

## EFL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS THE USE OF E-LEARNING

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**ABSTRACT:** In the era of digital development, electronic learning (e-learning) has been widely employed in varied fields, including education. Specifically, e-learning has been used as one of the means of instruction and interaction between lecturers and students in many educational institutions. A quantitative research method was used to explore the perceptions of 60 students pursuing an English major at a university in the Mekong Delta towards the use of e-learning for their study. Four main aspects of e-learning were examined, including perceived usefulness, perceived self-efficacy of using the e-learning system, perceived ease of use, and behavioral intention. The quantitative data were collected through an online questionnaire. The results showed that students express a positive perception towards the e-learning system and the most noticeable outcome is that e-learning gives them the flexibility and the use of online materials for their self-study. Students expressed their confidence and skills in using the e-learning system. Nevertheless, it is proposed that there should be more training sessions and instructions on how to find information and interact through the e-learning system effectively so that their learning performance is enhanced. Recommendations are made to universities, lecturers, and students to make the e-learning process more successful.

**KEYWORDS:** *E-learning, English major, perceptions*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Every aspect of life has been changing since the fast-changing of technology, and education is no exception [1]. In that context, digital development is seen to bring many changes in the field of education as well [2]. Under that trend, universities on over the world face great challenges to keep up with this rapid movement in finding learning and teaching solutions that can foster and support students' study besides the traditional methods [1–3]. With the strong development of 4.0 technology, e-learning has become a more flexible form of learning [4,5]. Moreover, e-learning serves as a vital key to unlocking this problem for educational institutions, especially during the pandemic, including Vietnam [6–8]. As a result, the e-learning system is widely recognized around the world and is being used commonly in many universities [3,9]. It is expected that lecturers are encouraged not only to deliver specialized knowledge but also to help students master skills for lifelong learning and innovation, information, media, and technology [9]. In Vietnam, many universities have implemented e-learning in teaching and learning to keep up with the development of the society [10,11].

Varied definitions have been provided by different researchers. For the most preferable concept, e-learning is viewed as a form of learning supported by electronic services and equipment [12]. This is a form of learning using an online-based platform as an intermediary between instructors and students, helping students to self-study anytime, anywhere through multimedia electronic learning materials, which includes learning through mobile devices, or smart learning devices [13]. Therefore, e-learning is a tool and a place in which students can get learning materials in a faster, easier, and more effective way than traditional learning methods [4]. Additionally, it is believed that e-learning provides many benefits to both learners and lecturers [3]. One of those benefits is that it can create opportunities for students to be more active in the learning process. This can help students expand their sources of information in the learning process [14,15]. In the same opinion, it is pointed out that e-learning promotes the application of student-centered teaching methods and also helps to create a highly interactive learning environment. As a result, this allows students to actively participate in the learning process and determine their own learning pace [9]. These further help students can be dynamic and independent in learning, and students know what to look for in order to evaluate the information and materials they receive. At the same time, students also actively seek answers to questions posted and discussed in the e-

learning forum. Furthermore, students can make the most of technology to achieve their learning goals. This is expected to have an impact on their employability skills in the future.

Although e-learning has been widely used recently, students face certain difficulties in using it for their learning. Moreover, some might fall behind with this rapid movement and change as there are many factors affecting the acquisition of lessons through e-learning such as personal background, internet connection or financial problems[6,12]. As a consequence, the ability to update e-learning may vary from one to another. This may lead to the issue that there is a big gap among students when they participate in this form of learning. Many students and even lecturers believe that learning through the e-learning system does not offer as many benefits as classroom-based teaching [4]. In addition, many students find that they do not have the skills to make the most of technology, and therefore they just use some very basic functions.

Based on the above overview, it is important to explore the perception of students towards the using of e-learning. This will help lecturers adjust teaching methods to meet students' needs. Therefore, the author carried out this present study and the participants are students who are pursuing English as a major at a university in the Mekong Delta. In addition to that, some strategies and methods are proposed to make the teaching and learning process of e-learning more effective.

## II. METHODOLOGY

This study employed quantitative research methods. Quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire. The questions were designed using Google Forms and distributed online to students. The survey was designed to include 18 items with 4 parts and was presented on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = completely disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly disagree). Part 1 includes five items about the perceived usefulness of the e-learning system. Part 2 presents four items about self-assessment of capacity in using the e-learning system. Part 3 consists of four items about perceived ease of use and part 4 covers five items about perceived intention to use e-learning in the future. The questionnaire of this present study was adopted and adapted from Khan et al.,'s[6].

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Participants' information and the Reliability of the Questionnaire

Table 1: Participants' general information

Academic Year	No of participants	Percentage
Freshman	10	16.7
Sophomore	11	18.3
Junior	13	21.7
Senior	26	43.3
Total	60	100.0

The participants in this study are currently pursuing English as their major, and it is required that they use e-learning during their time of study. As a result, the participants in this present study have experience in using the e-learning system. The survey data recorded a total of 60 responses, in which the senior accounted for the largest number of participants with 26 (43.3%). Whereas 21.7%, 18.3% and 16.7% of the participants were of the age of first-year, second-year and third-year students respectively.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software (version 22.0). The reliability of the scale is shown by Cronbach's alpha index in Table 2.

Table 2: The reliability of the questionnaire

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.921	18

The result of Table 2 indicates that Cronbach's alpha coefficient score is .921. This shows that the scale used in the questionnaire is reliable and valid.

### 3.2 Students' perceptions towards the use of e-learning

Table 3.1 Perceived usefulness of the E-learning system

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learning place	4.32	.911
Assignment submissions	4.32	.813
Interaction	4.27	.800
Learning time	4.00	1.008
Learning performance	3.55	.999

Regarding the perception of the usefulness of e-learning, the majority of students said that e-learning helps them to be flexible to opt for study location and is useful when students want to submit assignments directly on the system (M=4.32). In addition, participants expressed that they can exchange ideas with lecturers through the utilities available on the system without having to meet face-to-face and they can be flexible to study any time they prefer with M=4.27 and M=4.00 respectively. Besides, students agree that the e-learning system helps to improve learning efficiency and performance. This is consistent with the previous research results of Khan et al, [6] and Kokoç[14]. It has been explained that the perceived flexibility of time and space and perceived flexibility positively affects the academic performances of the students in the context of e-learning.

Table 3.2 Perceived self-efficacy of using the E-learning system

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sufficient skills	4.08	.944
Provided materials	4.05	.910
System functions	3.82	1.081
Confidence without instruction	3.77	.998

In terms of self-assessment of their ability to use the E-learning system, students think that they have enough confidence and skills to use the system. Besides, it is also helpful and convenient in sharing the-learning materials available for their self-study (M=4.08, M=4.05). The participants also express their confidence in using the system and its function without someone else to instruct. It reveals that students could perform tasks well by themselves. Students also showed a level of confidence when self-studying, using the materials provided by the teacher for self-study. This result is different from the conclusion in the study of Khan et al, [6]. In their study, participants showed that although they have a positive attitude towards updating materials, few thought that it is not helpful in sharing the learning handouts.

Table 3.3 Perceived ease of use

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Easy to use	4.13	.853
Simplify learning process	3.78	1.106
Easy to find necessary information	3.77	1.031
Friendly-user set-up service	3.70	.926

In relation to the perception of the ease of use of the e-learning system, students present that the e-learning system is generally easy to use (M=4.13). Besides, students also find that the interface and organization of the e-learning system are suitable for their learning style and can easily find the necessary information to serve the learning process. Furthermore, students agree that using the e-learning system can simplify their learning process. This result has similarities with the findings of Hidayat [3] and Cakrawati[1] that students believe that e-learning platforms are user friendly and accessible.

Table 3.3 Behavioral Intention of Using E-learning

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
a free learning tool	4.10	1.020
encourage to others	4.00	1.008
update subject knowledge with the latest amendments	3.97	.920
make use of the content and functions of the e-learning system for academic activities	3.95	1.048
assist learning in the future	3.85	1.162

With regard to the perception of behavioral intention to use the e-learning system, students note that they would use and encourage their friends to use it as a free tool to support their learning activities ( $M=4.00$ ), update subject knowledge in the future. This is in vein with the results of Tanveer[16], it is stated that e-learning foster students to take their own learning and provide skills to be a life-long learners and be adaptable with the movement of technology, which leads to the satisfaction of their study in a long term.

### 3.3 Proposed strategies and methods when using e-learning system in teaching and learning

It is crucial to get cooperation and responsibility from differnt stakeholders in order to use e-learning effectively in teaching and learning.

*For the the educational institutions:* Firstly, specific set of rules and policies for operating e-learning system need to be established. Secondly, access to the system, and information about modules, materials and functions should be continuously updated and promptly confirmed to lecturers and students through emails. Thirdly, it is necessary to have online technical assistant to provide timely support on system-related issues. Beside that, the layout and interface of the system should be simply designed so that it is easy to use, thus attract and promote students to use e-learning more frequently. Another important suggestion is that it is necessary to pay attention to the material copyright. Therefore, it is vital that universities need to support and the diverse document sources from prestige universities globally. By doing this, lecturers can prepare handouts and exercises from different souces for students to confidently and freely use the learning resources available on the system.

*For the unit in charge:* short guidance sessions should be often organized to help students practice using different functions of the system, from basic to advance levels. Besides, guidance videos should be available online so that lecturers and students can review and save time develop the lessons on the system more effectively.

*For lecturers:* In terms of exercises uploaded, they should be designed carefully and must serve the learning outcomes of the modules. This aims at helping students follow the module content appropriately and easily. Regarding interaction, it is advisable that lecturers should spend time exploring the various features available on the system so that they can create more and more interesting activities for students to actively participate in. By doing these activities, lecturers and students can interact and discuss questions arise. Although students may not ask lecturers for instructions on how to use the system, lecturers should support students every step of using online platforms to ensure that students will be able to operate e-learning platforms outside classroom correctly. Additionally, lecturers not only transfer knowledge but at the same time raise students' awareness of the importance of e-learning. This can help lecturers monitor the learning process of students on the system so that they can promptly take action.

What is more, the main and supporting documents need to be uploaded to the system to help students have reference materials before and after classroom time. It is lectures' responsibility to inform and instruct students necessary information related to the subject such as assessment, assignments and due dates they should complete on the system.

*For students:* Before attending the in-class lesson, students need to actively grasp and learn the knowledge related to the subject content through the documents posted on the system. This not only helps students acquire knowledge quickly but also helps students have time to learn more in-depth and raise relevant questions when interacting with lecturers and peers in classroom. Moreover, it is encouraged that students should discuss and share their opinions, challenges they might face using e-learning to peers and lecturers. This will help to improve students' learning competence and help lecturers adjust their teaching plans.

## IV. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE STUDIES

The integration of electronic platforms into teaching and learning has earned much attention and is becoming more popular than ever. This form has been applied in many universities around the world in general, and in Vietnam in recent years. This is an inevitable trend when technology is increasingly developed and the application of information technology in learning and teaching is increasingly widely applied. This

study was conducted with the aim of finding out the perception of English majors students at a university in the Mekong Delta towards the use e-learning system. The results found out that the students showed that e-learning helps students be more flexible in choosing the time and place for their study and helps them more active in doing and submitting assignments. With the results of this study, the author hopes that teaching and learning on the e-learning system can bring positive outcomes to both lecturers and students, and in the end, e-learning can help students grasp the lesson in time and is also a foundation to equip themselves with technology so that they are able to meet the needs of workplace in the future.

It is suggested that further studies can be conducted with more participants from various fields of study. It is also worth to explore the difference between students' and teachers' perception. From there, appropriate teaching methods using e-learning and quality of education can be enhanced.

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