A Descriptive Study of EFL Teachers' Perception toward E-learning Platforms during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Khalaf Alharbi and Lubna Khalil
English Unit, Deanship of Educational Services, Qassim University, Buraydah, Saudi Arabia.
khalafalharbi10@gmail.com
lubna.khalil1@outlook.com

Abstract: The study critically examines the features of three e-learning platforms: Blackboard (BB), Google Classroom, and Zoom. It provides an in-depth analysis of the digital learning platform's effectiveness in a pandemic like the COVID-19. It synthesizes the strengths and limitations of the selected e-learning platforms for English language teaching. The study focuses on authentic e-learning platforms' potential to encourage English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and learners to take the challenge of adapting to a transforming world that could engage them in e-learning innovation. The research was conducted in the first period of quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic in Saudi Arabia. An electronic survey of 36 items was conducted to identify three different countries' 101 EFL teachers' perceptions about the performance of these platforms. The survey comprised three questionnaires for each e-learning platform with six parts, namely, accessibility and usability, efficiency and convenience, communication and interaction, teacher's attitude, teacher's satisfaction, and e-learning experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data was analysed using Minitab 16 Statistical software. The internal consistency of the survey was measured through the values of Cronbach's Alpha. Other statistical measures such as mean, standard deviation, and agreeable rate (AR) were used to portray the efficacy of each application. The results of the survey indicate that Google Classroom (Ave. AR = 72.92%, Ave. Mean = 3.887) is the most effective e-learning platform, followed by BB (Ave. AR = 68.09%, Ave. Mean = 3.694), and lastly Zoom (Ave. AR = 61.85%, Ave. Mean = 3.544), according to the participants. Furthermore, the findings indicate that free E-learning platforms like Google Classroom could be more beneficial for developing countries, whereas BB Learning Management System (LMS) works best for the developed countries. The research findings should be of interest to the language learners and help teachers and policymakers design e-learning environments to make the learning process feasible in and out of an international global crisis.

Keywords: E-learning platforms, Blackboard, Google Classroom, Zoom Classroom, COVID-19

1. Introduction

It is interesting to explore the opportunities arising from advances in multimedia, web-learning, and other cutting-edge digital revolution technologies available in almost all areas of life which offer potential advantages to people in the workplace, academics, and home. At the beginning of the 21st century, e-learning has been adopted as a supplementary tool in educational systems because the role of digital literacy in education has been acknowledged (Halawi & Mccarthy, 2008). However, a complete transition to e-learning as a primary educational tool for interacting and communicating with students was entirely a different case. It was an unpredicted rapid change through the transformation from the physical domain of conventional teaching to the digital world that was expected due to technology before the COVID-19 pandemic; no one had ever imagined it to be so frustrating. The worst consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have been observed worldwide in the form of complete lockdown for months in 2020, which deeply affected the education sector like all other areas of life. As a result, academia needed to adapt online education with a high level of technical competence to meet the significant challenges of e-learning.

The study's rationale is that emerging technologies have radically transformed the learning scenario (Sayemet al., 2017). The traditional teaching system seems unsuccessful in producing the desired learning outcomes for teaching the English language. Therefore, a detailed digital learning outlook can help the language learning process flow and utilize advanced technologies as teaching tools. Secondly, during the global crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a dire need for innovative teaching methodologies to keep the learning process on track without unnecessary delays. The present study argues that digital learning should have an updated system to lodge into the educational field. It cannot take place randomly by using some simple websites online. Thirdly, the research focuses on the potential benefits and possible drawbacks of three popular e-learning platforms: Blackboard (BB), Google Classroom, and Zoom, examining the context, the learning environment, activities that can be significant for the teachers, learners, and contribute to reshaping the future education system. Finally, this study strongly appeals to the researchers to explore the unfamiliar aspects of the digital world for language learning.

2. Literature Review

2.1 E-learning Platforms

Today e-learning plays a vital role in education as an extraordinary teaching approach (Squillante, Wise & Hartey, 2014). It has successfully integrated classroom-based courses with online and hybrid technology. According to BB (2020), virtual classrooms are in use with a rapid increase of 9000% every year. Distant education, accessibility to educational services, resources, materials, and flexibility in time and space are the significant characteristics of e-learning (Rahayu, 2020; Sayem et al., 2017), which have proved to be extremely valuable during the pandemic since all face to face learning had to come to a sudden halt. Learners experience "personalization and positive motivation" on e-learning platforms (Northey et al., 2015. pp. 172). E-learning platforms provide exceptional ease and liberty to users (Halawi & Mccarthy, 2008). Students can understand the importance of the education process in academic settings, and they eagerly participate in the tasks, learning activities, and home assignments (Uziak, et al , 2018). Students' motivation and willingness come from innovative and flexible information delivery (Al Rawashdeh et al., , 2021). In the present situation of COVID-19, e-learning seems to be a perfect way to learn how to manage their time and save energy and resources in the learning process. BB, Google Classroom, and Zoom are synchronous Learning Management Systems (LMS) for e-learning which are being used by most educational institutions worldwide during the COVID-19 pandemic to avail all the benefits mentioned above.

2.2 Blackboard (BB)

BB Learning System is offered in the academic suite of Blackboard Inc (Bradford et al. 2007; Cader & McGovern, 2003). It is a paid e-learning platform launched as a commercial LMS and focuses on a higher education level with a refined presentation of unique features (Bradford et al., 2007; Martin, 2008; Squillante, Wise & Hartey, 2014). BB is used worldwide by many colleges and universities with potential benefits (Beatty, 2010). It is considered a flexible and easily accessible educational platform (Uziak et al., 2018; Beatty,2010), and users can access BB at any place via the world wide web (WWW). Among the most distinctive features of BB are efficient functionality, usability, standardization, security, student-teacher interaction, and class management.

Collaboration and communication are regarded as the best LMS features embedded in BB (Bradford et al., 2007; Uziak et al., 2018; Chen, Dobinson & Kent, 2020). Since the teacher-student interaction during the pandemic has been of utmost importance, BB provides access for the teachers to communicate with students by asynchronous and synchronous platforms. Students can notice announcements on BB, which can be posted with downloadable supplementary materials and attachments. Another feature is emailing within the BB system added and stored on each student's profile with different formats. Blackboard Collaborate Ultra (BCU) allows face-to-face classroom interaction, which creates a sense of physical presence on campus. This feature has proven to be very effective in instilling the feeling of being in a classroom, both for the learners and the teachers. Teachers can give virtual classes on BCU by creating their live sessions with convenience (Chen, Dobinson & Kent, 2020). A large audience can be managed and up to 250+ students to join a session on BB. However, the drawback is that it is hard to maintain student motivation during the lessons. Teachers cannot fully engage the students and they participate passively (Rogers, 2011).

Standardization (Beatty, 2010) and user security (Squillante, Wise, & Hartey, 2014) are significant features with a hierarchical organization followed rigidly for class management. Teachers can create or upload their course materials like lectures, assignments on BB with different formats. The PP slides, hyperlinks, audio/visual aids, and instructional materials are easily accessible (Bradford et al., 2007). It is easy to monitor students' progress and participation in online classes. A distinctive feature of BB is assessment. Online exams, tests, and quizzes have become necessary to assess students during the pandemic and can be designed easily with a timed schedule in BB (Beatty, 2010). After submitting, students can get immediate feedback with or without graded material that can be automated or faculty-initiated on their projects, homework, and quizzes (Bradford et al., 2007; Martin, 2008).

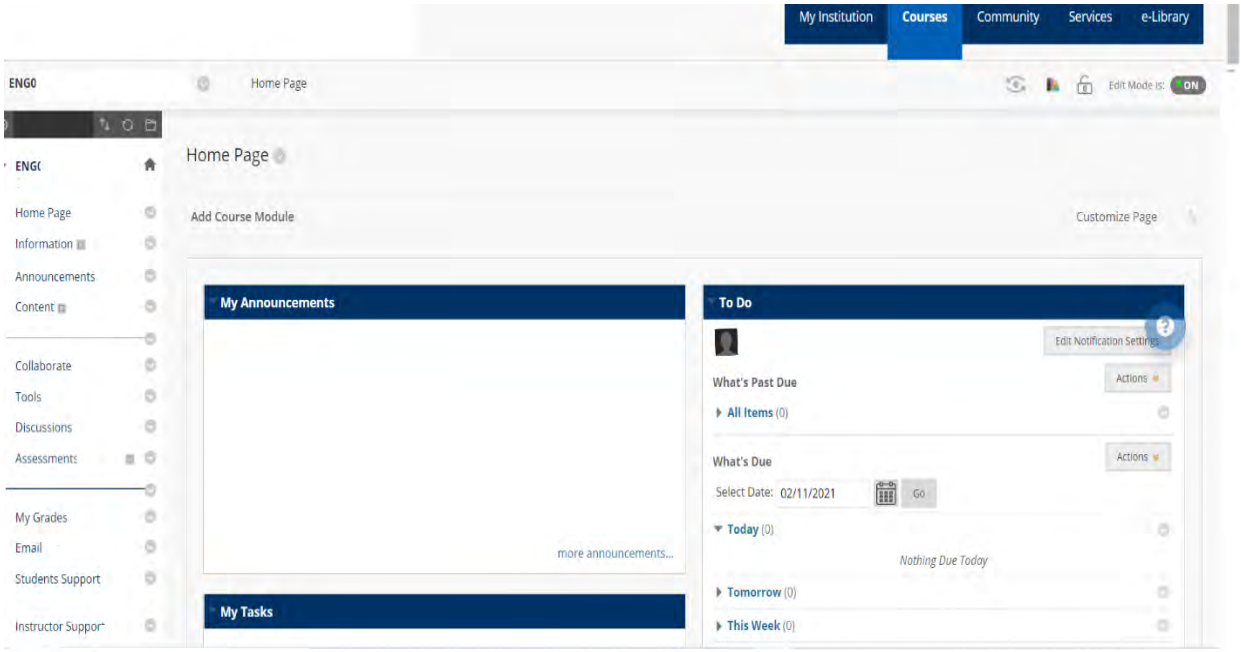

Figure 1: *Blackboard Portal*

However, BB has some limitations. First is the cost, with academic institutions having to pay a hefty amount to use the services. Secondly, BB's complex interface and the inherent technical issues can disappoint the teachers (Lavine, et al.,2012). Finally, the study materials are not available to anyone without enrollment in the class. It means that outsiders cannot take advantage of the resources, which otherwise should be accessible free to all (Beatty, 2010).

2.3 Zoom

Zoom has unique popularity and convenience for EFL teaching and learning features. Zoom is a third-generation synchronous web-based tool launched in 2013 (Sayem et al., 2017; Rahayu,2020)**.** It has gained much attention from teachers and learners in academia during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, Zoom can be easily incorporated in any educational institution at any level as a user-friendly software (Bates, 2005).

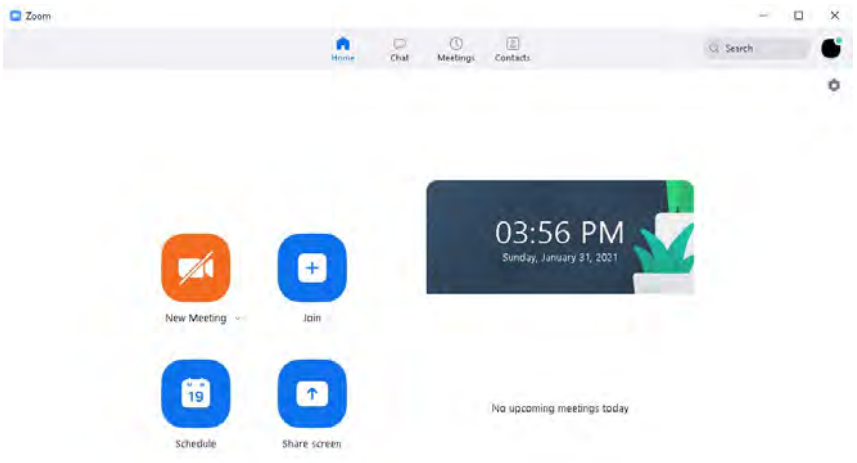

Figure 2: Zoom Portal

Among Zoom's main features, gripping from the language learning point of view, are individual and group collaboration through video conferencing, collaborating and participating in the discussion, file sharing, and data security (Archibald et al., 2019; Dharma, Asmarani & Dewi, 2017). Remote classroom sessions via Zoom through the video-conferencing application offer a great learning opportunity for students worldwide, especially in English learning. Sayem et al., 2017 assert the effectiveness of Zoom as a digital teaching platform for teachers

and students. The results confirm that the Zoom platform can reduce teacher's workload by 25% without compromising teaching material delivery quality. Dharma, Aswarani and Dewi (2017) compared Skype and Zoom as online media applications for teaching Japanese students grammar and conversation. The researchers concluded that Zoom is a better e-learning platform to teach effectively, and learners can interact easily.

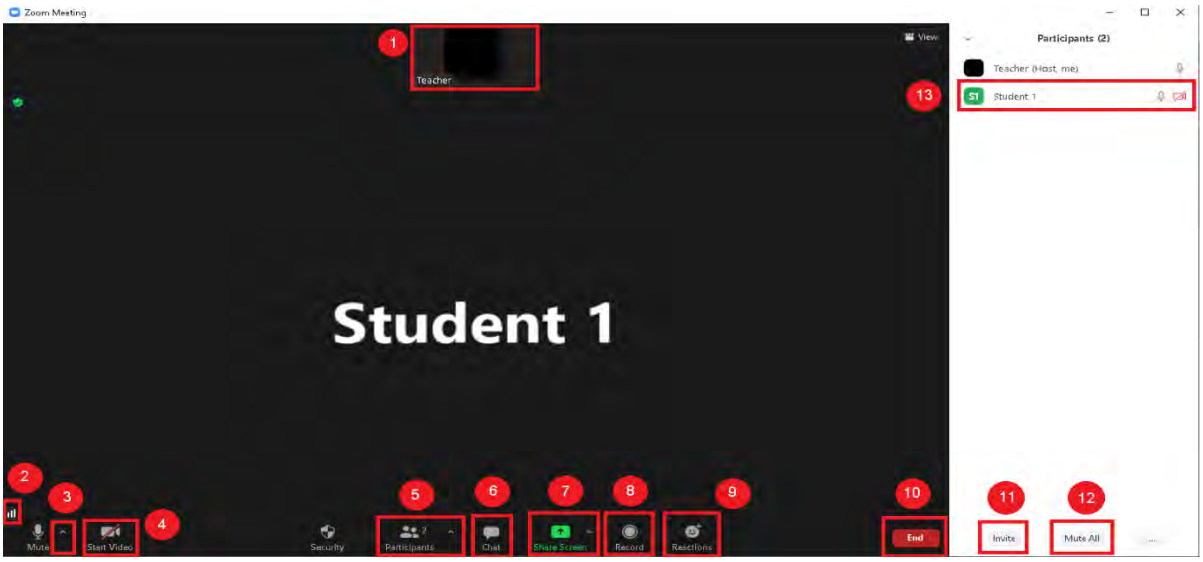

Figure 3: Zoom Interface

Zoom screen annotation encourages EFL teachers to deliver their instructional material more effectively. They can explain a concept or a topic more comprehensively by using essential annotation tools. Both verbal and non-verbal feedbacks are available for the participants. Also, teachers can utilize Zoom breakout room functionality for group work, allowing the host to split the Zoom meeting into 50 breakout rooms with 200 participants in separate sections like physical classes.

Drawbacks of Zoom are reluctance due to distraction (Brainard & Watson, 2020). Users can experience audio and video quality deterioration during lessons, affecting participants interaction, and therefore limit the language learning process. The screen sharing feature is also subject to lag and can disrupt the flow of online presentations. Lastly, sharing files is not possible on mobile devices and can only be done using a PC.

2.4 Google Classroom

Google has introduced a valuable productivity tool, Google Classroom (GC) (Ventayen et al., 2018), with other practical applications. An attractive feature of GC is the cost-free service (Albashtawi & Al Bataineh, 2020; Gupta & Pathania, 2020; Hemrungrote, Jakkaew & Assawaboonmee, 2017), which could prove to be a game-changer for institutions during the high inflation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the institutions would not have explicitly pay Google to use GC's features, they could save a lot of cost over the period of pandemic. The users do not have to pay for creating their accounts (Ventayen et al., 2018), and teachers and learners can enjoy its benefits for free and save their budgets spent on paper (Gupta & Pathania, 2020). It requires technically less savvy users so that anyone can use it without strict professional training, which is good news for language teachers. GC centralization helps English learners, teachers, and educators to merge their e-learning teaching resources in a single cloud-based location and create the learning tasks within the application (Hemrungrote, Jakkaew & Assawaboonmee, 2017). GC is highly integrated with main Google applications, like G Suite (Albashtawi & Al Bataineh, 2020; Ventayen et al., 2018). Users can save and organize the materials in personalized Google Drive folders and recreate them whenever required. Students can access the assigned tasks anywhere and use the Google Doc application to complete and submit their work. The assignment reception and submission are organized and encourage students to self-directed learning (Hemrungrote, Jakkaew & Assawaboonmee, 2017). The assignment page of GC is an excellent way to keep them updated through Gmail. It highlights the upcoming assignments and tasks and gives reminders for the deadlines (Hemrungrote, Jakkaew and Assawaboonmee, 2017).

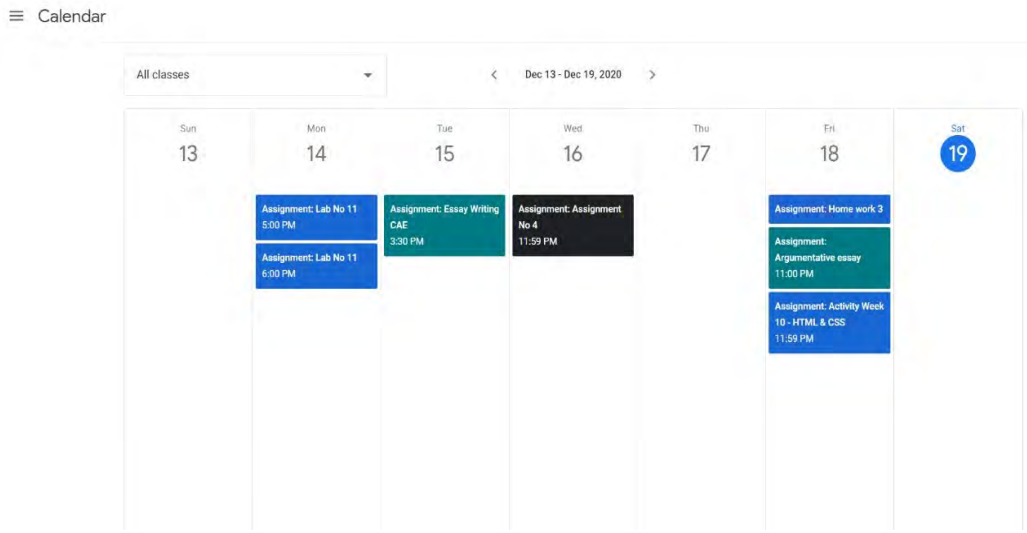

Figure 4: Google Classroom Portal

GC provides constructive feedback, which EFL teachers can use to respond conveniently and promptly. Students can get immediate feedback on their written work with the teacher's support, which motivates students to correct and write better to improve their English language skills. In addition, EFL teachers can upload audio and videos as supplementary teaching material with shareable links. Also, students can work collaboratively and share their tasks with the group members.

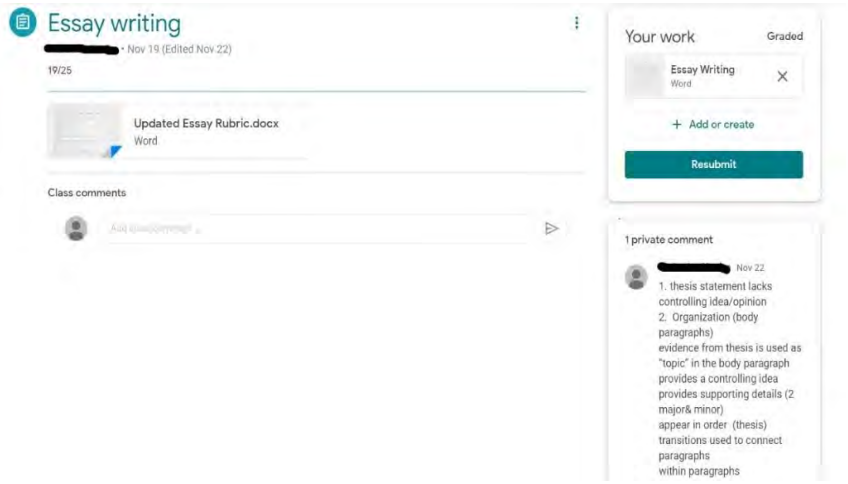

Figure 5: Assignment Submission & Teacher's feedback on Google Classroom

GC has a few drawbacks that slow down the learning process, mostly related to the technical part. Less configuration is a big issue, annoying teachers and students alike. Account management is not ideal with fewer advanced management and integrated options. Also, the classroom capabilities are restricted due to the G Suite. Sometimes users face problems sharing and editing the materials, which is a big obstacle for language learners.

2.5 Effects of COVID-19 and e-learning

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed education forever. In these perilous times, students have to isolate themselves to halt the spread of the virus, but they need to re-emerge and assemble to continue their education. The current situation seems hard for both teachers and students who have already been devastated in lockdown. Some of the unprecedented challenges for English language teaching are designing the content in a digital context, delivering with ease to naïve audiences, developing digital competence and friendliness to collaborate with the students, and keeping them involved and motivated about using the e-learning platforms (Kolesova, Moskovkin & Popova, 2021).

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Saudi Arabia has successfully implemented e-learning in education, as acknowledged by UNICEF. The transition from physical to distance learning was carried out at all levels of

academia, beginning in February 2020. It was primarily to ensure student safety to continue the educational process; therefore, online classes were opened immediately for more than six million students in schools and universities. According to the Arab News, 27 public universities hosted two million virtual courses in higher education, which was considered a great success. Most universities use BB LMS to manage and progress in e-learning and it has proven productive throughout the crisis because teachers and students have readily embraced it. This study's central purpose is to investigate the efficiency of e-learning platforms and their productivity during the COVID-19 pandemic on the education system. More specifically, the integration of e-learning in English language teaching is assessed from EFL university teacher's perspective, which leads the authors to search for answers to the following questions:

1. From EFL teacher's perceptions, can (a) BB, (b) GC, and (c) Zoom technology provide a useful e-learning environment?
2. How efficient are (a) BB, (b) GC, and (c) Zoom as e-learning platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic?

3. Research Methodology

The present study evaluates three e-learning platforms: BB, GC, and Zoom. The data was obtained from a diverse sample (n=101), and university teachers were accessed at home and abroad. The research's principal objective is to assess the teacher's opinions about using three e-learning platforms and their usefulness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A complete survey consisted of 3 separate questionnaires, one for each application, with 36 items each. Two experienced ESL teachers critically reviewed the survey, and a pilot study was also conducted to identify and rephrase any statements presenting ambiguity to the respondents. The survey was conducted online on Google Forms. Notably, the participants had the choice of filling the questionnaire for any of the three applications. They were required to fill in multiple surveys if they wanted to evaluate more than one application. Each questionnaire was divided into six distinct sections to evaluate aspects of e-learning platforms' effectiveness during the COVID-19 pandemic from the teacher's perspectives. The sections were:

1. Accessibility and Usability
2. Efficiency and Convenience
3. Communication and Interaction
4. Teacher's Attitude
5. Teacher's Satisfaction
6. E-learning Experience during the COVID-19 pandemic

Quantitative data was gathered and analyzed using Minitab 16 Statistical Software. The survey's internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, a good measure of data reliability. The mean was used to measure data spread, while Standard Deviation was employed to measure data dispersion. Agreeable Rate (AR) was also calculated by adding the percentage responses of *4: Agree* and *5: Strongly Agree* options of each item, which provided insight during the data analysis.

3.1 Participants

The survey was administered on EFL teachers (male and female) at different universities in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Canada. The rationale for collecting qualitative data from other regions was to examine the performance of e-learning platforms widely. The researchers ensured that the respondents were fully aware of the study's purpose and seriousness. They accepted the requests to fill in the survey willingly with a flexible timeline. The anonymity of the respondents was assured to receive unbiased answers.

All the participants utilize some form of e-earning platform for synchronous or asynchronous teaching, and as they reported, during the pandemic, they were entirely dependent on e-learning platforms. The bar chart (Figure 6) shows that the gender ratio (male: female) was almost equal to 1, with 51 participants being male while 50 were female.

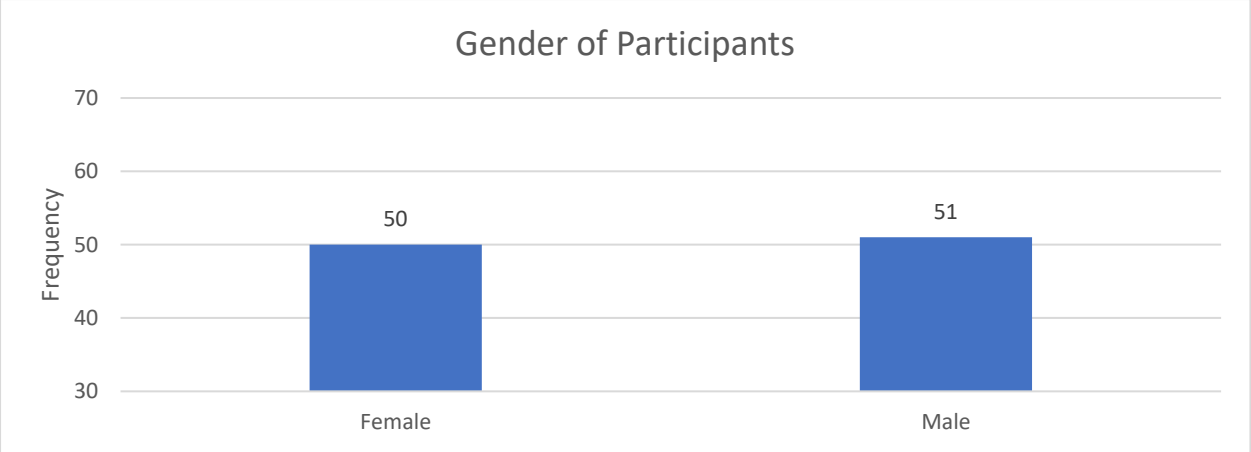

Figure 2: *Gender of Participants*

The bar chart below (Figure 7) shows the data in chart form. 12 teachers had a professional teaching experience of 1-3 years, while 14 had 4-7 years. There were 15 senior teachers with 7-10 years' experience. Most teachers (n = 60) had more than ten years' experience on their records. The professionally experienced teachers can help critically highlight the problems and suggest solutions to these expected or unexpected English language teaching and learning issues.

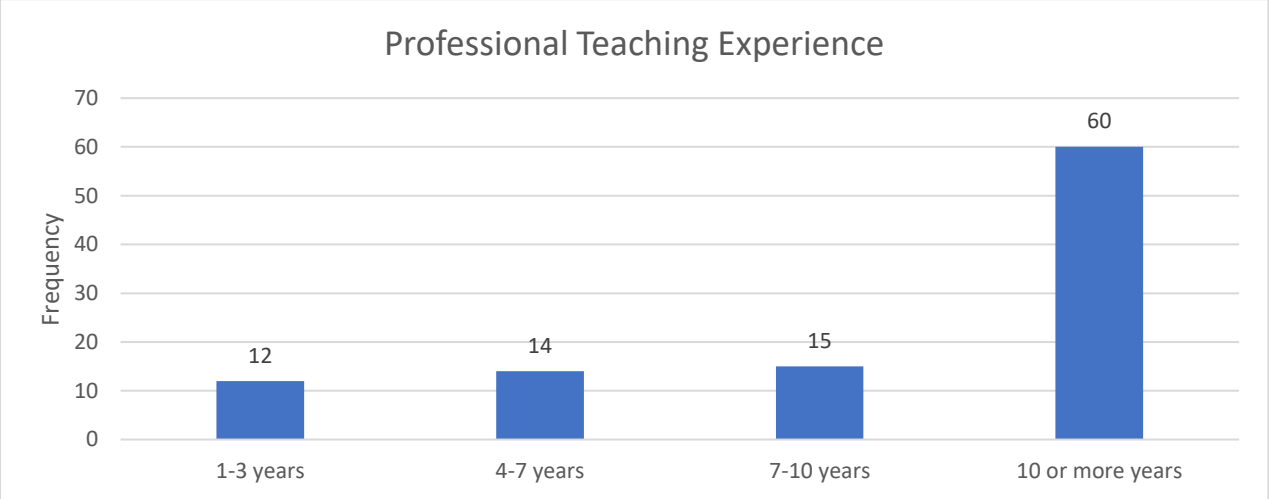

Figure 3: *Professional Teaching Experience*

The bar chart below (Figure 8) shows that most teachers were newly introduced to e-learning platforms with only 1-2 years of utilization experience (n=65), whereas 18 of the participants had been using them for at least 3-4 years. 10 participants had 5-6 years of e-learning platform utilization, and 3 teachers used them for 7-8 years. Only 5 teachers used e-learning platforms for at least 9-10 years. The high difference from using e-learning is because most teachers have not been exposed to the e-learning platform, and they have been using online resources as supplementary material. However, the COVID-19 pandemic shifted the teaching medium to e-learning.

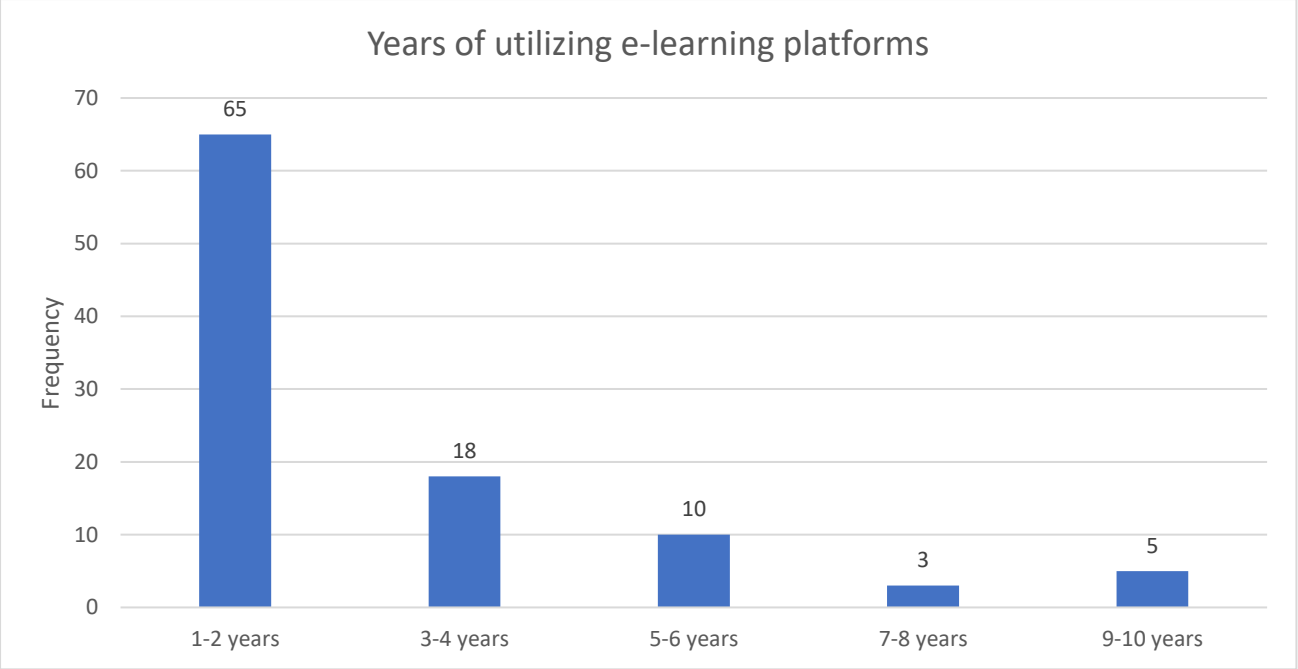

Figure 4: Years of utilizing e-learning platforms.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Blackboard (BB)

BB was the most popular among all the e-learning platforms studied in this research, as it received the highest number of responses (n=74). Most EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia were approached, and most responses were received from Saudi universities using BB as an e-learning platform.

Reliability analysis was performed for each Section resulted in healthy Cronbach's Alpha values, especially section C (α=0.834) and section E (α=0.855). High mean values per item generally coincided with a high agreeable rate (AR). The BB questionnaire had an average AR of 68.09% and an average mean of 3.694. Table A provides the descriptive statistics of results for each section of the BB questionnaire, which answers the research question(a) about the effectiveness of BB as an e-learning teaching tool. (See Appendix.1).

The results show that 73.26% of the teachers (n=74) filled out the BB questionnaire. Section A assesses the accessibility and usability of BB as an e-learning tool. The teachers find BB to be fairly accessible and usable (Ave. ARA=76.35%, Ave. MA=3.822), especially, creating an account and signing into Blackboard is convenient (AR=83.78%, M=4.041, SD=0.898). Most are satisfied regarding the sharing of audio/video materials (AR=58.11% M=3.91, SD=1.044), but almost one quarter of the teachers believe it is not easy to apply. For section B, the extremely high agreeable rate (AR=93.25%) and mean (M=4.365) of the responses to Q8 suggest sending notifications to the students about assignments, quizzes, and exams is one of the most efficient features. Furthermore, most teachers feel comfortable delivering the lecture on BB (AR=85.14%, M=4.108, SD=0.751). The difference in AR is also seen for the BB grading system. Although most teachers (AR=68.92%, M=3.75, SD=0.781) agree to grade and monitor their students' performance by the BB grading system, the rest disagree with this usability. The results are in line with Alturki, Aldraiweesh, and Kinshuck (2016) that the King Saud University's faculty members can successfully use BB LMS to offer lectures to students.

Almost the same is the difference of opinion regarding the teacher's satisfaction with the online assessment on BB. Many reasons can be linked to the teacher’s dissatisfaction with the BB grading system. We opine that the teachers who prefer traditional assessment systems may not be fully acquainted with the technological usability of grading on the BB system. Also, there may be various risks involved in online assessment, which can be avoided in face-to-face examinations, such as plagiarism and cheating. These findings are uniquely reported by the present research. However, the BB as a mechanical delivery information tool does not lead teachers to introduce innovative teaching strategies, which can help obtain knowledge in an eLearning environment as Rogerson-Revell (2007) had suggested.

In section C, most teachers consider students engagement (AR=64.87 %, M=3.527, SD=0.982) and participation in virtual class sessions (AR=75.68%, M=3.851, SD=0.871) highly satisfactory. A comparatively lesser AR (=66.22) is seen for teacher's enthusiasm about teaching BB, though the teachers perceive that they are approachable to the students during the class (AR=97.3%, M=4.432, SD=0.599). However, they do not primarily credit BB as a suitable application for group work, pair work, or individual work in class. Notably, 12.16% of the teachers strongly disagree, and 17.57% disagree, accounting for the highest percentage values of disagreement in section C. If in an e-learning environment, the group activities, pair work or individual assignments are not designed to engage the students cognitively, chances are the medium of instruction may not prove fruitful.

In section D, the teachers also believe they should receive training for the new technology used in e-learning (AR=94.6%, M=4.432, SD=0.599), and must be a part of training sessions before using BB (AR=83.79%, M=4.041, SD=0.835). A few teachers face reluctance using BB as the main teaching tool because they are not accustomed to its interface (AR=17.57%, M=2.527, SD=1.037). As is mentioned in figure 7, most teachers have been teaching for more than 10 years, whilst Figure 8 shows that most (n=65) have an e-learning utilization experience of 1-2 years. The reason can be identified that most EFL teachers do not have enough exposure and training to utilize BB efficiently as an e-learning tool (Blin & Munro, 2008). Similarly, Alturki, Aldraiweesh, and Kinshuck (2016) reported that teachers should have updated knowledge about the software usage and they stressed the need to offer the bilingual delivery of the materials.

Section E, reflects that BB moderately satisfies teachers in terms of meeting the learning objectives through its online platform (AR=55.41%, M=3.419, SD=0.876). Only 37.84% of teachers agree with the prospects of the BB's successful application to all subjects (AR=37.84%, M=3.041, SD=1.152). Just 18.92% of the participants prefer to connect remotely through BB than face to face teaching, suggesting that most teachers favor physical teaching on campus compared to BB (AR=18.92%, M=2.419, SD=1.098). In language teaching, physical presence in real-life classes enlightens better learning outcomes. Students and teachers have a direct face-to-face interaction, which cannot be practiced in online classes.

Section F's results indicate that teachers have a positive experience of teaching e-learners with BB during the COVID-19 pandemic (AR=89.19%, M=4.135, SD=0.728). They believe e-learning through BB saves students a lot of time, which could have been wasted during the COVID-19 lockdowns (AR=97.3%, M=4.351, SD=0.535). However, regarding self-learning and curiosity to gain information, teachers expressed a lower agreement rate (AR=68.92%, M=3.811, SD=0.7.53). This can be attributed to the fact that students may lack self-learning motivation in an e-learning environment because the relevant teaching strategies are still to be worked out. Most teachers agree to learn new teaching strategies, which they had never used before in a traditional academic setting (AR=85.13%, M=4.041, SD=0.730). Hence, these findings respond to the second research question (a) about the efficiency of the e-learning platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.2 Zoom

The second part of the first research question (c) is obtained by evaluating Zoom's effectiveness as an e-learning platform. 14.85% of the total participants (n=15) completed the survey for the Zoom application. Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from α=0.704 to α=0.939, while the average AR of the questionnaire reached 61.85% with an average mean of 3.544. Table B, Appendix. 2 shows the descriptive statistics of results for all sections of the Zoom questionnaire.

In section A, most teachers like the Zoom interface and respond satisfactorily (AR=73.33%, M=3.667, SD=1.234). The account creation with an easy sign-in feature is appreciated (AR=80%, M=4.000, SD=0.845). In contrast, a lesser AR is recorded for assignment reception and teacher's feedback (AR=46.67 %, M=3.267, SD=1.280), and almost the same for assignment notification (AR=46.66 %, M=3.067, SD=1.387), which is the lowest proportion in this section. However, essential e-learning platform features such as sharing audio/video materials with the students are very convenient in Zoom (AR=73.33%, M=3.933, SD=1.100). They help in creating an ideal e-learning environment for English language teaching. These findings affirm the Archibald et al. (2019) study that whilst a few participants had technical difficulties, the vast majority rated their experience as great and preferred Zoom over other interviewing methods such as phone and face-to-face interviews.

For section B, most of the teachers can organize their teaching material on Zoom (AR=60 %, M=3.400, SD=1.056); however, the agreement is less positive when sending student notification about the assessments (AR=46.67 %, M=3.200, SD=1.182). These Zoom features can be developed to help EFL teachers in the future. A large number

of teachers show dissatisfaction regarding monitoring the student's performance on Zoom (AR=26.67 %, M=3.000, SD=0.756) and assessment system (AR=33.33 %, M=3.133, SD=0.743). These novel findings of the survey indicate the drawbacks of using Zoom as an e-learning platform for teaching the English language. The authors believe that if teachers cannot monitor and assess student performance, they would not achieve the desired learning outcomes. Further, it can lead them to uncertain situations about their students' language skills improvement. More than half of the teachers agree to the lecture delivery statements (AR=53.33 %) and annotation while delivering the lecture (AR=66.66 %).

For section C, many teachers believe that they can engage the students in the productive discussion (AR=66.67%, M=3.733, SD=1.163). They show their satisfaction for students understanding the explanation of the topics in class (AR=66.67%, M=3.867, SD=0.915). Interestingly, most teachers are approachable to students (AR=73.34%, M=3.733, SD=0.704) using private or public chat. However, they are less enthusiastic about using Zoom as a teaching tool (AR=53.33%, M=3.400, SD=1.242). It seems that they are more comfortable with the traditional classroom setting. This finding indicates that further research is needed to investigate why teachers lack enthusiasm for using e-learning platforms.

For section D, teacher's attitude and training sessions are thought to be necessary before adopting Zoom as an e-learning tool (AR=73.33%, M=3.800, SD=0.941). Except for 6.67% of the total, the teachers claim that they can use the Zoom application with comfort after training (AR=73.33%, M=3.800, SD=1.041). As discussed in the opinion section of BB, technical expertise is essentially required for the optimum utilization of any e-learning platform.

Section E shows teacher's satisfaction towards using Zoom as digital technology for teaching the English language. Two-thirds of the participants agree that the course could meet the learning objectives using Zoom (AR=66.67%, M=3.533, SD=0.990). Almost half believe that Zoom can be used to teach all subjects (AR=53.34%, M=3.067, SD=1.280). If given a choice, a majority agrees to select Zoom over traditional teaching, which is a good sign and reflects that teachers are eager to adopt e-learning (AR=60 %, M=3.400, SD=0.910). Over 70% of teachers thought Zoom could boost motivation and learning initiative (AR=73.34%, M=3.667, SD=0.816). Surprisingly, a lower proportion prefers connecting remotely via Zoom over on-campus courses.

Lastly, section F's results suggest that teaching with Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic has been a good experience for most teachers (Ave. AR_F=76.67%, Ave. M_F=3.789), as shown by Ave. AR and Ave. Mean. According to most of the participants, e-learning is one of the few activities that students look forward to during the COVID-19 lockdowns (AR=86.67%, M=4.000, SD=0.756). They agree that self-learning and curiosity in students can be promoted through e-learning because they search for the relevant topics on the internet to prepare their assignments during the COVID-19 lockdowns (AR=80%, M=3.667, SD=0.900). The findings identify Zoom as a potential e-learning platform during the COVID-19 pandemic by responding to the second research question (c).

4.3 Google Classroom (GC)

To obtain the answer to the first research question (b), twelve teachers filled the survey for GC, which accounted for 11.88% of the total participants. Reliability Analysis showed adequate Cronbach's Alpha values, prominently for section C (α=0.713), section E (α=0.854) and section F (α=0.704). Average AR reached 72.92%, with an average mean of 3.887 for the GC questionnaire. Table C, Appendix.3 shows the descriptive statistics of results for each Section of the GC questionnaire.

The results indicate all the teachers like receiving updated notifications about the assignments submitted by the students, shown by the perfect agreeable rate and high mean value (AR=100%, M=4.417, SD=0.515). They also appreciate the feature of submitting feedbacks after receiving the assignments (AR=91.67%, M=4.417, SD=0.669). The teachers find it easy to share audio/video teaching materials on GC (AR=83.33%, M=4.167, SD=0.718) due to its uncomplicated interface. Timely notification of the students about assignments, quizzes, and exams is also a well-liked feature of GC (AR=100%, M=4.417, SD=0.515), with great comfortability delivering the lectures on this application (AR=83.34%, M=4.000, SD=0.603).

They can successfully keep the students engaged in productive discussion on GC (AR=83.33%, M=3.917, SD= 0.515), and are easily approachable by the students for questions during the class (AR=100%, M=4.250, SD=0.452). The majority of teachers also feel enthusiastic in teaching via GC (AR=83.33%, M=3.917, SD=1.084). Likewise, Fauzi et al. (2021) investigated student's acceptance of Google Classroom during the Covid-19

pandemic. They state that students profited from the platform's features since they were easy to use and made studying more enjoyable. Azhar & Nayab (2018) agree with GC's popularity. However, the present research findings contradict with Azhar and Nayab (2018) that according to teacher's perception GC is somewhat inefficient and the key reason for its inefficiency is the absence of a user-friendly interface

The teachers deem that training for the new technology used in e-learning is necessary (AR=100%, M=4.583, SD=0.515). Many researchers also consider teacher's training a vital factor (Kebaetse, Nkomazana, & Haverkamp, 2014). Only a few are unwilling to use GC as the main teaching tool because of its unfamiliar interface (AR=16.67%, M=2.583, SD=0.996). The course can meet the learning objectives on GC (AR=75%, M=4.083, SD=0.793). It can be a source of motivation booster to teachers and students (AR=75%, M=3.917, SD=0.669).

The present study reports a novel finding that most teachers agree that e-learning is a healthy interactive activity that helps with student depression and mental stress during the COVID-19 lockdowns (AR=91.67%, M=4.167, SD=0.577). E-learning through GC saves students time which could have been wasted during the COVID-19 lockdowns (AR=91.66%, M=4.167, SD=0.835). The results confirm the positive impact of GC as an educational tool during the COVID-19 pandemic, which addresses the second research question (b).

5. Conclusion

Three e-learning platforms, BB, GC, and Zoom, were comprehensively studied in this research. The study focused on the teacher's academic outlook on e-learning platform's potential and possible issues in e-learning and their adoption during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research findings conclude that GC is the most effective educational tool in e-learning, followed by BB and Zoom. However, teacher training is deemed necessary for implementing new technology in language teaching and learning. The teachers need to be creative and tech-equipped to overcome these issues in the future. Due to limited resources and time, our study was confined to three e-learning platforms. To get a wider perspective, we recommend that future studies take into consideration all reputable e-learning sites.

Furthermore, the study acquired just EFL instructors' views, and it would be more valuable if student's perspectives were recorded. Future research initiatives should consider the technical issues and challenges related to accessibility and usability among e-learners. Overall, the study's findings support that during the COVID -19 pandemic, utilizing authentic eLearning platforms can make a difference in the online teaching scenario.

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Appendix. 1

Table A: Descriptive statistics of Blackboard questionnaire results

N = 74	Frequency Table (%)					Agreeable Rate (AR)	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
	1 = Strongly Disagree	**2 = Disagree**	**3 = Neutral**	**4 = Agree**	**5 = Strongly Agree**				
A. Accessibility and usability									0.691
1. BB has an intuitive and flexible interface.	4.05	1.35	16.22	63.51	14.86	78.37	3.838	0.844	
2. Creating an account and signing in to the BB is easy.	2.70	4.05	9.46	54.05	29.73	83.78	4.041	0.898	
3. I can receive the assignments and submit the feedback.	1.35	5.41	22.97	56.76	13.51	79.73	3.757	0.808	
4. I can receive updated notifications about the assignments submitted by the students.	2.7	5.41	29.73	50	12.16	79.73	3.635	0.869	
5. I can share audio/video teaching materials easily.	4.05	8.11	9.46	48.65	29.73	58.11	3.919	1.044	
6. I can design the course materials easily on BB.	1.35	6.76	21.62	56.76	13.51	78.38	3.743	0.829	
B. Efficiency and Convenience									0.764
7. I can organize my teaching material online on BB.	1.35	4.05	13.51	66.22	14.86	81.08	3.892	0.751	
8. I can send notifications to the students about assignments, quizzes, and exams.	1.35	1.35	4.05	45.95	47.3	93.25	4.365	0.751	
9. I can grade and monitor students' performance by the BB grading system.	1.35	1.35	28.38	58.11	10.81	68.92	3.757	0.718	
10. I am satisfied with the online assessment on BB.	2.71	5.41	33.78	54.05	4.05	58.1	3.514	0.781	
11. I can annotate while delivering the explanation of a topic during the lecture on BB.	1.35	2.7	27.03	63.51	5.41	68.92	3.689	0.681	
12. I feel comfortable delivering my lecture on BB.	0	4.05	10.81	55.41	29.73	85.14	4.108	0.751	
C. Communication and Interaction									0.834
13. I can keep students engaged and participate in productive discussion.	4.05	13.51	17.57	55.41	9.46	64.87	3.527	0.982	
14. I believe students can understand	2.7	4.05	17.57	56.76	18.92	75.68	3.851	0.871	

N = 74	Frequency Table (%)					Agreeable Rate (AR)	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
	1 = Strongly Disagree	**2 = Disagree**	**3 = Neutral**	**4 = Agree**	**5 = Strongly Agree**				
when I explain a topic in the online class.									
15. I am enthusiastic about teaching via BB.	2.7	10.81	20.27	55.41	10.81	66.22	3.608	0.919	
16. I am approachable, and students can ask me questions during the class.	0	1.35	1.35	50	47.3	97.3	4.432	0.599	
17. BB is a perfect educational tool for teacher-student interaction and collaborative work among the students.	6.76	8.11	31.08	43.24	10.81	54.05	3.432	1.021	
18. I think BB is helpful for group work, pair work, or individual work in class.	12.16	17.57	28.38	37.84	4.05	41.89	3.041	1.103	
D. Teacher's Attitude									0.475
19. Teachers and instructors should get trained for the new technology used in e-learning.	0	0	5.41	45.95	48.65	94.6	4.432	0.599	
20. I am reluctant to use BB as a main teaching tool because the BB interface is new to me.	9.46	52.7	20.27	10.81	6.76	17.57	2.527	1.037	
21. It is difficult to use BB without training.	5.41	24.32	20.27	36.49	13.51	50	3.284	1.141	
22. Teachers should have training sessions before using BB.	2.7	1.35	12.16	56.76	27.03	83.79	4.041	0.835	
23. I can use all BB applications comfortably after training sessions.	1.35	5.41	13.51	51.35	28.38	79.73	4.000	0.876	
24. I recommend using BB as a main instructional tool in education.	4.05	16.22	18.92	47.3	13.51	60.81	3.500	1.050	
E. Teacher's Satisfaction									0.855
25. The course can meet the learning objectives through BB online platform.	1.35	16.22	27.03	50	5.41	55.41	3.419	0.876	
26. BB online learning platform can be applied to all the subjects.	10.81	21.62	29.73	28.38	9.46	37.84	3.041	1.152	
27. BB is my first choice in active learning compared to traditional learning.	9.46	17.57	32.43	37.84	2.7	40.54	3.068	1.025	
28. I think BB can be a learning initiative and motivation booster.	5.41	8.11	37.84	39.19	9.46	48.65	3.392	0.963	

N = 74	Frequency Table (%)					Agreeable Rate (AR)	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
	1 = Strongly Disagree	**2 = Disagree**	**3 = Neutral**	**4 = Agree**	**5 = Strongly Agree**				
29. I think BB can be a motivation booster for both teachers and students.	4.05	16.22	31.08	36.49	12.16	48.65	3.365	1.028	
30. I prefer to connect remotely through BB than teaching a course physically on campus.	22.97	33.78	24.32	16.22	2.7	18.92	2.419	1.098	
F. E-learning Experience during COVID-19									0.788
31. I had a positive experience of teaching e-learners with BB during COVID-19.	1.35	1.35	8.11	60.81	28.38	89.19	4.135	0.728	
32. I believe e-learning through BB saved students a lot of time, which could have been wasted during COVID-19 lockdown.	0	0	2.7	59.46	37.84	97.3	4.351	0.535	
33. I believe e-learning was one of the few activities that students looked forward to during COVID-19 lockdown.	0	2.7	16.22	58.11	22.97	81.08	4.014	0.712	
34. E-learning emerged as a healthy interactive activity that greatly helped with depression and mental stress during COVID-19 lockdown.	0	0	20.27	60.81	18.92	79.73	3.986	0.630	
35. E-learning during COVID-19 promoted self-learning and curiosity in students as they searched the relevant topics on the internet to prepare their assignments.	0	4.05	27.03	52.7	16.22	68.92	3.811	0.753	
36. I learned new teaching strategies to teach e-learners, which I had never used before in traditional teaching.	1.35	1.35	12.16	62.16	22.97	85.13	4.041	0.730	

Appendix.2

Table B: Descriptive statistics of Zoom questionnaire results

N=15	Frequency Table (%)					Agreeable Rate (AR)	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
	1 = Strongly Disagree	**2 = Disagree**	**3 = Neutral**	**4 = Agree**	**5 = Strongly Agree**				
A. Accessibility and usability									0.744
1. ZOOM has an intuitive and flexible interface.	13.33	0	13.33	53.33	20	73.33	3.667	1.234	
2. Creating an account and signing in to ZOOM is easy.	0	6.67	13.33	53.33	26.67	80	4.000	0.845	
3. I can receive the assignments and submit the feedback.	6.67	26.67	20	26.67	20	46.67	3.267	1.280	
4. I can receive updated notifications about the assignments submitted by the students.	20	13.33	20	33.33	13.33	46.66	3.067	1.387	
5. I can share audio/video teaching materials easily.	6.67	0	20	40	33.33	73.33	3.933	1.100	
6. I can design the course materials easily on ZOOM.	13.33	13.33	20	40	13.33	53.33	3.267	1.280	
B. Efficiency and Convenience									0.704
7. I can organize my teaching material online on ZOOM.	6.67	13.33	20	53.33	6.67	60	3.400	1.056	
8. I can send notifications to the students about assignments, quizzes, and exams.	6.67	20	26.67	40	6.67	46.67	3.200	1.082	
9. I can grade and monitor students' performance by the ZOOM grading system.	0	26.67	46.67	26.67	0	26.67	3.000	0.756	
10. I am satisfied with the online assessment on ZOOM.	0	20	46.67	33.33	0	33.33	3.133	0.743	
11. I can annotate while delivering the explanation of a topic during the lecture on ZOOM.	6.67	0	40	33.33	20	53.33	3.600	1.056	
12. I feel comfortable delivering my lecture on ZOOM.	6.67	6.67	20	53.33	13.33	66.66	3.600	1.056	
C. Communication and Interaction									0.939
13. I can keep students engaged and participate in productive discussion.	6.67	6.67	20	40	26.67	66.67	3.733	1.163	

N=15	Frequency Table (%)					Agreeable Rate (AR)	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
	1 = Strongly Disagree	**2 = Disagree**	**3 = Neutral**	**4 = Agree**	**5 = Strongly Agree**				
14. I believe students can understand when I explain a topic in the online class.	0	6.67	26.67	40	26.67	66.67	3.867	0.915	
15. I am enthusiastic about teaching via ZOOM.	6.67	20	20	33.33	20	53.33	3.400	1.242	
16. I am approachable, and students can ask me questions during the class.	0	6.67	20	66.67	6.67	73.34	3.733	0.704	
17. ZOOM is a perfect educational tool for teacher-student interaction and collaborative work among the students.	0	26.67	13.33	40	20	60	3.533	1.125	
18. I think ZOOM is helpful for group work, pair work, or individual work in class.	0	6.67	33.33	40	20	60	3.733	0.884	
D. Teacher's Attitude									0.802
19. Teachers and instructors should get trained for the new technology used in e-learning.	6.67	0	20	40	33.33	73.33	3.933	1.100	
20. I am reluctant to use ZOOM as a main teaching tool because the ZOOM interface is new to me.	13.33	33.33	13.33	26.67	13.33	40	2.933	1.335	
21. It is difficult to use ZOOM without training.	0	26.67	20	40	13.33	53.33	3.400	1.056	
22. Teachers should have training sessions before using ZOOM.	0	13.33	13.33	53.33	20	73.33	3.800	0.941	
23. I can use all ZOOM applications comfortably after training sessions.	6.67	0	20	53.33	20	73.33	3.800	1.014	
24. I recommend using ZOOM as a main instructional tool in education.	6.67	13.33	33.33	26.67	20	46.67	3.400	1.183	
E. Teacher's Satisfaction									0.812
25. The course can meet the learning objectives through ZOOM online platform.	6.67	6.67	20	60	6.67	66.67	3.533	0.990	
26. ZOOM online learning platform can be applied to all the subjects.	13.33	26.67	6.67	46.67	6.67	53.34	3.067	1.280	
27. ZOOM is my first choice in active learning compared	6.67	6.67	26.67	60	0	60	3.400	0.910	

N=15	Frequency Table (%)					Agreeable Rate (AR)	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
	1 = Strongly Disagree	**2 = Disagree**	**3 = Neutral**	**4 = Agree**	**5 = Strongly Agree**				
to traditional learning.									
28. I think ZOOM can be a learning initiative and motivation booster.	0	13.33	13.33	66.67	6.67	73.34	3.667	0.816	
29. I think ZOOM can be a motivation booster for both teachers and students.	6.67	6.67	20	53.33	13.33	66.66	3.600	1.056	
30. I prefer to connect remotely through ZOOM than teaching a course physically on campus.	6.67	33.33	13.33	26.67	20	46.67	3.200	1.320	
F. E-learning Experience during COVID-19									0.892
31. I had a positive experience of teaching e-learners with ZOOM during COVID-19.	6.67	13.33	13.33	53.33	13.33	66.66	3.533	1.125	
32. I believe e-learning through ZOOM saved students a lot of time, which could have been wasted during the COVID-19 lockdown.	0	6.67	13.33	46.67	33.33	80	4.067	0.884	
33. I believe e-learning was one of the few activities that students looked forward to during COVID-19 lockdown.	0	6.67	6.67	66.67	20	86.67	4.000	0.756	
34. E-learning emerged as a healthy interactive activity that greatly helped with depression and mental stress during COVID-19 lockdown.	0	13.33	13.33	53.33	20	73.33	3.800	0.941	
35. E-learning during COVID-19 promoted self-learning and curiosity in students as they searched the relevant topics on the internet to prepare their assignments.	0	20	0	73.33	6.67	80	3.667	0.900	
36. I learned new teaching strategies to teach e-learners, which I had never used before in traditional teaching.	6.67	6.67	13.33	60	13.33	73.33	3.667	1.047	

Appendix. 3

Table C: Descriptive statistics of Google Classroom questionnaire results

N = 12	Frequency Table (%)					Agreeable Rate (AR)	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
	1 = Strongly Disagree	**2 = Disagree**	**3 = Neutral**	**4 = Agree**	**5 = Strongly Agree**				
A. Accessibility and usability									0.656
1. GC has an intuitive and flexible interface.	0	8.33	16.67	41.67	33.33	75	4.000	0.953	
2. Creating an account and signing in to the GC is easy.	0	0	16.67	41.67	41.67	83.34	4.250	0.754	
3. I can receive the assignments and submit the feedback.	0	0	8.33	41.67	50	91.67	4.417	0.669	
4. I can receive updated notifications about the assignments submitted by the students.	0	0	0	58.33	41.67	100	4.417	0.515	
5. I can share audio/video teaching materials easily.	0	0	16.67	50	33.33	83.33	4.167	0.718	
6. I can design the course materials easily on GC.	0	8.33	50	16.67	25	41.67	3.583	0.996	
B. Efficiency and Convenience									0.613
7. I can organize my teaching material online on GC.	0	25	8.33	41.67	25	66.67	3.667	1.155	
8. I can send notifications to the	0	0	0	58.33	41.67	100	4.417	0.515	

N = 12			Frequency Table (%)			Agreeable Rate (AR)	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
	1 = Strongly Disagree	**2 = Disagree**	**3 = Neutral**	**4 = Agree**	**5 = Strongly Agree**				
students about assignments, quizzes, and exams.									
9. I can grade and monitor students' performance by the GC grading system.	0	16.67	25	41.67	16.67	58.34	3.583	0.996	
10. I am satisfied with the online assessment on GC.	0	8.33	33.33	41.67	16.67	58.34	3.667	0.888	
11. I can annotate while delivering the explanation of a topic during the lecture on GC.	0	16.67	16.67	50	16.67	66.67	3.667	0.985	
12. I feel comfortable delivering my lecture on GC.	0	0	16.67	66.67	16.67	83.34	4.000	0.603	
C. Communication and Interaction									0.713
13. I can keep students engaged and participate in productive discussion.	0	0	16.67	75	8.33	83.33	3.917	0.515	
14. I believe students can understand when I explain a topic in the online class.	0	8.33	33.33	41.67	16.67	58.34	3.667	0.888	
15. I am enthusiastic	8.33	0	8.33	58.33	25	83.33	3.917	1.084	

N = 12			Frequency Table (%)			Agreeable Rate (AR)	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
	1 = Strongly Disagree	**2 = Disagree**	**3 = Neutral**	**4 = Agree**	**5 = Strongly Agree**				
about teaching via GC.									
16. I am approachable, and students can ask me questions during the class.	0	0	0	75	25	100	4.250	0.452	
17. GC is a perfect educational tool for teacher-student interaction and collaborative work among the students.	0	0	25	41.67	33.33	75	4.083	0.793	
18. I think GC is helpful for group work, pair work, or individual work in class.	0	16.67	16.67	33.33	33.33	66.66	3.833	1.115	
D. Teacher's Attitude									0.610
19. Teachers and instructors should get trained for the new technology used in e-learning.	0	0	0	41.67	58.33	100	4.583	0.515	
20. I am reluctant to use GC as a main teaching tool because the GC interface is new to me.	16.67	25	41.67	16.67	0	16.67	2.583	0.996	
21. It is difficult to use GC	0	33.33	16.67	41.67	8.33	50	3.250	1.055	

N = 12			Frequency Table (%)			Agreeable Rate (AR)	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
	1 = Strongly Disagree	**2 = Disagree**	**3 = Neutral**	**4 = Agree**	**5 = Strongly Agree**				
without training.									
22. Teachers should have training sessions before using GC.	0	16.67	16.67	50	16.67	66.67	3.667	0.985	
23. I can use all GC applications comfortably after training sessions.	0	0	33.33	41.67	25	66.67	3.917	0.793	
24. I recommend using GC as a main instructional tool in education.	0	0	25	41.67	33.33	75	4.083	0.793	
E. Teacher's Satisfaction									0.854
25. The course can meet the learning objectives through GC online platform.	0	0	25	41.67	33.33	75	4.083	0.793	
26. GC online learning platform can be applied to all the subjects.	8.33	25	8.33	33.33	25	58.33	3.417	1.379	
27. GC is my first choice in active learning compared to traditional learning.	0	0	33.33	50	16.67	66.67	3.833	0.718	
28. I think GC can be a learning initiative and motivation booster.	0	0	33.33	50	16.67	66.67	3.833	0.718	

N = 12	Frequency Table (%)					Agreeable Rate (AR)	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
	1 = Strongly Disagree	**2 = Disagree**	**3 = Neutral**	**4 = Agree**	**5 = Strongly Agree**				
29. I think GC can be a motivation booster for both teachers and students.	0	0	25	58.33	16.67	75	3.917	0.669	
30. I prefer to connect remotely through GC than teaching a course physically on campus.	16.67	25	16.67	16.67	25	41.67	3.083	1.505	
F. E-learning Experience during COVID-19									0.704
31. I had a positive experience of teaching e-learners with GC during COVID-19.	0	0	16.67	58.33	25	83.33	4.083	0.669	
32. I believe e-learning through GC saved students a lot of time, which could have been wasted during the COVID-19 lockdown.	0	8.33	0	58.33	33.33	91.66	4.167	0.835	
33. I believe e-learning was one of the few activities that students looked forward to during COVID-19 lockdown.	0	16.67	8.33	50	25	75	3.833	1.030	
34. E-learning emerged as	0	0	8.33	66.67	25	91.67	4.167	0.577	

N = 12			Frequency Table (%)			Agreeable Rate (AR)	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α
	1 = Strongly Disagree	**2 = Disagree**	**3 = Neutral**	**4 = Agree**	**5 = Strongly Agree**				
	a healthy interactive activity that greatly helped with depression and mental stress during COVID-19 lockdown.								
35.	E-learning during COVID-19 promoted self-learning and curiosity in students as they searched the relevant topics on the internet to prepare their assignments.	0	8.33	25	33.33	33.33	66.66	3.917	0.996
36.	I learned new teaching strategies to teach e-learners, which I had never used before in traditional teaching.	0	0	16.67	66.67	16.67	83.34	4.000	0.603