

The Transformative Power of Educational Platforms: Empowering Sixth-Grade Preparatory Students in Iraq

Naz Badr Khan Al-Sindi

Prof. Dr., College of Education Ibn Rushd, Baghdad University,

Email: naz@ircoedu.uobaghdad.edu.iq

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-4433-7244>

Dawood Abdel Salam Sabri

Prof. Dr., College of Education Ibn Rushd, Baghdad University,

Email: daood.a@ircoedu.uobaghdad.edu.iq

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-3774-1477>

Abstract

This study investigated the effect of educational platforms on the education and the proficiency of sixth-grade preparatory students in using them. For conducting the evaluation, the study used a descriptive methodology. The sample of the study consisted of 300 students from the sixth grade in the Republic of Iraq both male and female students. Based on the results, sixth grade students show a strong inclination towards using educational platforms. Also, there were no significant differences between genders in the effect of educational platforms on the learning and the students' ability of deriving benefits from them. In addition, the students were keen to incorporate educational platforms into their coursework and highlight their potential for fostering self-learning skills. The study recommends prioritizing the incorporation of educational platforms into the curriculum by training courses specifically focusing on equipping students with the necessary skills to professionally use these platforms for self-learning.

Keywords: Educational Platforms, Education Processes, Sixth Grade Students, Transformative Power.

Introduction

Recently, the advent of digital learning technology has caused a revolution in education which offers many new tools significantly enhancing learning. The ability of digital learning of immersing students to captivate and interactive environments is remarkable encouraging meaningful approaches (Durojaye et al., 2023).

In this ever-evolving world, continuous improvement of educational platforms enhance learning processes which is in particular significant for students in the 6th preparatory grade, as it is a critical stage in their education journey in Iraq. Using educational platforms is important to develop the quality of education and motivate students for academic aspirations. Students can develop their skills in the access and analysis of online resources. The implementation of thoughtful and innovative approaches for designing, along with a personalized delivery framework for online instruction, students can be empowered and satisfied with their learning (Serna-Mendiburu & Guerra-Tamez, 2024). The advent of intelligent tutoring systems (ITS) and adaptive educational technology has totally changed the education, helping for personalized learning environments. The use of state-of-the-art technology can tailor education to cater to the unique needs, abilities, and passions of each student (Contrino et al., 2024). This study investigates the influence of educational platforms on the learning processes. It tests the extent these platforms help 6th preparatory grade students in Iraq by examining their experiences. Also, it examines their effectiveness to enhance the learning experience and student performance (Radhi & Sabri, 2021).

Literature Review

Introduction

The internet has revolutionized the way we share knowledge, making information easily accessible to all learners. What was once a distant aspiration just 25 years ago has now materialized. The success of e-learning has resulted in universities and educational institutions worldwide adopting educational platforms. Online learning, also referred to as electronic learning or web-based training, is the method of delivering instruction to students and learners through a web browser, accessible from anywhere and at any time, using the internet or a corporate intranet. Contrary to conventional teaching methods, e-learning offers a unique opportunity for individuals to engage in a well-organized learning experience regardless of their location. Static and interactive methods are combined to provide education through the internet. Learning portals, hyperlinked articles, screencast tutorials, streaming audio and video, and live

web broadcasts are all examples of effective techniques for academic learning. Methods such as chat rooms, discussion boards, and desktop video conferencing are illustrative of collaborative techniques (Valverde-Berrocoso et al., 2020).

Educational platforms are electronic environments that include a variety of interactive applications and links. They facilitate instant communication not just between two individuals, but also among a group of people at the same time, thanks to the services they offer to the user (Zurebi, 2017). E-learning has emerged as a powerful educational tool, thanks to the integration of technology and education through the use of Internet technologies. The proliferation of e-learning courses and systems offering a wide range of services has surged, highlighting the undeniable significance of online education in the field of academia. E-learning technologies ensure successful delivery, optimal utilization, and a positive effect on learners (Valverde-Berrocoso et al., 2020)., Al-Thobaiti (2020) tested their effectiveness of e-learning in improving the English language skills of Saudi university students developing a new descriptive methodology selecting 212 students. To analyse the data, the study conducted many statistical tests were: calculating the average scores and percentages. The "Taqeem English Language Initiative" on the EEPs offers online English courses to improve learners' knowledge and proficiency with factors, such as age, gender, occupation, and educational attainment with no impact on the outcomes.

Al-Malki and Daghestani (2020) examined the impact EEPs on the professional development of kindergarten teachers to identify the limitations that prevented their application in teaching. It enlisted kindergarten instructors in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, by descriptive survey on 205 teachers showing a significant majority of kindergarten instructors effectively use e-learning platforms with a flexible learning environment and diverse ranges of information presentation techniques. yet, most educators face challenges when utilizing e-learning platforms, mainly due to insufficient funding. Al-Ta'i (2020) examined the faculty's perspectives on the advantages of EEPs in math instruction to show the effect of incorporating EEPs in arithmetic instruction. Thirty-four professors, male and female, were selected highlighting several advantages of utilizing e-learning systems. Digital educational platforms engages and cooperate

learning atmosphere by the abilities of web technologies, social networks, and digital content management.

Also, it has been incorporated into many communication and networking applications. These platforms offers students accessing instructional materials at their own conveniences which allows them to complete assignments and engage in learning. Simultaneously, teachers share lectures, conduct online assessments, assign tasks to students, communicate aims, and use many technological tools. The used EEPs are accessible providing a chance to engage in distance learning. They provide many features: interactive sessions, discussion forums between students and teachers, and access to course materials and video lectures ([Rasheed & Sabri, 2022](#)).

Advantages of E-Learning Platforms

E-learning is a distinct as a method of instruction not relying on traditional teaching tools like a blackboard and chalk. It offers students with the flexibility to learn at their own convenience and fit their learning to individual needs by an online platform. The students can have unlimited access to the study materials with individuals with the flexibility of pursuing their studies at their own convenience and in any place. Access to updated material can be found. E-learning has the primary advantage of keeping students up-to-date with current learning trends. The platform offers open and secure access to regularly updated and exclusive content. E-learning enables students to stay updated on the latest developments ([Al-Fraihat, Joy, & Sinclair, 2020](#)). E-learning platforms offer several advantages by enabling the exchange of expertise among specialists. These platforms stand out due to several benefits, including:

1. Providing easy and convenient access to knowledge.
2. Allowing students to contribute to course content.
3. Continuously updating information.
4. Emphasizing the diversity and enrichment of resources
5. making education possible even if it's not possible to be there physically.
6. Certain features in this digital mode make learning and understanding easier and error free ([Al-Rashid, 2018](#))

The importance of the current research is manifested in the following points:

1. Shedding light on the e-learning platforms used in the Iraqi preparatory stage.
2. Providing data and information for educators, researchers, and interested entities regarding the areas of use of e-learning platforms in the process of teaching and learning.
3. Offering a perspective on e-learning in general and educational platforms specifically, grounded in connectivist theory. Such a perspective contributes to providing educational and learning opportunities for students, aiding them to acquire adaptable skills and competencies across diverse cognitive domains, encouraging them to self-organize their learning, and offering them a mechanism to process the information presented to them.

The aim is to enhance the Iraqi and Arab libraries by providing a comprehensive theoretical framework that will benefit researchers in the field. This will contribute to the advancement of scientific research and educational practices concerning the utilization of e-learning and educational platforms.

Top E-Learning Apps

Acquiring knowledge is crucial for progress in the global community.

The education industry has been completely transformed by the introduction of various apps such as Google Classroom, Zoom, Education, Seesaw, Photo math, Socrative, Edmodo, Scratch, Prezi, Thinglink, and Quizlet (Al-Fraihat et al., 2020). Given that this research is being conducted in an Arab country, the focus will be on e-learning platforms that offer Arabic content, regardless of whether they are free or paid.

Newton Educational Platform in Iraq

The Newton platform is an educational scientific platform developed by the engineering staff of the Ministry of Education in response to the COVID-19 pandemic that had a significant impact on Iraq. This platform was introduced by the ministry to provide students and teachers with beneficial features, making it an essential tool for curriculum pursuit. The Newton platform provides a wide range of features to

support Iraqi students pursuing virtual education. Following the global spread of the virus, it has emerged as one of the most effective methods. This platform provides several advantages, including:

1. Easy access and user-friendly navigation.
2. It is available for all levels in Iraq and all subjects such as students learn English for the 8th grade and mathematics for the 9th grade.
3. Dashboards are available for textbooks, lectures, downloading school assignments (Akhter et al., 2021)

The "Ewane" Platform

The "Ewane" platform was established by the Ministry of Education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, in partnership with UNESCO and the European Union, to maintain the educational process and prevent any interruptions. The objective was to achieve universal access for students to engage in remote learning. The pandemic has impacted a total of 1,782,111 students in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. UNESCO provided support to the Ministry of Education in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq by upgrading and installing server devices in order to enhance the capacity of the new electronic platform, "Ewane," which is designed for online lessons. The platform, available at www.ewane.krd, aims to provide access to students across primary and secondary education levels.

Taelim Platform in Iraq

The educational platform is innovative and distinguished, catering to the educational needs of all age groups and academic stages. The platform aims to make education accessible to all by offering a user-friendly and innovative learning experience. The platform has developed numerous educational and training solutions that incorporate modern technology and creative features. The platform collaborates with the Ministries of Higher Education, Education, and Scientific Research in Iraq.

Disadvantages of e-learning

E-learning has both advantages and disadvantages. E-learning has certain

drawbacks. The educational environment encourages students and teachers to lack discipline. Lack of self-control can hinder motivation to learn and contribute to procrastination. Discipline is taught in a traditional classroom. Consistency in all aspects of life is essential for achieving success, and this consistency is facilitated by practicing good discipline. The prevalence of health issues among students has increased as a result of e-learning. Students face challenges due to their impaired vision. Individuals who allocate a greater amount of time to using computers or tablets are more prone to encountering these types of problems. To minimize discomfort, it is advisable to engage in regular walking, take short breaks of at least ten minutes every hour, and incorporate arm exercises into the routine (Al Rawashdeh et al., 2021). It promotes a tendency towards isolation. Individuals who prioritize online learning and teaching tend to be less social. They do not prioritize physical social engagement. Individuals may experience the development of shyness, leading them to avoid social interactions. The activity promotes the wasteful expenditure of time on unproductive endeavours. Many young people use these devices without any form of protection. Some students enjoy participating in gaming. Instead of studying, they waste their time and neglect their health.

As a consequence, students' interest in reading textbooks in-depth decreases. Textbooks are a reliable source of information and expertise. Due to the lack of trustworthiness of online information, students often uncritically accept the content they encounter on the internet (Akhter et al., 2021). The students' confidence decreases as a consequence. Students have the opportunity to interact with professors and peers in face-to-face classes. The authors take a risk by presenting their argument boldly and confidently. Students develop confidence in traditional classroom settings. Students are required to answer the teachers' questions in front of the entire class. The students are seated in the classroom in a socially appropriate manner (Malik & Rana, 2020).

Obstacles facing e-learning platforms

The researchers identified obstacles that significantly affect educational platforms based on a review of various studies and research on e-learning and educational platforms. These obstacles include:

1. The availability of devices and supporting tools necessary for creating platforms is

- limited, primarily due to weak infrastructure.
2. Many students are not familiar with modern technology skills, such as computer research usage and internet browsing. This is largely due to the lack of integration of educational platforms into the curriculum.
 3. Many faculty members show little enthusiasm for incorporating modern technology into their teaching or training methods. This may be due to a lack of training courses that focus on developing their skills in using educational platforms.
 4. Sometimes, the internet connection may not be very reliable, and the fees for design subscriptions can be quite high. Additionally, there may be subscriptions required for specific electronic pages (Sabri, 2011).

Research Problem

It was observed that the teaching methods commonly employed in various subjects, including the curriculum for the 6th preparatory grade, were noted. This curriculum places a strong emphasis on traditional teaching methods and does not prioritize the integration of modern technology or the development of students' technological skills. Based on this foundation, the research problem was identified. The researchers have observed the progression of education over time, which has included a growing dependence on technology and the widespread adoption of electronic educational platforms (EEPs) as a standard educational system across many countries. Teachers and educators have been working to address the educational gaps that students may face as a result of limitations in traditional classroom teaching methods.

From this perspective, the researchers were driven to tackle the issue, acknowledging the importance of offering students a structured educational opportunity that would prepare them for the future. This entails providing guidance and support to help individuals achieve their overall and well-rounded growth, including proficiency in educational platforms. Therefore, the researchers clearly defined the research problem; they were interested in studying and identifying the variables in order to introduce a digital e-learning system for students. Analyze and contrast the advancements made with the new system. Assess the benefits of the system. Exploring the drawbacks of digital learning and seeking solutions to How

digital learning can be introduced with old traditional system? Is digital system cause more progress than old system?, What are the advantages of digital learning?, what are the disadvantages of digital learning?

Methodology

Research Design

This research was conducted using the descriptive methodology as it was deemed the most suitable approach for the research topic. This approach focuses on analysing events, phenomena, and trends, describing the educational phenomenon in its true form, and then expressing it through both quantitative and qualitative means. By comprehending the connections within this phenomenon, one can draw conclusions and make generalizations (Al-Jubouri & Dawood, 2013). The study is focused on Sixth-grade preparatory students in the Republic of Iraq for the academic year (2023 - 2024).

Research Population

The study enrolled 6th-grade students from the Directorate of Education of Baghdad's Rusafa and Karkh districts. For this study, a sample of 6th-grade students from the Directorate of Education of Rusafa 1 was chosen from the overall population.

Instrument

This study used the questionnaire as a research tool to gather the perspectives of sixth-grade preparatory students on the effect of EEPs on the teaching and learning processes. In making the questionnaire, the researchers used many sources. First, a thorough review of previous research findings and studies have been conducted. Also, the researchers referred to the suitable educational literature on the use of integration of such platforms. Finally, their own expertise composed the content of the questionnaire. This method developed a thorough and knowledgeable tool that successfully captured the perspectives and experiences of the 6th-grade preparatory students. The questionnaire adhered to the conventional format, with basic demographic questions and

then the primary measures to assess the key constructs.

Upon the initial introduction, the study included questions about gender, the online platforms utilized, students' grade level before and after traditional or online learning, and the amount of time spent studying in online education. Furthermore, the study utilized the established items from the literature to avoid the necessity of a pilot study for ensuring reliability and validity. The study concentrates on two key constructs: student and teacher's efficacy. So, a 9-item scale was used to assess the teachers' effectiveness, derived from the literature review (Monteiro & Forlin, 2023). Also, a 6-item scale measured student efficacy. The scale items were easier to understand in the questionnaire (Svartdal et al., 2022). The scale was a 5-point Likert scale, in the final sections of the questionnaire.

Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire's validity was tested by examining students' perceptions of the role of educational platforms. 8 experts reviewed and approved it. Moreover, the questionnaire's reliability in testing the role of educational platforms was shown by Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The reliability coefficient was 0.7, showing a high reliability.

Analysis, Results and Interpretation

Demographical Analysis

EEPs are crucial for building the foundation of students' knowledge during their preparatory stage. The Iraqi students demonstrated a strong interest in incorporating educational platforms into their course curricula. EEPs foster the development of students' self-learning abilities. Research has shown that students who utilize free educational platforms for their learning have found a strong correlation between their level of engagement in e-learning and their academic performance (Alenezi, 2020). The level of effort students invest in their online learning strategies directly impacts their performance on exams. It usually relies on the student's mindset, their perception of e-learning resources (whether they find them useful or not), how user-friendly they are, and the delivery method.

The objective of the study was to ascertain the average score of each student. The figure below illustrates the performance of students who have utilized e-learning techniques, as compared to those who have solely relied on traditional teaching and learning methods. In order to achieve this objective, the study employed basic frequency statistics in SPSS to analyse the collected sample. Based on the analysis output, it was found that 55% of the individuals who achieved an A utilized a combination of traditional study methods and online learning techniques. On the other hand, 45% solely relied on traditional methods for instruction and learning. Among the students who achieved a B grade, 62% relied on traditional study methods while the remaining 38% opted for online learning.

The study aimed to investigate the amount of time students dedicated to online studying. A study found that 15% of individuals dedicated one to two hours to their studies, while 40% opted for online studying and spent three to five hours on it. Additionally, 35% of participants devoted five to nine hours to their academic pursuits. The survey also found that, unlike their male counterparts, female participants were using e-learning techniques for both studying and teaching. A significant number of female participants in the study reported having extensive interaction and use of online educational platforms. Furthermore, within the realm of online platforms, the research found that local Iraqi online platforms in the native language are widely utilized by individuals for educational purposes, enhancing their academic abilities. The results of the initial demographical questions are displayed in [Table 1](#).

Table 1: Demographical Questions Frequencies.

Demographic	Frequency	Valid Percent
Gender		
Male	115	38.3
Female	185	61.7
Students with A grades		
Students who use traditional and online methods	165	55.0
Students who use only traditional method	135	45.0
Students with B grades		
Students who use traditional and online methods	186	62.0
Students who use only traditional method	114	38.0
Online platforms usage		
Newton	106	35.3

Ewane	124	41.3
Taelim	41	13.7
International educational platforms	29	9.7
Online study hours		
2 hours	45	15.0
3 to 5 hours	120	40.0
5 to 9 hours	135	45.0

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics provides a valuable opportunity to visualize the key trends within a collected data sample. Descriptive statistics typically encompass a wide range of estimations in one step, revealing the sample's range, presence of missing values, outliers, and normality. The analysis in the main results provides a range of statistical values, including the minimum and maximum values, mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis. The descriptive statistics of this study can be found in [Table 2](#). The analysis has yielded satisfactory results by ensuring the absence of missing values and outliers, which enhances the quality of the data. Furthermore, the mean values provide a concise representation of the responses on the Likert scale in the questionnaire, allowing researchers to gain insight into the overall theme or perspective of the participants. Regarding this matter, the study obtained relatively higher values of 4.06 and 4.03 for teachers' efficacy and students' efficacy. Furthermore, the analysis confirmed the data quality by illustrating a normal distribution of data in the response scales, with skewness and kurtosis values falling within their expected range.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
TE	300	1.22	5.00	4.0693	.97134	-1.162	.752
SE	300	1.00	5.00	4.3039	1.00406	-1.429	1.163

Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis is a fundamental statistical analysis used to assess the relationship between variables. The Pearson correlation is widely acknowledged and commonly used in correlation statistical procedures. In analysing correlations, it is important

to note the significance level of the estimated association. A correlation greater than 0.5 is generally seen as a strong inter-relationship. Regarding this matter, the correlation analysis conducted for this study has shown a strong relationship between student efficacy and teacher efficacy. This suggests that educational institutes and teachers have a significant impact on enhancing students' cognition, reasoning, and learning aptitude. As a result, curriculum organizations should pay close attention to this influential relationship.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis.

	Variables	TE	SE
TE	Pearson Correlation	1	.599**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	300	300
SE	Pearson Correlation	.599**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	300	300

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (Binary).

Association Testing

Lastly, the study aimed to assess whether there were any significant differences in the learning capabilities and abilities of individuals after the introduction of online educational platforms. Given the nature of the study, a simple regression analysis could not be utilized due to the categorical nature of one of the underlying constructs. In order to address this particular challenge, we employed a straightforward one-way ANOVA test to assess the objectives of the study. The results of the ANOVA test can be found in [Table 4](#). Based on the findings, there is no notable disparity between male and female students when it comes to their learning abilities and the potential benefits of educational platforms in enhancing educational qualities.

Table 4: ANOVA test for Group Testing.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
SE	Between Groups	.605	1	.605	.600	.439
	Within Groups	300.829	298	1.009		
	Total	301.434	299			
TE	Between Groups	1.180	1	1.180	1.251	.264
	Within Groups	280.925	298	.943		
	Total	282.104	299			

Discussion

This study explored different demographic parameters, descriptive statistics, correlations, and interactions for understanding the effect of educational e-platforms (EEPs) on the academic performance of Iraqi students. It studies the effect of these discoveries on the ongoing educational methods. Such studies showed their tendencies by the EEP. The data showed a big number of students with high grades by the combination of traditional and online methods for their assignments. This using EEPs in traditional learning settings is preferred. Both learning strategies improve academic performances. The dual method offers tools and options which enhances their knowledge understanding and retention. The increasing number of female students using these platforms shows differences in EEP usage according to gender. This is due to women pursuing higher education and leveraging technology for achieving their goals, this phenomenon is possibly a change in societal dynamics. [Al-Kahlan and Khasawneh \(2023\)](#) showed zero notable differences in the use of the electronic learning platform Moodle based on gender and college type.

Thus, electronic educational platforms can significantly enhance the effectiveness of learning forms and methods in any circumstances. The quick information technology development of and modern communication is driving this trend, finally improving education ([Al-Kahlan & Khasawneh, 2023](#)). The request for educational platforms linked to the demand of Iraqis shows the significance of incorporating language and culture into online educational platforms (EEPs). The regionally linked educational content significance improving learning and engagement is comprehended. The use of descriptive statistics provided a comprehensive representation of the key patterns and changeability in the data, providing a big understanding of respondents' experiences with EEP. The mean self-efficacy ratings of students (SE) and instructors (TE) were 4.30 and 4.07 in respect, showing high self-efficacy. So both groups hold a positive view of EEPs in terms of education. The TE and SE data showed a normal distribution with appropriate skewness and kurtosis values. The lack of notable outliers or distorted data in this normalcy reveals that the reliable conclusions from the results. This proves the connection between learning and teaching and shows that good teaching strategies in

rapidly enhancing student learning are effective.

Teachers are able to improve students' academic achievement by high support and assistance. This relationship proves the significance of adequate preparation of educators for success. This means that teacher professional development programs concentrating EEPs could be useful for students. The study employed one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine potential differences in learning capacity and EEP benefits between male and female students. The statistical analysis revealed no significant difference between the groups ($p > 0.05$). The equitable distribution of educational resources by equity education programs (EEPs) helps to achieve gender equity in education. Equitable access for help and support improve learning results for all students, without regarding gender, through the implementation of EEPs. According to [Toumpalidou and Konstantoulaki \(2023\)](#), students expressed overall positivity towards the implementation of distant learning. However, they expressed pessimism regarding its long-term viability. Their main focus is on the implementation of distance learning. Furthermore, they expressed apprehensions regarding the future prospects of online education and testing.

Implications of the Study

This study has the potential to impact school management practices in Iraq and similar countries. It is recommended that schools incorporate EEPs alongside traditional instructional methods to enhance student academic performance. The integration of both teaching methods can offer a comprehensive education that caters to diverse student needs. Furthermore, the production of culturally and linguistically relevant information is of utmost importance. It is crucial to note that female students are increasingly utilizing electronic educational platforms (EEPs) and depending on local platforms. It is crucial for educational policymakers and platform developers to give priority to the development and dissemination of local knowledge. Each student's needs can be individually satisfied.

Furthermore, there is a strong correlation between student and teacher efficacy, thus necessitating ongoing professional development for educators. Emphasizing digital literacy and pedagogy is important in professional development programs for education technology (EEP) instructors. A learning-friendly environment can be

created. EEP programs can contribute to educational equity as they offer benefits that are not influenced by gender. In order to optimize the academic advantages of EEPs, it is imperative that all students, irrespective of their gender, are granted equitable access to necessary technical tools and resources.

Limitations and Future Implications

This study focuses on a single age group. It is suggested that a similar study be conducted on various educational stages. This study is currently limited to one specific area, but it would be beneficial to conduct it in multiple areas. The study exclusively focused on Iraqi students, so its findings may not be generalizable to other student populations. The study employed quantitative data, potentially introducing bias, while neglecting to consider socioeconomic status and internet access. Subsequent research should incorporate students' technological proficiency and level of motivation. Conducting longitudinal research in multiple countries is necessary to monitor changes over time. Examining the outcomes of various teaching methods and EEPs across different subject domains could enhance the quality of online courses.

Conclusion

The study emphasizes the significant influence of EEPs on student academic performance and the dynamics of teacher-student interaction in utilizing these platforms. The results indicate that a combination of EEPs should be employed, accompanied by appropriate professional development for educators and locally relevant content. Emphasizing these subjects can enhance learning outcomes and promote educational equity in higher education institutions. A study demonstrated that digital learning has a positive effect on students' learning abilities and strategies, resulting in improved comprehension. Disadvantages of digital learning were also observed in addition to its advantages. The results indicated that e-learning led to an increase in learning hours. Additionally, the relationship between teachers and students was affected due to the absence of face-to-face interaction.

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