and evaluation
- Core skill sets for students and teachers
- Design of school buildings in the future
- Designing and delivering a digital strategy
- Digital competence
- Digital parenting
- Distance Education
- Earthquake Education
- Post Earthquake Trauma Training
- Earthquake and Effective Psychosocial Intervention Methods
- Earthquake and Trauma
- The Impact of Earthquakes on School Staff
- Education and society
- Education for healthy living and healthy communities
- Education for a sustainable life
- Education in the digital age: Primary, secondary, high school, higher education, and application examples
- Educational leadership in the digital age
- Effects of regional differences on education
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Related to Marginalized Groups
- Emergency Management at Schools
- Evidence-Based School Counseling Services for Refugees and Marginalized Groups
- Globalisation and Education
- Higher education
- Innovative learning designs for student success
- Instructional technologies in the digital age
- Integration of immigrants into education
- K-12 education (preschool, primary, and secondary education)
- Learning management systems
- Lifelong learning
- Machine learning
- Management information system
- Managing schools
- Measurement and evaluation of students’ learning outcomes
- Metaverse
- Migration and education
- Multicultural Classroom Concerns of Educators and Parents
- New educational system after COVID-19
- New skills to live and work in new times
- New technologies in teaching and learning

- New trends in educational research
- New trends in learning and teaching methods
- New trends in research methods
- Pedagogy, educational programs, and teaching
- Politics, good governance, and leadership in the educational sector
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Abstract

An important issue about testing and assessment is that despite their significant role as item writers, assessors, or decision-makers, teachers' perception of testing and assessment in the English as a foreign language (EFL) context and how their perception differs with certain variables are usually ignored. This study aims to explore teachers' perspectives of online assessment and if English instructors' perspectives of online assessment in tertiary educational institutions in Turkey differ concerning their gender, age, teaching experience in years, highest educational degree received, graduation department, the institution they work at, their computer expertise, having an administrative duty or an office related duty or not. In this descriptive study, the data were collected from 302 English instructors working at English preparatory schools in various universities in Turkey through an online survey that included participants' demographic information and gathered their views on online assessment with 30 Likert scale survey questions. The results indicate that instructors' perspectives of online assessment significantly differed according to their gender, age, teaching experience in years, and their self-reported computer expertise. On the other hand, their educational background, department of graduation, the institution they worked at, and holding administrative or office duties did not change instructors' perspectives significantly.

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Keywords: English as a foreign language; online assessment; perceptions; age; gender

Introduction

Teachers' perceptions of online testing assessment in the EFL context are very important for three reasons. First, EFL teachers need to adapt to technological improvements since they are teaching and assessing today's tech-savvy students who automatically need the involvement of technology to be interested (Mahbub, 2020). As language teachers need to grab students' attention, they need to make use of online assessments. However, if they do not believe in the effectiveness or usefulness of the system, they cannot appeal to students. Therefore, knowing teachers' perceptions regarding online testing and assessment in the EFL context is paramount. Second, to improve assessment, it is necessary to identify the needs and requirements of teachers with regard to online assessment methods (Gamage et al., 2020). Improving assessment or catering to their needs may not be possible without asking them about their perceptions, wants, and needs. Third and last, it is important to discover teachers' perceptions of online assessment in the EFL context to see how well their opinions match with the principles of language learning and teaching in teachers' minds. Since their perceptions greatly affect their performance in class, it might be important to understand what teachers think of online assessment and make changes in the curriculum, assessment methods, teaching methods, and the teaching program accordingly (Balaman & Tiryaki, 2021).

Since online testing and assessment in the EFL context is a new practice in many institutions, it has brought about many challenges and uncertainties (Gamage et al., 2020), most of which are directly related to teacher roles and responsibilities. As the process involves many uncertainties, it

causes many differences in teachers' ideas. Thus, the problem of now knowing how EFL teachers feel about these uncertainties and whether their perceptions differ according to certain variables are issues regarding the effectiveness, efficiency, and safety of online testing and assessment procedures. However, EFL teachers' perceptions about the issue, and what affects their attitudes are not known because of the lack of research (Rea-Dickins, 2004). When the teachers' overall perceptions are not known, how much they accept this new phenomenon is also subject to doubt. As the acceptance level of new technology is unknown, it is impossible to understand the general attitude toward the new procedures (Al-Alak & Alnawas, 2011). This can also be valid for the components of validity, reliability, and the effects of assessment on learning and teaching. On the other hand, limited research on teacher perceptions of online assessment and whether their perceptions differ according to certain variables reflects contradicting results (Alruwais et al., 2018; Öz, 2014).

Literature review

Few studies compare the results of participants in terms of different variables such as age, gender, and computer experience, and these studies provide contradictory results in these aspects in different countries. For instance, a quantitative study by Öz (2014) in the Turkish context conducted to explore pre-service English teachers' perceptions of web-based assessment found that female students were less anxious using online assessment and were more likely to use it in their future studies. It was also shown that although most student-teachers had positive attitudes

towards online assessment, most of them were not likely to use it in their future practices. It was also revealed that the more computer literate they were, the easier they found online assessments to use (Öz, 2014). Another study (Abduh, 2021) which also investigated English teacher perceptions of online assessment in the Saudi Arabia context, found through a quantitative analysis of the data that the perceptions of English teachers of online assessment did not indicate a meaningful distinction regarding gender. It was also revealed that teachers had a moderate attitude toward online assessment due to the challenges such as technical problems, cheating issues, and limitation of productive skills assessment during the online assessment. (Abduh, 2021). Another study by Küppers & Schroeder (2020) looked into university teachers' perceptions of online assessment through online surveys and demonstrated that most of the teachers were open-minded about the use of online assessment, and their major concerns were related to fairness and security. They also compared demographic results and revealed that the younger and the more technologically experienced the teachers were, the more positive attitudes they had toward using online assessment tools.

Overview of the current study

There are many noteworthy qualitative studies on teacher perceptions of online assessment. However, these studies are conducted with a limited number of teachers who may not represent the general population. On the other hand, there are also some quantitative studies on teachers' perceptions regarding online assessment, yet they fall short in number. Thus, the area is immature both in the number of studies available and in the scope of studies having been done. Besides, most available studies focus on general teacher perceptions, the benefits teachers see, and the challenges they experience. Moreover, very few studies compare participants' results in terms of different variables such as age, gender, and teaching experience. Thus, this study aims to identify how teacher perceptions toward online assessment differ in the Turkish university-level EFL context according to gender, age, teaching experience, graduation department, highest completed educational degree, type of institution, institutional role, and computer literacy variations, and asks one research question:

- Do EFL instructors' perceptions of online testing and assessment differ in accordance with certain variables?

Method

Participants

The participants in the study were 302 English instructors working at the English preparatory programs in various universities in Turkey; 228 (75.5%) were females, and 74 (24.5%) were males. The mean age of these participants was 41.1, between 24 and 71. The mean score for teaching experience was 17.5 years with one year of experience being the lowest and 48 years being the highest level of experience. One hundred seventy-seven of the participants had a master's degree (58.6 %), while 92 had a bachelor's (30.5%)

and 33 had a doctoral degree (10.9%). Of these participants, One hundred eighty-eight instructors graduated from English Language Teaching departments (62.3%), 74 of them graduated from English Language and Literature departments (24.7%), 19 from American Culture and Literature departments (6%), and 21 (7%) from other departments such as Translation Studies, or Linguistics. Of the participants, two hundred and three (67.4%) instructors worked at private or foundation universities, and 99 of them worked at state universities (32.6%). Two hundred fifty-six of these teachers expressed that they did not have an administrative duty (84.7%), while only 46 of them (15.2%) stated that they had administrative duties. As for office duties such as being a curriculum development, testing, and assessment, or professional development unit member, two hundred and six instructors stated that they did not have such responsibilities (68.2%), and 96 of them stated that they were working at one of these offices (31.7%). One hundred sixty-eight of the participants stated that they found themselves good in terms of computer expertise (56.6%), 69 of them (22.8%) stated they were excellent at using computers, and 65 of them (21.5%) thought that they were adequate users of computers.

Tools

The study used two data collection tools. First, a background questionnaire to collect demographic and background information about participants was shared with the participants. The participants were expected to give information about their gender, age, the highest level of educational degree completed, graduation department, level of teaching experience in years, position in their institutions, and their level of computer expertise. The second tool was the Student Perceptions of e-Assessment Questionnaire (SPEAQ) developed by Dermo (2009), which was originally administered to students to identify their online assessment perceptions and perspectives. In the original research, the questionnaire was divided into six dimensions related to online assessment: affective factors, validity, practicality, reliability, security, and effects on learning to analyze the data more effectively (Bryman & Cramer, 2001, as cited in Dermo, 2009). Although the overall reliability coefficient and construct validity values for the scale were not reported, the reliability coefficients in Cronbach's alpha for each questionnaire component were stated in the paper.

Procedure

Upon receiving the Educational Sciences ethical committee approval, the online survey which consists of two parts (Part 1: Demographic Questions; Part 2: Scale Questions), was shared with instructors working at English preparatory programs of diverse universities in Turkey via e-mails and social media tools. Since the online questionnaire and scale are one of the most efficient ways of data collection, participation is positively affected when participants are sent personal messages via mail (Dermo, 2009; Muñoz-Leiva et al., 2010). The data was collected through personalized e-mails.

Having collected the data, which took around one month, the questionnaire was deactivated, and participants could not take the questionnaire from that point on.

Analysis

In the analysis process, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) data analysis software was used. The data were analyzed for nominal variables such as gender division, graduation department, workplace, highest degree received, institutional responsibilities, and self-reported computer expertise, and for ordinal variables which were age and teaching experience. For ordinal variables, which were age and teaching experience, mean, minimum and maximum values, and standard deviation were calculated. Right after that, intervals for age and years of teaching experience were specified. For variables of age, highest educational degree, department of graduation, workplace, institutional responsibilities, and self-perceived computer expertise, frequencies, and percentages were computed as well. The reliability of the overall survey with 30 items was found as $\alpha = .92$, indicating good internal reliability. The reliability value of each aspect of online assessment is as follows: $\alpha = .81$ for affective factors; $\alpha = .61$ for validity; $\alpha = .73$ for practicality; $\alpha = .70$ for reliability; $\alpha = .73$ for security and $\alpha = .83$ for impact on teaching and learning. The overall construct validity of the scale was computed as a % of the total variance of 59.82%. The construct validity values for the aspects related to online assessment evaluated in this scale are as follows: 57.82% for affective factors, 62.84% for validity, 49.83% for practicality, 56.23% for reliability; 59.96% for security, and 60.31% for effects on teaching and learning. As most of the data had a normal distribution, the relationships between the survey items and all the variables except for the department of graduation were analyzed and investigated through parametric tests of One-way ANOVA and independent samples T-tests. The non-parametric variable of the graduation department was analyzed with the Kruskal-Wallis H test.

Results

Gender

As *Table 1* indicates, gender is a significant differentiating variable for instructors' perceptions of online assessment ($p=.00$). It can be observed from their mean differences that males had a more positive attitude ($\bar{x}=2.99$) toward online assessment compared to females ($\bar{x}=2.76$). Gender was a significant factor not only in the overall perspectives of instructors but also in the sub-components of online assessment, except for validity, as can be seen in *Table 1* ($p=.00-.01$).

Table 1

Relationship Between Online Assessment Perceptions and Gender (Independent Samples T-Test)

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig. (p-value)
Online Assessment Perception	Female	228	2.76	.55	7.98	.00
	Male	74	2.99	.65		
Affective Factors	Female	228	2.62	.77	5.53	.00
	Male	74	2.92	.93		
Practicality	Female	228	2.66	.71	1.92	.01
	Male	74	2.90	.78		
Reliability	Female	228	2.90	.68	4.78	.01
	Male	74	3.14	.81		
Security	Female	228	2.27	.64	5.60	.01
	Male	74	2.48	.76		
Impacts on Teaching and Learning	Female	228	3.32	.68	5.56	.00
	Male	74	3.58	.72		

Age

According to *Table 2*, age is an effective variable that indicates significant differences among instructor perceptions of online assessment ($p=.05$). There was a significant difference in the perceptions of online assessment between the instructors aged 31-40 and the ones above 50. Apparently, instructors above 50 years old had more negative perceptions ($\bar{x}=2.63$) of online assessment compared to the ones in the 31-40 group ($\bar{x}=2.89$).

Table 2

Relationship Between Online Assessment Perceptions and Age (One-Way ANOVA)

	Age Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig. (p-value)
Online Assessment Perception	20-30	36	2.86	.60	2.62	.05
	31-40	137	*2.89	.56		
	41-50	77	2.79	.65		
	50+	52	*2.63	.48		
Affective Factors	20-30	36	*2.83	.99	2.65	.04
	31-40	137	2.79	.75		
	41-50	77	2.64	.85		
	50+	52	*2.45	.78		
Practicality	20-30	36	2.74	.67	2.59	.05
	31-40	137	*2.79	.74		
	41-50	77	2.74	.80		
	50+	52	*2.46	.62		
Impact on Teaching and Learning	20-30	36	3.33	.67	5.50	.00
	31-40	137	*3.51	.67		
	41-50	77	*3.38	.74		
	50+	52	*3.05	.64		

Teaching experience

Another significant discriminator for instructors' online assessment perceptions is teaching experience in years with a significance value of $p=.03$, as Table 3 indicates. According to the table, mean scores indicate that instructors with less experience in years had a more positive perception of online assessment than instructors with longer years of experience. As Table 3 indicates, the most significant difference can be observed in the mean scores of instructors with less than 10 years ($\bar{x}=2.93$) and more than 30 years of ($\bar{x}=2.57$) experience, the latter being less positive towards online assessment compared to the former.

Table 3

Relationship Between Online Assessment Perceptions and Teaching Experience in Years (One-Way ANOVA)

	Experience in Years	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig. (p-value)
Online Assessment Perception	<10	70	2.93	.60	2.84	.03
	11-20	129	2.83	.55		
	21-30	74	2.77	.66		
	>30	29	2.57	.38		
Affective Factors	<10	70	2.89	.85	5.66	.00
	11-20	129	2.73	.74		
	21-30	74	2.66	.91		
	>30	29	2.17	.64		
Practicality	<10	70	2.80	.77	2.78	.04
	11-20	129	2.77	.70		
	21-30	74	2.68	.80		
	>30	29	2.37	.355		
Impacts on Teaching and Learning	<10	70	3.53	.72	3.32	.02
	11-20	129	3.42	.67		
	21-30	74	3.31	.75		
	>30	29	3.07	.53		

Degree of education

The degree of education is not a significant differentiating factor ($p=.56$) in instructors' overall perception of online assessment. It was also revealed that the relationship between the components of online assessment and the degree of completed education level indicated no significant difference. The p -value was .50 for affective factors, .79 for validity, .75 for practicality, .41 for reliability, .85 for security, and .10 for impacts on teaching and learning.

Department of graduation

There is no statistically significant difference in instructors' perspectives of online assessment according to their departments. Instructors who graduated from different departments had similar viewpoints on online assessment. Where p -values and *chi-square* values are indicated, it was

seen that there was no significant difference between instructors' perceptions of the components of online assessment, except reliability ($p=.01$). Instructors who graduated from American Culture and Literature departments ($\bar{x}=3.28$) found online assessment more reliable compared to instructors who graduated from English Language and Literature ($\bar{x}=2.77$) departments and English Language Teaching departments ($\bar{x}=2.98$).

Table 4

Relationship Between Instructor Perceptions of the Aspects of Online Assessment and Department of Graduation (Kruskal Wallis-H)

Department	N	Mean Rank	H (chi-square)	Sig.
Reliability	English Language Teaching	188	154.52	10.38 .01
	English Language and Literature	74	127.85	
	American Culture and Literature	19	185.63	
	Other	21	177.48	

Institution

Instructors' workplace is not a significant variable in their overall perceptions of online assessment. It is apparent from their mean scores that instructors working at state universities ($\bar{x}=2.82$) and private universities ($\bar{x}=2.81$) had similar perspectives of online assessment overall. Their viewpoints on the components of online assessment also did not present any statistically significant difference.

Administrative duty

Instructors' perspectives of online assessment do not statistically differ according to having an administrative duty ($\bar{x}=2.90$) or not ($\bar{x}=2.80$). This could mean that regardless of being a manager, director, vice director, or coordinator, all instructors had similar perceptions of online assessment.

Office Duty

Instructors' overall perceptions of the online assessment show no significant difference about having an office duty such as testing and assessment, curriculum development, or teacher training duties ($p=.99$). The mean scores of instructors who worked in the offices ($\bar{x}=2.81$) were similar to those who did not have any office duties ($\bar{x}=2.81$).

Self-reported computer expertise

As *Table 5* indicates, instructors' self-reported computer expertise is a significant differentiating factor for instructors' online assessment perception ($p=.02$). According to the table, the mean differences between instructors point out that instructors who reported themselves having excellent computer skills ($\bar{x}=2.97$) had more positive perceptions of online assessment compared to those who reported themselves as having adequate computer skills ($\bar{x}= 2.70$). *Table 29* also shows that some of the components of the online assessment indicated significant differences, while some did not. The table illustrates that instructors' perceptions of online assessment did not significantly differ in validity ($p=.23$), reliability ($p=.22$), and security ($p=.57$) aspects about their computer expertise. Nevertheless, there were statistically significant differences in instructors' responses to affective factors ($p=.00$), practicality ($p=.05$), and the impact of online assessment on teaching and learning ($p=.00$) components about instructors' self-perceived computer literacy.

Table 5

Relationship Between Online Assessment Perceptions and Self-Reported Computer Expertise (One-Way ANOVA)

	Computer Expertise	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	Sig. (p-value)
Online Assessment Perception	Adequate	65	2.70	.44	3.97	.02
	Good	168	2.79	.59		
	Excellent	69	2.97	.65		
Affective Factors	Adequate	65	2.51	.60	6.81	.00
	Good	168	2.65	.82		
	Excellent	69	3.00	.94		
Practicality	Adequate	65	2.57	.58	2.86	.05
	Good	168	2.71	.76		
	Excellent	69	2.88	.79		
Impact on Teaching and Learning	Adequate	65	3.30	.44	4.96	.00
	Good	168	3.32	.59		
	Excellent	69	3.62	.65		

Conclusions and Discussion

According to the results of the study, gender is a statistically significant variable affecting instructors' perspectives of online assessment. It is found that male instructors have a more positive overall perception of online assessment compared to females in this context. They have fewer anxiety issues and feel more comfortable compared to females during an online assessment. Another critical finding of this study is age is an important differentiating variable in instructors' perceptions of online assessment. Instructors younger than 40 have more positive perspectives of online

assessment than those 50 years old and older. Naturally, the results and findings of age and teaching experience are compatible with each other since these two variables are demographically in close connection with each other. As said earlier, teaching experience is effective in creating statistically significant differences between different experience groups. In general, it is seen that instructors with less experience have more positive perspectives with regard to online assessment compared to teachers with long years of experience, reflecting the results of the age variable. The final variable that affects instructors' perceptions of online assessment is self-reported computer expertise. Instructors with higher self-reported computer expertise have a more positive perception of online assessment than those who report themselves as adequate or good users of computers. On the other hand, the highest degree of completed education, department of graduation, the institution of work, having an administrative duty or not, and having an office duty are not significant variables in instructors' perceptions of online assessment.

Pedagogical implications

This study has contradictory points with Abduh (2021), who concludes that gender is not a statistically significant differentiating factor in teacher perceptions toward online assessment. In the current study, gender is found to be a significant factor ($p=.00$), with males having a more positive perception of online assessment than females. Another research this study has contradictory results with is Öz's (2014) study, which concludes that female instructors feel less anxious during an online assessment. However, in this study, it is found that female instructors ($\bar{x}=2.26$) are more anxious during online assessment compared to males ($\bar{x}=2.99$), according to their responses in the affective factors component. Other studies in the literature that have different results from this study are those of Chien et al (2014) and Fageah (2015) study both of which reveal that teachers have positive attitudes toward online assessment. However, the results of this study reveal that instructors had a neutral perception toward online assessment ($\bar{x}=2.81$). In sum, the current study has contradictory results with other studies in literature, some of which found that instructors have less anxiety during online assessment, they have positive attitudes toward it, and gender is either not a significant variable in teachers' online assessment perceptions or even females are less anxious during online assessment.

Practical recommendations

Several practical recommendations can be made in light of the findings. First of all, researchers should focus on understanding how teachers perceive online assessment if their perceptions differ regarding certain factors. Since teachers' beliefs and perceptions greatly influence their practices, a considerable amount of research should be done to understand their perspectives on online assessment and the factors that influence their perceptions (Shim, 2009). Teachers can also benefit from practical recommendations in light of this research. Teachers' anxiety level increases greatly

with age and less computer expertise. Accepting that online assessment might be an inevitable component of assessment, especially in the higher education context, it might be necessary to overcome these issues as much as possible. Regardless of their age, teachers must be given necessary computer or online assessment system training, which should be updated at regular intervals to keep the teachers' skills up-to-date. As for decision makers such as school administrators, testing office members, and test writers, several recommendations can be put forward. The findings of this study suggest that instructors with an adequate level of computer expertise found online assessment less positive compared to the ones with excellent computer skills. Decision makers should be aware of this problem and provide the teachers with the necessary computer training so that the instructors feel more comfortable during online exams. Moreover, the decision-makers should be aware of the benefits and opportunities that online assessment might provide and promote online assessment in their institutions by giving relevant information and training to the teachers working at their institutions. Online assessment will probably be much more common in the future thanks to its ease of use, efficient administration, ease of grading, and grade announcement; its flexible nature of time and space, its prospect to give immediate feedback to the student, and the teacher, institutions, and decision-makers need to be ready to equip their instructors with essential information and skills. Furthermore, they should be ready to make necessary technological innovations and install the required equipment to adapt to 21st-century assessment methods.

Limitations and recommendations for further research

There are several limitations of this study. First of all, the data of this study were collected from 302 participants who worked in a specific context in Turkey. Secondly, only quantitative data were used to come up with descriptive results. Another limitation is that the data is collected in a limited time and, thus, does not represent the participants' ideas throughout their lives. A fourth limitation of this study is the challenge of studying the perspectives of instructors as perspectives, beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes are personal values that are hard to measure and explain, especially with a quantitative study. Finally, the results are limited to the variables investigated in the study.

There might be many other factors and variables that might affect teacher perceptions toward online assessment. To analyze the issue further, researchers should focus on whether other variables affect teacher perceptions of online assessment and to what extent they affect this phenomenon. Other variables such as contact hours, previous training, or experience with online assessment might also affect teacher perceptions. Moreover, this research only explores the factors that affect teacher perceptions of online assessment. Further insight into how and why these variables affect teacher perceptions should be investigated through qualitative and experimental research designs.

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