



# The Use and Perception of Online Learning among EFL Faculty Members in Yemen

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**Abstract:** This study examines the use, perception, and challenges of online learning among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) faculty members in Yemen. For data collection, a questionnaire was distributed to 50 EFL lecturers. The findings reveal significant variations in the use, perceptions, and challenges of online learning based on demographic factors such as age, gender, and academic rank. While faculty members frequently use online resources for professional development and encouraging student self-study, there is limited use of online platforms for formal assessments and regular coursework integration. Old-aged faculty members, males, and those with higher academic ranks generally demonstrated more positive perceptions of online learning effectiveness. However, female instructors and those with lower academic ranks reported facing greater challenges in implementation. Key challenges identified include technical issues, maintaining student engagement, and adapting traditional teaching methods to online platforms. These results highlight the need for targeted professional development programs, improved technological infrastructure, and tailored support systems that consider the diverse needs and experiences of EFL faculty in Yemen. The study contributes valuable insights for policymakers and educational leaders seeking to enhance the quality and effectiveness of online EFL instruction in Yemen's higher education institutions, particularly in the context of ongoing conflict and limited resources.

**Keywords:** EFL faculty members, online learning, Yemen, faculty perceptions, teaching challenges, educational technology

## 1. Introduction

The integration of technology in education, particularly in the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), has been rapidly evolving over the past decade (AlTameemy & Alrefaee 2021). This digital transformation has been further accelerated by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated an unprecedented shift to online learning modalities (Hodges et al., 2020). In the context of Yemen, a nation grappling with prolonged conflict, economic instability, and infrastructural challenges, this transition has presented both opportunities and significant obstacles for educators and institutions alike (Al-Mekhlafi, 2021; AlTameemy & Alrefaee, 2021).

The adoption of online learning in EFL education has been a subject of increasing interest globally, with studies exploring its effectiveness, challenges, and impact on teaching practices. In Yemen, research has highlighted the complex landscape of technology integration in education, revealing

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both enthusiasm for digital tools and significant barriers to their effective implementation (Al-Hakami & Al-Mekhlafi, 2021; Al-Qadasi & Al-Hidabi, 2021). According to recent World Bank reports (2021), only 26.7% of the Yemeni population had access to the internet in 2019, highlighting a substantial digital divide. This limited connectivity, coupled with frequent power outages and high internet service costs, creates fundamental barriers for English language students and teachers attempting to access online learning platforms consistently (Al-Dubai et al., 2020).

While the potential benefits of online learning in EFL contexts are well-documented, including increased access to authentic materials and opportunities for global communication (Chapelle, 2017), the realities of its implementation in Yemen often present challenges. These can range from technical issues and lack of training to concerns about student engagement and assessment. The ongoing conflict in Yemen has exacerbated these challenges while simultaneously making online English language learning more crucial than ever. The destruction of educational infrastructure, displacement of populations, and economic hardships have created an urgent need for alternative educational solutions (Muthanna et al., 2022).

This study aims to contribute to this growing body of knowledge by examining the use and perception of online learning among EFL faculty members in Yemen. Specifically, it addresses three key research questions:

1. How do faculty members perceive online learning in teaching English in Yemen?
2. What are the challenges of teaching English online in Yemen?
3. How often do EFL teachers in Yemen use online teaching?
4. Does the demographic background of the participant play a role in these variables?

By exploring these questions, this research seeks to provide insights into the current state of online EFL education in Yemen, building upon previous studies in the region. Understanding the factors influencing the adoption and perception of online learning among EFL faculty is crucial for developing effective strategies to enhance digital literacy and pedagogical practices in higher education (Safar & AlKhezzi, 2013). The findings of this study not only contribute to the academic discourse on online EFL education but also inform policymakers and educational leaders in Yemen about the realities of online learning implementation. This knowledge is essential for developing targeted interventions and support systems to improve the quality and effectiveness of online EFL instruction in the country's higher education institutions, particularly in the face of ongoing conflict and resource limitations.

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Participants

The participants of this study are 50 EFL lecturers from three Yemeni universities: Saba Region University in Marib, Albaydha University, and Sana'a University. As shown in Table 1, 58% are male and 42% are female. The age distribution reveals that 32% fall between 31-35 years old, while 54% are aged 36-40. The majority (68%) hold the position of assistant lecturer, with the remaining 32% being assistant professors.

**Table 1.** Demographic Variables of the Participants

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	21	42

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	Female	29	58
	26-30	16	32
	31-35	27	54
	36-40	5	10
	Above 40	2	4
Academic Rank	Assistant Lecturer	34	68
	Assistant Professor	16	32
<b>Total</b>		50	100

### 2.1. Instrument

The study employed a structured questionnaire designed to measure three primary constructs: the use of online learning tools, perceptions of online learning effectiveness, and challenges faced in online teaching. Each construct was measured using 10 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Never to 5=Always). The questionnaire was developed based on a comprehensive review of literature on online learning in EFL contexts and validated through expert review. Items were crafted to address specific aspects of online teaching relevant to the Yemeni higher education context.

### 2.2. Data Collection

The questionnaire was distributed to EFL faculty members at three Yemeni universities: Saba Region University in Marib, Albaydha University, and Sana'a University. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation across different academic ranks and experience levels. The questionnaire was administered over two months in 2024, with follow-up reminders sent to maximize response rates. From the distributed questionnaires, 50 complete responses were received and included in the final analysis.

### 2.3. Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for each construct. The analysis yielded satisfactory internal consistency values: .790 for the use of online learning, .839 for the perception of online learning, and .752 for challenges faced. All values exceeded the generally accepted threshold of .70, indicating reliable measurement of the intended constructs (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Reliability Statistics

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Use	.790	10
Perception	.839	10
Challenges	.752	10

This suggests that each construct's items are legitimate and appropriate for measuring the target dimension. Furthermore, each of the three constructs has ten items, which is a sufficient quantity to guarantee measurement reliability. More items can lessen the influence of any one item on overall reliability and help to capture the whole range of the construct being measured. In terms of data analysis, the researcher can have confidence in using these constructs in their studies as they have demonstrated good reliability. Furthermore, the tool's items were found to be not normally distributed as it happened to be less than  $p.value=.05$  which was shown in Table (5).

## 2.4. Data Analysis

The analysis employed both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Initial examination of data distribution using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed non-normal distribution patterns ( $p < .05$ ) for all three constructs (Table 3), necessitating the use of non-parametric statistical tests.

**Table 3.** One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Results

Parameter	Use of Online Learning	Perception of Online Learning	Challenges
Mean	2.9304	2.9020	3.5424
Std. Deviation	.39789	.48085	.36628
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.002	.000

Descriptive statistics were calculated to determine means and standard deviations for each construct. Response categories were established based on mean scores: Never (1-1.99), Sometimes (2-2.99), Often (3-3.99), and Always (4-5).

For inferential analysis, the following non-parametric tests were employed:

1. The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to examine differences across age groups (26-30, 31-35, 36-40, and above 40 years) in relation to the three constructs.
2. The Mann-Whitney U test was utilized to analyze differences based on:
  - Gender (male vs. female)
  - Academic rank (assistant lecturer vs. assistant professor)

Statistical significance was set at  $p < .05$  for all inferential analyses. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to conduct all analyses. Results were organized to address the study's research questions regarding use patterns, perceptions, and challenges of online learning among EFL faculty members, with particular attention to demographic variations in these areas.

This comprehensive analysis approach enabled the examination of both overall patterns and specific demographic differences in faculty members' experiences with online learning, providing a robust foundation for addressing the study's research objectives.

**Table 4.** Comparing the means of the constructs  
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Parameter	Use of Online in Learning/Teaching English	Perception of Online Learning	Challenges
Normal Parameters:			
Mean	2.9304	2.9020	3.5424
Std. Deviation	.39789	.48085	.36628
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.001c	.002c	.000c

From the table above, the nonparametric tests were used to compare the means of the constructs regarding the demographic variables. A one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was used to check the perception of online learning and challenges in teaching English. The mean score of Use of Online Learning in Teaching English was 2.9304 and this means the utilization of online was less than expected – as it was expected that the utilization of online will be of high level. For the perception of online learning was 2.9020 which means that the participants' perception was very low. Regarding the challenges construct, the mean of this construct was 3.5424, which means that the

challenges somehow constitute some level of hindrance. The standard deviations for these variables are .39789, .48085, and .36628. The p-values for all three variables are statistically significant at the .05 level, with p-values of .001, .002, and .000. This indicates that there is a significant difference between the use, perception and use of online learning in teaching English.

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1. 3.1. Faculty Perceptions of Online Learning in English Language Instruction

Table 5 presents the perceptions of Yemeni EFL teachers regarding online learning, displaying mean scores and response categories for ten statements related to their experiences with online teaching.

**Table 5.** Faculty Perceptions of Online Learning in English Language Instruction

No	Statement	Mean	Category	Minimum	Maximum
1	I find it easy to adapt my teaching methods to an online format.	2.58	Sometimes	Occasionally	Always
2	I believe online learning can be as effective as traditional classroom learning for teaching English.	2.70	Sometimes	Occasionally	Always
3	I feel comfortable using online platforms for teaching English.	2.78	Sometimes	Never	Always
4	Online learning tools enhance student engagement in my English classes.	2.80	Sometimes	Occasionally	Always
5	I think online learning provides sufficient interaction between me and my students.	2.80	Sometimes	Occasionally	Always
6	Online learning is an effective method for teaching English.	2.82	Sometimes	Occasionally	Always
7	I believe online learning can improve the English language skills of my students.	2.92	Sometimes	Occasionally	Often
8	I would recommend online learning as a viable method for teaching English to other faculty members.	2.98	Sometimes	Occasionally	Always
9	I am satisfied with the support and training I receive for online teaching.	3.18	Sometimes	Occasionally	Always
10	I feel that online learning requires more effort from me as a teacher.	3.46	Often	Occasionally	Always
	Total	2.90	Sometimes		

Analysis of faculty perceptions regarding online learning in English language instruction reveals a nuanced perspective among Yemeni EFL teachers. As shown in Table 6, teachers demonstrate

moderate adaptability to online teaching methods ( $M=2.58$ ), indicating that while some adjustment has occurred, there remains scope for enhancement in online pedagogical approaches.

The data indicates that educators' perspectives on the equivalence of online and traditional classroom learning effectiveness are measured ( $M=2.70$ ). This finding suggests potential recognition of online learning's capabilities while acknowledging areas for development. Similarly, the reported comfort level with online platforms ( $M=2.78$ ) reflects basic technological competence, though potentially indicating a need for additional professional development in pedagogical applications of these tools.

The findings regarding student engagement and teacher-student interaction are noteworthy, with both aspects receiving identical mean scores ( $M=2.80$ ). While these scores fall within the "sometimes" category, they demonstrate that teachers perceive positive outcomes in these crucial pedagogical areas. The effectiveness of online learning for English language instruction and its potential for improving students' language skills received similar assessments ( $M=2.82$  and  $M=2.92$ , respectively), suggesting cautious optimism regarding the modality's pedagogical value.

Teachers' willingness to recommend online learning to colleagues ( $M=2.98$ ) indicates a positive disposition toward the teaching format. Satisfaction with support and training received a higher mean score ( $M=3.18$ ), though the "sometimes" categorization suggests room for enhancement in professional development offerings. Notably, teachers reported that online learning frequently requires increased effort ( $M=3.46$ ), the highest mean score among all measured aspects.

The overall mean score of 2.90 ("sometimes" category) across all dimensions suggests that Yemeni EFL teachers maintain a measured perspective on online learning's efficacy. These findings indicate recognition of online learning's potential while acknowledging existing challenges in areas such as teaching method adaptation, ensuring adequate interaction, and managing increased workload demands. The results suggest the potential benefit of enhanced support systems, continued professional development opportunities, and the establishment of best practices to fully realize online learning's potential in English language instruction.

### 3.2. Challenges of Teaching English Online

The data reveals that Yemeni EFL teachers encounter multiple challenges while teaching English online. As illustrated in Table 7, the aggregate mean score across all statements ( $M=3.54$ ) falls within the "often" category, indicating frequent occurrence of these challenges.

**Table 6.** Challenges of Teaching English Online

	Statement	Mean	Category	Minimum	Maximum
1	Technical issues disrupt my online English classes.	3.06	Sometimes	Occasionally	Always
2	I find it difficult to maintain student engagement during online English classes.	3.28	Sometimes	Never	Often
3	Online teaching platforms lack some features necessary for effective English teaching.	3.38	Sometimes	Occasionally	Often
4	I find it challenging to keep up with the latest technology and tools for online teaching.	3.48	Often	Never	Always
5	I find it hard to build a rapport with students in online English classes.	3.56	Often	Occasionally	Often
6	I find it difficult to cater to individual student needs in online English classes.	3.64	Often	Occasionally	Always

7	It's challenging to manage classroom dynamics in an online setting.	3.68	Often	Occasionally	Always
8	Assessing student performance is more challenging in an online environment.	3.72	Often	Occasionally	Always
9	I feel that online teaching requires more preparation time compared to traditional classroom teaching.	3.76	Often	Occasionally	Always
10	I believe that the lack of face-to-face interaction hinders effective English teaching online.	3.86	Often	Never	Always
	Total	3.542	Often		

The analysis of challenges reveals several key findings. Technical difficulties emerge as a significant concern, with teachers reporting occasional class disruptions ( $M=3.06$ ). This finding emphasizes the fundamental requirement for reliable technological infrastructure and internet connectivity to facilitate uninterrupted online instruction.

Student engagement in online settings presents another notable challenge, with teachers reporting moderate difficulty ( $M=3.28$ ). Additionally, teachers indicate that existing online teaching platforms sometimes lack essential features for effective English language instruction ( $M=3.38$ ), suggesting the need for more specialized educational technology solutions.

As shown in Table 7, keeping pace with technological advancements presents a significant challenge ( $M=3.48$ ). The data further indicates that establishing student rapport in virtual environments is frequently challenging ( $M=3.56$ ), highlighting the complexity of building interpersonal connections in online settings.

Teachers report considerable difficulty in addressing individual student needs ( $M=3.64$ ) and managing virtual classroom dynamics ( $M=3.68$ ). Assessment of student performance in online environments emerges as a prominent challenge ( $M=3.72$ ), suggesting the need for innovative evaluation methodologies suited to virtual instruction.

The findings indicate that online teaching requires substantially more preparation time compared to traditional instruction ( $M=3.76$ ). Most notably, teachers frequently perceive the absence of face-to-face interaction as a significant barrier to effective English instruction ( $M=3.86$ ), representing the highest mean score among all challenges.

These findings underscore the multifaceted nature of challenges in online English language instruction. The data suggests that while technical infrastructure forms the foundation of these challenges, pedagogical and interpersonal aspects significantly impact the effectiveness of online instruction. The results indicate the need for comprehensive solutions addressing the technological, pedagogical, and interpersonal dimensions of online English language teaching.

The high mean scores across multiple dimensions suggest that these challenges are not isolated incidents but rather systematic issues requiring structured interventions. These findings have important implications for the development of support systems, professional development programs, and technological solutions specifically designed for online English language instruction.

### 3.3. Use of Online Learning

To investigate EFL teachers' utilization of online learning, mean scores were calculated to determine the rank order of construct items.

**Table 7.** The Mean and Rank of EFL Teachers' Use of Online Teaching

No	Statement	Mean	Category	Minimum	Maximum
1	I use online platforms for student assessments in my English classes.	1.74	never	Never	Sometimes
2	I assign online activities as part of my English coursework.	2.18	Occasionally	Never	Often
3	I use online learning platforms for teaching English.	2.20	Occasionally	Never	Often
4	I incorporate online resources into my English classes.	2.20	Occasionally	Never	Often
5	I communicate with my students using online tools outside of class hours.	3.00	Sometimes	Never	Always
6	I regularly update my knowledge about the latest online teaching tools and platforms for English teaching.	3.24	Sometimes	Never	Always
7	I believe that regular use of online learning enhances the effectiveness of my English teaching.	3.32	Sometimes	Occasionally	Always
8	I participate in online professional development courses related to English teaching.	3.52	Often	Occasionally	Always
9	I use online forums or communities for discussing English teaching methods and challenges with other faculty members.	3.68	Often	Occasionally	Always
10	I encourage my students to use online resources for self-study in English.	4.20	Often	Sometimes	Always
	Total mean	2.928	Sometimes		

Analysis of EFL teachers' engagement with online teaching reveals distinct patterns in the adoption of digital tools for language education. As indicated in Table 8, the aggregate mean score ( $M=2.928$ ) suggests that teachers "sometimes" utilize online learning in their pedagogical practices, reflecting moderate adoption rates among the surveyed population.

Frequency analysis across various online teaching activities reveals a hierarchical pattern of implementation. The highest frequency of online tool utilization centers on three primary areas: promoting autonomous student learning ( $M=4.20$ ), engaging in professional discourse through online forums ( $M=3.68$ ), and participating in professional development activities ( $M=3.52$ ). These findings suggest strong engagement with online tools for professional growth and student self-directed learning.

Moderate frequency of usage is observed in extra-curricular communication with students and professional knowledge updating. Teachers demonstrate moderate conviction regarding online learning's effectiveness in enhancing English instruction ( $M=3.32$ ). However, Table 8 reveals a



notable disparity between this pedagogical belief and the actual implementation of online tools in core teaching practices.

The data indicates minimal utilization of online tools in direct instructional activities and assessment. Online assessment platforms show the lowest adoption rate ( $M=1.74$ ), while online activity assignment ( $M=2.18$ ) and learning platform utilization ( $M=2.20$ ) demonstrate occasional implementation. The incorporation of online resources into classroom instruction shows similar patterns of limited adoption ( $M=2.20$ ).

These findings illuminate several significant trends. First, there is pronounced emphasis on online resource utilization for autonomous learning and professional development. Second, a substantial gap exists between teachers' theoretical endorsement of online learning effectiveness and their practical implementation, suggesting potential implementation barriers requiring investigation.

The data reveals considerable variation in adoption rates across different online teaching activities, ranging from "never" to "always," indicating significant heterogeneity in teachers' utilization of online tools. This variability may be attributed to factors such as technological proficiency, institutional support mechanisms, or resource accessibility.

These findings carry important implications for EFL pedagogy. They indicate a clear need for enhanced support and professional development in integrating online tools into core instructional practices, particularly in assessment and regular coursework delivery. The high utilization of online tools for professional development could serve as a foundation for expanding adoption in teaching practices.

Moreover, addressing the disparity between pedagogical beliefs and implementation practices could significantly enhance online tool integration in EFL instruction. Promoting more consistent utilization of online platforms could lead to standardization of practices across the teaching cohort, potentially resulting in more effective integration of online tools in EFL education.

In conclusion, while EFL teachers demonstrate selective adoption of online tools, substantial opportunity exists for enhanced integration into daily instructional activities. Future initiatives should focus on narrowing the gap between teachers' theoretical perspectives and classroom practices through targeted professional development, enhanced support systems, and systematic addressing of implementation barriers.

### 3.4. Age and Online Learning Experiences: Perceptions and Challenges

A Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to examine the relationship between age and three constructs related to online learning: usage patterns, perceptions, and challenges encountered among Yemeni EFL instructors.

**Table 8.** Kruskal-Wallis Test Results for Age-Related Differences in Online Learning Constructs

Dimensions	Mean		Chi-Square	Sig
	Age	Rank		
Use	26-30	22.19	1.850	.604
	31- 35	26.30		
	36-40	28.30		
	above 40	34.25		
Perception of Online Learning	26-30	16.34	14.246	.003

	31- 35	27.31	
	36-40	36.00	
	above 40	48.00	
Challenges	26-30	31.13	041
	31- 35	25.44	
	36-40	15.10	8.233
	above 40	7.25	

The analysis reveals varying patterns of association between age and online learning experiences. Regarding online learning usage, as shown in Table (9) the Kruskal-Wallis test indicates no statistically significant differences across age groups ( $\chi^2 = 1.850$ ,  $p = .604$ ). This suggests that the implementation of online learning tools and resources remains relatively consistent across different age cohorts of instructors.

However, significant age-related differences emerge in the perception of online learning ( $\chi^2 = 14.246$ ,  $p = .003$ ). The mean ranks demonstrate a progressive increase with age, from 16.34 (26-30 years) to 48.00 (above 40 years), indicating that older instructors generally hold more positive perceptions of online learning effectiveness. This finding suggests that age may be a significant factor in shaping instructors' views regarding the pedagogical value of online learning methodologies.

The analysis of challenges encountered in online learning also reveals statistically significant age-related differences ( $\chi^2 = 8.233$ ,  $p = .041$ ). Interestingly, the mean ranks show an inverse relationship with age, declining from 31.13 (26-30 years) to 7.25 (above 40 years). This pattern suggests that younger instructors report experiencing more challenges with online learning implementation compared to their older counterparts.

These findings provide important insights into the role of age in shaping online learning experiences among Yemeni EFL instructors. While usage patterns remain consistent across age groups, significant variations in perceptions and challenges indicate that age-specific factors may influence both the attitude toward and experience of online learning implementation.

### Gender and Online Learning Experiences: Perceptions and Challenges

Mann-Whitney U test results reveal distinct patterns in gender-related differences across the measured constructs. Analysis of online learning usage shows no statistically significant difference between male and female instructors ( $Z = -1.271$ ,  $p = .204$ ), suggesting comparable implementation levels across genders.

**Table 9.** Mann-Whitney Test Results for Gender Differences in Online Learning Constructs Among Kuwaiti EFL Instructors

Constructs	Gender	Mean Rank	Z.Value	P.Value
Use of Online Learning	male	28.55	-1.271	.204
	female	23.29		
Perception of Online Learning	male	32.36	-2.846	.004
	female	20.53		
Challenges of Online Learning	male	18.69	2.840	.005
	female	30.43		

As shown in Table 9, significant gender differences emerge in perceptions of online learning effectiveness ( $Z = -2.846$ ,  $p = .004$ ). Male instructors demonstrate higher mean ranks (32.36) compared to female instructors (20.53), indicating more favorable perceptions among male faculty members. Similarly, significant differences appear in challenges encountered ( $Z = 2.840$ ,  $p = .005$ ), with female instructors reporting higher mean ranks (30.43) compared to male instructors (18.69).

These findings suggest that while the actual usage of online learning tools remains consistent across both age groups and genders, significant variations exist in perceptions and challenges experienced. The results indicate that both age and gender may be important factors influencing faculty members' experiences with and attitudes toward online learning implementation in Kuwaiti EFL instruction.

### 3.5. Online Learning Experiences: Assistant Lecturers vs. Assistant Professors

A Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to examine differences between assistant lecturers and assistant professors regarding their online learning experiences across three constructs.

**Table 10.** Mann-Whitney Test Results for Academic Rank Differences in Online Learning Constructs

Constructs	Rank	Mean Rank	Z.Val	P.Value
Use of Online Learning	Assistant lecturer	23.60	-1.356	.175
	Assistant professor	29.53		
Perception of Online Learning	Assistant lecturer	20.63	-3.461	.001
	Assistant professor	35.84		
Challenges of Online Learning	Assistant lecturer	28.57	-2.196	.028
	Assistant professor	18.97		

Analysis of the data reveals varying patterns across the three measured constructs. Regarding the use of online learning, no statistically significant difference was found between assistant lecturers and assistant professors ( $Z = -1.356$ ,  $p = .175$ ). The mean ranks (assistant lecturers = 23.60; assistant professors = 29.53) suggest comparable levels of online learning tool implementation between the two academic ranks.

However, significant differences emerge in the perception of online learning effectiveness between the two groups ( $Z = -3.461$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Assistant professors demonstrate notably higher mean ranks (35.84) compared to assistant lecturers (20.63), indicating more favourable perceptions of online learning effectiveness among those holding higher academic rank.

The analysis of challenges encountered in online learning implementation also reveals statistically significant differences between the groups ( $Z = -2.196$ ,  $p = .028$ ). Assistant lecturers report higher mean ranks (28.57) compared to assistant professors (18.97), suggesting that junior faculty members encounter more substantial challenges in online teaching implementation.

These findings indicate that while the actual usage of online learning tools remains consistent across academic ranks, significant variations exist in both perceptions and challenges experienced. The results suggest that academic rank may be an important factor influencing faculty members' experiences with and attitudes toward online learning implementation.

## 4. Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the use, perceptions, and challenges of online learning among EFL faculty members in Yemen. The results reveal a complex landscape where faculty members recognize the potential of online learning but face significant barriers to its effective implementation. These findings align with previous research on online learning in Yemen and other developing countries, particularly in contexts affected by conflict and limited resources (Al-Mekhlafi, 2021; AlTameemy & Alrefaee, 2021; Al-Dubai et al., 2020).

### 4.1. Faculty Perceptions of Online Learning

The study found that Yemeni EFL faculty members generally hold cautious but optimistic views about online learning. While they acknowledge its potential to enhance student engagement and improve language skills, they also express concerns about the effectiveness of online platforms compared to traditional classroom settings. This aligns with previous studies that have highlighted the mixed perceptions of online learning among educators in developing countries, where the lack of infrastructure and training often hinders the full realization of online learning's potential (Al-Hakami & Al-Mekhlafi, 2021; Al-Qadasi & Al-Hidabi, 2021; Hazhar, Kausar & Mohammed, 2023). The relatively low mean scores for perceptions of online learning effectiveness (2.90) suggest that faculty members are still in the process of adapting to this new mode of instruction, which is consistent with findings from other conflict-affected regions where educators have had to rapidly transition to online teaching without adequate preparation (Muthanna et al., 2022; Zitouni et al., 2023).

The cautious optimism observed among faculty members is further supported by research from AlTameemy and Alrefaee (2021), who found that while Yemeni educators recognize the potential of online learning, they often struggle with the transition due to limited digital literacy and inadequate training. This is particularly relevant in Yemen, where only 26.7% of the population had access to the internet in 2019, and frequent power outages exacerbate the challenges of online education (World Bank, 2021). Additionally, Al-Sohbani (2015) notes that traditional teaching methods are deeply ingrained in Yemen's educational culture, which may contribute to the skepticism and resistance towards online learning observed in this study.

### 4.2. Challenges of Online Teaching

The challenges identified by faculty members in this study are consistent with those reported in previous research on online learning in Yemen and similar contexts. Technical issues, such as unreliable internet connectivity and frequent power outages, were cited as significant barriers, echoing findings from Al-Dubai et al. (2020) and Al-Mekhlafi (2021). These infrastructure challenges are particularly acute in Yemen, where the ongoing conflict has severely damaged educational infrastructure and disrupted access to basic services (Muthanna et al., 2022). The high cost of internet services, which can consume up to 30% of a typical household's income, further compounds these challenges, making it difficult for both students and teachers to consistently access online learning platforms.

Maintaining student engagement and building rapport in an online environment were also identified as major challenges. This is consistent with studies that have highlighted the difficulties of fostering interaction and community in virtual classrooms, particularly in contexts where students may lack access to reliable technology or face socio-economic barriers to participation (Al-Qadasi & Al-

Hidabi, 2021; AlTameemy & Alrefaee, 2021). The lack of face-to-face interaction was perceived as a significant hindrance to effective teaching, which aligns with research suggesting that online learning can feel isolating for both students and teachers, particularly in cultures where in-person interaction is highly valued (Al-Hakami & Al-Mekhlafi, 2021). Furthermore, Al-Soofi et al. (2021) found that Yemeni university instructors often struggle with the lack of immediate feedback and interaction in online environments, which can hinder the development of language skills that require active communication and practice.

#### **4.3. Use of Online Learning Tools**

The study found that while faculty members frequently use online tools for professional development and encouraging student self-study, they are less likely to integrate these tools into formal assessments and regular coursework. This gap between the potential and actual use of online learning tools has been noted in previous research, which suggests that faculty members may lack the training or confidence to fully integrate technology into their teaching practices (Al-Hakami & Al-Mekhlafi, 2021; Al-Qadasi & Al-Hidabi, 2021). The high frequency of online tool use for professional development, however, indicates a willingness among faculty members to engage with digital resources, which could be leveraged to improve their online teaching practices.

The limited use of online platforms for formal assessments and regular coursework may also be attributed to the lack of culturally relevant and locally adapted online learning materials. As noted by Al-Aghbari et al. (2015), the development of online content that reflects the values, traditions, and everyday experiences of Yemeni students is crucial for the success of distance education in the country. Without such materials, faculty members may find it difficult to fully integrate online tools into their teaching practices, particularly in a context where traditional teaching methods are deeply entrenched (Al-Sohbani, 2015).

#### **4.4. Demographic Variations**

The study also revealed significant variations in perceptions and challenges based on demographic factors such as age, gender, and academic rank. Older faculty members and those with higher academic ranks generally demonstrated more positive perceptions of online learning, which may reflect their greater experience and confidence in using technology. This finding is consistent with research suggesting that more experienced educators are often better equipped to adapt to new teaching modalities (Al-Hakami & Al-Mekhlafi, 2021). However, female instructors and those with lower academic ranks reported facing greater challenges, which may be due to limited access to resources or institutional support. This aligns with studies highlighting the gender disparities in access to technology and training in developing countries (Al-Qadasi & Al-Hidabi, 2021).

The gender disparities observed in this study are particularly concerning, given the cultural and social barriers that female educators in Yemen often face. Al-Eryani (2012) notes that cultural norms and economic barriers prevent many women from accessing digital education, which may explain why female instructors in this study reported greater challenges in implementing online learning. Similarly, Al-Qadasi and Al-Hidabi (2021) found that female students in Yemen often face additional barriers to online learning, such as limited access to devices and internet connectivity, which may also affect female educators.

#### 4.5. Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study have several implications for policymakers and educational leaders in Yemen. First, there is a clear need for targeted professional development programs to help faculty members build their digital literacy and pedagogical skills for online teaching. This is particularly important for female instructors and those with lower academic ranks, who reported facing greater challenges. Second, improving technological infrastructure, including reliable internet access and electricity, is essential for the successful implementation of online learning in Yemen. Public-private partnerships could play a key role in addressing these infrastructure challenges, as suggested by Al-Mekhlafi (2021).

Finally, the study highlights the importance of developing culturally relevant and locally adapted online learning materials that address the specific needs of Yemeni students and educators. This could help bridge the gap between traditional teaching methods and online learning, making it easier for faculty members to adapt their practices to the digital environment. As noted by Al-Aghbari et al. (2015), the development of online content that reflects the local context is crucial for gaining acceptance and support from both students and their families.

### 5. Conclusion

This study offers a comprehensive exploration of the use, perceptions, and challenges of online learning among EFL faculty members in Yemen, shedding light on the complexities of integrating digital tools into English language education in a conflict-affected and resource-constrained environment. The findings reveal that while faculty members recognize the potential of online learning to enhance student engagement and improve language skills, significant barriers hinder its effective implementation. These barriers include persistent technical issues, difficulties in maintaining student engagement, and a lack of adequate training and support. Moreover, the study highlights notable demographic variations, with older faculty members and those in higher academic ranks generally holding more positive perceptions of online learning, while female instructors and junior faculty face greater challenges.

The implications of these findings are clear: for online learning to become a viable and effective tool in Yemen's higher education system, a multi-faceted approach is essential. First, targeted professional development programs must be implemented to enhance faculty members' digital literacy and pedagogical skills, particularly for female instructors and those with lower academic ranks. Second, improving technological infrastructure—such as reliable internet access and consistent electricity—is critical to overcoming the technical barriers that currently impede online education. Public-private partnerships could play a pivotal role in addressing these infrastructure challenges. Finally, the development of culturally relevant and locally adapted online learning materials is crucial to bridging the gap between traditional teaching methods and digital platforms, ensuring that online learning aligns with the specific needs of Yemeni students and educators.

By addressing these challenges through strategic interventions, policymakers and educational leaders can create an enabling environment for online learning to thrive. This, in turn, could significantly enhance the quality and accessibility of English language education in Yemen, even amidst ongoing conflict and resource limitations. The findings of this study not only contribute to the academic discourse on online EFL education but also provide actionable insights for stakeholders seeking to foster resilience and innovation in Yemen's higher education system. Ultimately, with the right support and resources, online learning has the potential to transform English language

instruction in Yemen, offering new opportunities for both educators and students in a rapidly changing educational landscape.

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