

Whatsapp as Media of Online Teaching and Learning during Covid-19: Arabic Language Teachers' Perspectives

Abdullah bin Mohammed Al-Subaie

*Department Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education,
Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia - Al-Kharj*
Email: a.alsubai@psau.edu.sa, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2311-011X>

KEYWORDS Challenges of Whatsapp. Technological Development. Education. Disadvantages. Open Learning

ABSTRACT The aim was to investigate Arabic Language Teachers' (ARL) perceptions on the effectiveness of WhatsApp during Covid-19, the challenges of WhatsApp during Covid-19 as perceived by ARL teachers, and the advantages and disadvantages of WhatsApp during Covid-19 as perceived by ARL teachers. The population of the study was ARL teachers, either immigrants or natives, in Educational. 300 Arabic Language teachers were selected randomly from this population. An online survey was created by Google Docs. It consisted of two parts: sociodemographic, and teachers' perspectives on teaching online effectiveness. Respondents agreed to the importance of involving WhatsApp in the educational field. When asked about the challenges of WhatsApp during Covid-19, the ARL teachers emphasized that they faced a set of challenges through online learning due to the abrupt shift from face-to-face instruction to online instruction. The challenges came from three sources: challenges from the teacher, challenges from the student, and challenges from the educational content.

INTRODUCTION

The world today is moving according to the inevitability of technological development to the inevitability of open learning, as it has become a station that must be walked according to the same capacity, it was inspired by the Corona syndrome, but the researchers believe that experts may agree that the signs of the issue of education appeared long before Corona (Altun et al. 2021), and they had appeared since the beginning of the development of social communication mechanisms, where it was noted that the learner is now showing a lot of reluctance to attend education (Alshaibani 2020), as if it were announcing that attendance education is obsolete, and needs some development, as well as these programs, which were adapted to curricula, have become deficient and are called classics in light of the talk about didactic and educational as a way to bring the issue to safety. It intended to graft this issue with some focus on embodying a large number of commandments and by resorting to the use of some of the ideas that began to philosophize the initiation process (Islam 2019; Karaman and Coskun 2020).

WhatsApp is an instant messaging and calling app for smartphones that allows users to freely access to send text, voice and video messages, and even share photos with other users over the

Internet. This application is one of the interactive social media, which allows chatting with friends, creating groups, and transmitting content in the form of text, image, video or audio (Çam and Can 2019). As is the case for "Facebook Messenger and Instagram", and other social media applications, which require users to search, suggest and send friend requests (Ahmed 2019).

The WhatsApp app represents the most widespread and diverse new communication model in its communication uses, so that it has become difficult to dispense with it. Young people use WhatsApp via smart mobile phones, build networks of friends, coordinate with them, spread information and ideas, and thanks to the instant nature of the application, it is increasingly used among young people in communication processes (Nihayati and Indriani 2021).

In light of the spread of the new Corona epidemic around the world as a whole, we need to search for a pattern of education that can coexist with the data and conditions of this epidemic, whether this type of education is new or existing and has already been applied with its compatibility with this epidemic and limiting its spread (Ramadan 2020; Tahoon 2021).

The affected countries should resort to distance education to reduce the disruption that students and the educational process as a whole will

be exposed to, and indicated on its website that distance education and resorting to the method of online education will help stop the spread of the Corona virus and ensure the continuation of basic services in the field of education. The organization also advised all those interested in the educational process to stay in contact with students and provide psychological support to them and avoid falling into isolation, as well as ensuring the continuation of research according to the school curricula and facilitating education by providing additional materials for reading and education for students (Al-Dahshan 2020).

The Impact of Technological Development on Education

In recent years, the use of computers in the learning and teaching processes began in many countries, especially developed ones, and the computer is not just an educational tool, but rather it is several means in one medium, as it performs new functions that cannot be achieved by any other method, as it provides an interactive learning environment with two directions. The computer is also considered an entrance or method in the field of teaching and learning various subjects of study (Tatar and Muzaffer 2013; Zalat et al. 2021). The use of computers in the process of learning and teaching is one of the latest areas that the computer has invaded. It is known that teachers are always looking for ways to help them perform their educational functions in order to reach better education; Sometimes it uses colored pictures and sometimes it uses stereoscopic shapes, as well as blackboards, books and some simple devices. In recent years, some modern devices have appeared, such as recording devices, microscopes, telescopes, rear projection devices, educational films, cinema projectors, educational television sets, etc. Despite the multiplicity and diversity of these means, each means serves a specific goal. This led to the reluctance of many schools to buy and use them (Hong et al. 2021; Siemieniecka et al. 2017).

The Use of WhatsApp in Education

WhatsApp is described as the second largest social network in the world. It has more than a billion and a half active subscribers according to the statistics of 2017. It is known and familiar to both students and their families and teachers as well. It is necessary to use it as an educational tool

through which it can increase communication between the student and the teacher. The following are some ways in which WhatsApp app. can be used in education:

Encouraging Students to Cooperate

WhatsApp allows group creation, which can be used to give students some collaborative tasks; as it is possible to divide the students in the classroom into several groups, each of which has tasks that must be completed in a specific period of time, and thus helps to increase the enthusiasm and team spirit of the students and obtain fruitful results. It is also worth noting that the teacher can through this feature to it stays abreast of students' efforts, as well as assesses and supervises them to ensure their success (Habibi et al. 2018).

Extending the Time of the Educational Process

WhatsApp provides a space that brings the teacher together with the students and keeps them in contact all the time, and with this degree of development, the teacher had to use it to increase the intensity of efforts exerted to achieve the goals of education, which lies in the teacher's ability to stay close to his students and his contact with them to help them overcome all the problems they encounter during the study, by sending explanations, imposed duties and lessons in the form of text messages or multimedia; Whether audio recordings, photos and videos, it helps clarify all the confusion (Nasr and Mustafa 2018).

Creating an Interactive Platform for Students

The WhatsApp application can be dealt with as an interactive electronic platform that gives each student the right to express his opinion on any topic whatsoever. The effectiveness and strength of education, in addition to collecting students for a longer period, have a role in improving students' production and expanding their thinking perceptions while providing the notes and instructions they need to get rid of repeated errors (Hashemifardnia et al. 2018).

Increasing Confidence between Teachers and Students

Many students are shy and hesitant to participate and interact in the classroom, and some of

them are unable to communicate with the teacher, and this negatively affects the student's educational achievement and the formation of his personality, and therefore the WhatsApp application can be used to overcome this Building barriers and building trust with students by communicating with them and sending them explanations, asking them if they have any questions or learning difficulties, and then seeking to encourage them to become more interactive in the classroom (La Hanisi et al. 2018).

Staying In Touch With Parents

Most parents are keen to be aware of all the personal and educational aspects of their children, and instead of visiting the school constantly, and at the end of the semester, parents can stay in touch with teachers and find out what they need information by creating groups They communicate with them to evaluate and evaluate students' behavior in a more positive way (Oktaviani and Mandasari 2020).

Objectives

The aim was to investigate ARL teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of WhatsApp during Covid-19.

Research Questions

The present research study seeks to give answers to the following research questions:

1. What are ARL teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of WhatsApp during Covid-19?
2. What are the challenges of WhatsApp during Covid-19 as perceived by ARL teachers?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of WhatsApp during Covid-19 as perceived by ARL teachers?

METHODOLOGY

Interviews were held in order to support the findings of the questionnaire. Data were collected during the academic year 2020-2021.

Sample

ARL teachers, either immigrants or natives, were selected in Educational Edara, public, private,

and foreign education, Al-Kharj Governorate, KSA. Three hundred Arabic Language teachers were selected randomly. An online survey was employed. The online survey was created and sent to the Arabic Language teachers through emails, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp messages, and LinkedIn.

Data Gathering Instrument

An online survey was created by Google Docs. It consisted of two parts: socio-demographic, and teachers' perspectives on teaching online effectiveness. Data were imported into Excel.

Validity and Reliability

The content validity of the online survey was examined by a group of four experts. The 7 items were judged to be quite or highly relevant. I-CVI = 0.90. Internal consistency coefficient (α) was 0.78.

Data Analysis

A questionnaire was developed with the purpose of assessing the effect of Whatsapp during Covid-19 as perceived by Arabic Language teachers in KSA. Interviews were held in order to support the findings of the questionnaire.

RESULTS

ARL Teachers' Perceptions on the Effectiveness of WhatsApp during Covid-19

The ARL teachers were also asked to rate, on a 5-point Likert-scale (that is, strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree), statements about the effectiveness of WhatsApp as media of online teaching and learning during Covid-19. Table 1 shows the results of the responses of the teachers. From Table 1 it was indicated that 108(36%) agreed that WhatsApp provides learning based on the principle of self-learning, while 32 (10.66%) strongly agree, 100 (33.33%) were neutral, 30(10.00%) disagreed while 30 (10.00 %) strongly disagreed. "WhatsApp makes learning easier" gained agreement of 66(22.00%). Meanwhile, WhatsApp is really effective during Covid-19 was disagreed upon by 100(33.33 %). Likewise, the WhatsApp -based learning environment helps the interaction between teacher,

learner and the content through electronic means of communication, gained the same percentage of disagreement. Compared to other learning media WhatsApp is the most effective gained the most disagreement percentage: 130(43.33%). WhatsApp is easier than other means gained agreement of 26.66 percent. Finally, WhatsApp's data are accessible gained 100(22%) of disagreement and the same: 100(22%) as strongly disagree.

What are the Challenges of WhatsApp during Covid-19 as Perceived by ARL Teachers?

The ARL teachers emphasized that there are some challenges they encounter when using open learning. These challenges came from three sources: challenges from the teacher, challenges from the student, and challenges from the educational content, tabular cum graphical forms were used.

Challenges from Teacher

As shown in Table 2, "The weakness of the teacher's ability to influence students in distance teaching compared to Learning face to face" came first with 94 percent of agreements among respondents, while "Working from home puts pressure on the teacher in terms of time management" came second with 92 percent of agreement among respondents. "The teacher's inability to determine the distance learning tools that suit his students" came third with 91 percent agreement among respondents. Lastly, "overburdening the student with the many duties provided by distance learning tools" came fourth with 90 percent of agreement among respondents.

Table 2: The percentage (percent) and Rank (R) for challenges from teacher

Statement	Percentage	Rank
The weakness of the teacher's ability to influence students in distance teaching compared to Learning face to face	94	1
Working from home puts pressure on the teacher in terms of time management	92	2
The teacher's inability to determine the distance learning tools that suit his students	91	3
Overburdening the student with the many duties provided by distance learning tools	90	4

Challenges from Student

As shown in Table 3, "the student is not used to this amount and type of teaching at home" came first with 87 percent of agreements among respondents, while "the student's weakness of the feasibility of distance teaching during this stage" came second with 84 percent of agreement among respondents. "Weakness of students' skills in communicating with teachers through distance learning tools" came third with 82 percent of agreement among respondents. Lastly, "students were not able to acquire the main skills in distance learning as well as in face-to-face learning" came fourth "with 80 percent of agreement among respondents".

Challenges from the Educational Content

As shown in Table 4, "The courses are not prepared to be taught through distance learning"

Table 1: Teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of WhatsApp during Covid-19

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
WhatsApp provides learning based on the principle of self-learning	30 (10%)	30 (10.%)	100 (33.33%)	108 (36%)	32 (10.66%)
WhatsApp makes learning easier				66 (22.00%)	
WhatsApp is really effective during Covid-19 era		100 (33.33 %)			
The WhatsApp -based learning environment helps the interaction between teacher, learner and the content through electronic means of communication compared to other learning media		100 (33.33 %)			
WhatsApp is the most effective		130 (43.33 %)			
WhatsApp is easier than other means				(26.66%)	
WhatsApp's data are accessible	100 (22%)	100 (22.00 %)			

Table 3: The percentage (percent) and rank (R) for challenges from student

Statement	Percentage	Rank
The student is not used to this amount and type of teaching at home	87	1
The student's weakness of the feasibility of distance teaching during this stage	84	2
Weakness of students' skills in communicating with teachers through distance learning tools	82	3
Students were not able to acquire the main skills in distance learning as well as in face-to-face learning	80	4

came first with 94 percent of agreements among respondents, while "it is difficult to take into account individual differences between students during distance learning" came second with 92 percent of agreement among respondents. "The need for many hours of preparation and converting the material into electronic material" came third with 90 percent of agreement among respondents. Lastly, "lack of clarity on the desired educational goals of the distance learning process" came fourth "with 87 percent of agreement among respondents".

Table 4: The percentage (percent) and Rank (R) for challenges from the educational content

Statement	Percentage	Rank
The courses are not prepared to be taught through distance learning	94	1
It is difficult to take into account individual differences between students during distance learning	92	2
The need for many hours of preparation and converting the material into electronic material	90	3
Lack of clarity on the desired educational goals of the distance learning process	87	4

Findings from Online Interview

In the interviews, ARL teachers were asked to express their perceptions regarding the advantages of WhatsApp during Covid-19 as perceived by

ARL teachers. Some of ARL teachers (n=200, 66.66%) who participated in the interviews gave positive feedback about the implementation of WhatsApp in their teaching.

"I find that students' interaction and satisfaction improve when using WhatsApp. They became more and more collaborative students."

"WhatsApp allows enhancement of face-to-face delivery, greater flexibility in teaching, and better communication and participation."

"WhatsApp is efficient because almost all students understand the use of social media."

"WhatsApp stimulates collaborative work and achieves the exchange of content between the institution and students and between the employees of the institution. For example, share audio lessons, send PPT materials or documents like Word, books, etc. It is also possible to share video content."

DISCUSSION

The purpose was to investigate ARL teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of WhatsApp during Covid-19, the challenges of WhatsApp during Covid-19 as perceived by ARL teachers, and the advantages and disadvantages of WhatsApp during Covid-19 as perceived by ARL teachers. The ARL teachers were asked to rate, on a 5-point Likert-scale (that is, strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree), statements about the effectiveness of WhatsApp during Covid-19. Respondents agreed to the importance of involving WhatsApp in the educational field. This is consistent with other studies (Gokdas et al. 2014; Ozaydin et al. 2017; Enyama et al. 2021; Suryana et al. 2021; Ubaedillah et al. 2021).

Due to the rapid developments in our contemporary world, which are due to modern technology that has entered every field of life, including the field of education, students have become familiar with sharing information using different social media modes, such as WhatsApp. That is done through messages, videos, audios, photos, or screenshots. It is very useful for the students as well as their teachers to create learning collaboration using WhatsApp messenger outside the class. This result is consistent with the results of Almahasees et al. (2021) who reported the usefulness of this means during the pandemic. Additionally, the findings of Nsabayeze et al. (2020) illustrated that WhatsApp is effective and supportive of students learning.

The ARL teachers emphasized that there are some challenges they encounter when using open learning. The challenges came from three sources: challenges from the teacher, challenges from the student, and challenges from the educational content.

It has become certain in the sustainable development literature that the education and scientific research sector are components of national security, and cannot be achieved under traditional education, which confirms the urgent need for e-learning, and in order for the guardianship bodies to provide effective e-learning, educational policies in university institutions must be reviewed, and work to achieve the future vision for a short-term and a long-term period in the adoption of digital education, and this can only be achieved by planning based on statistics on the extent of the use of digitization and educational technology within the university, and taking into account the available technical means and available digital capabilities, and the interests of digitization and distance education will face the problem of electronic piracy and viruses that penetrate educational platforms and sites are exposed to damage, so it is necessary to work on cyber security, which provides a set of mechanisms, procedures, means and frameworks aimed at protecting software, computers and electronic property from theft and corruption and maintaining the confidentiality of information, which requires allocating a budget for e-learning and digital research.

It is necessary to adopt e-learning to become an adopted and officially approved strategy in the education sector, and accordingly, it is necessary to provide the appropriate atmosphere to pass the distance learning process, and to raise the ceiling of the challenge to face the shortcoming in providing qualified educational cadres with the aim of improving performance and achieving quality by international standards, and finding solutions to the high cost to participate in the networks in light of the slowing down of the global economy, which makes families with daily incomes or limited incomes unable to bear the financial burdens required by e-learning. In order for education to transition to digital education smoothly and successfully, it is necessary to work on changing the educational culture of the teacher and student, and to find alternative ways to provide e-learning distinctly to students.

CONCLUSION

The current study highlights the ARL teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of WhatsApp during Covid-19. Arabic language teachers were to a large degree satisfied with the WhatsApp and had a positive perception towards its use as a supplement to conventional classroom mode of teaching. Concerning the challenges of WhatsApp as media of online teaching and learning during Covid-19, the ARL teachers emphasized that there are some challenges they encounter when using open learning. The challenges came from three sources: challenges from the teacher, challenges from the student, and challenges from the educational content. Tabular cum graphical forms were used.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Some recommendations are presented below. Implementing distance learning in a manner that takes into account the diversity in every society to ensure that all learners have equitable educational opportunities. Qualifying the human cadre (administrative and educational bodies and learners) and informing them of all necessary basic technologies to keep pace with distance education. Enhancing digital resources for practical fields in technical and vocational education through increased investment in the design of educational simulation programs. Activating the partnership between the public and private sectors, providing Internet services in unserved areas through satellites, and agreeing with Internet companies with the aim of securing free access to all educational servers through the application of technology of Whitelisting.

LIMITATION

The study was conducted in a single governorate involving only Arabic Language teachers as respondents.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author declares no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed S 2019. Use of WhatsApp to enhance reading and writing skills. *International Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 8(2): 61–68. <http://doi.org/10.18488/journal.23.2019.82.61.68>

- Al-Dahshan J 2020. The future of education after the Corona pandemic: Oriental scenarios. *International Journal of Research in Educational Sciences, International Foundation for Future Horizons*, 4(4): 105-169.
- Almahasees Z, Mohsen K, Amin MO 2021. Faculty's and students' perceptions of online learning during COVID-19. *Front Educ*, 6: 638470. doi: 10.3389/feduc.2021.638470
- Alshaibani M 2020. Prevalence and factors associated with social networking addiction among Saudi University students: A Cross-Sectional Survey. *Psycho-Educational Research Reviews*, 9(2): 87-99.
- Altun T, Salih A, Ahmet G, Caner Ö 2021. Investigating education faculty students' views about asynchronous distance education practices during Covid-19 isolation period. *Psycho-Educational Research Reviews*, 10(1): 34-45.
- Çam B, Can Y 2019. The effect of "WhatsApp" usage on the attitudes of students toward English self-efficacy and English courses in foreign language education outside the school. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 11(3): 247-256. <http://doi.org/10.26822/iejee.2019349249>
- Enyama D, Balti EV, Simeni Njonou SR et al. 2021. Use of WhatsApp®, for distance teaching during COVID-19 Pandemic: Experience and perception from a sub-Saharan African Setting. *BMC Med Edu*, 21: 517.
- Gokdas I, Aynur K 2014. Barriers in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Use in Educational Environments Scale. *Psycho-Educational Research Reviews*, 3(3): 34-40.
- Habibi A, Mukminin A, Riyanto Y, Prasajo LD, Sulistiyo U, Sofwan M et al. 2018. Building an online community: Student teachers' perceptions on the advantages of using social networking services in a teacher education program. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 19(1): 46-61.
- Hashemifardnia A, Namaziandost E, Esfahani FR 2018. The effect of using WhatsApp on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 5(3): 256-267.
- Hong X, Zhang M, Liu Q 2021. Preschool teachers' technology acceptance during the COVID-19: An adapted technology acceptance model. *Front Psychol*, 12: 691492. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.691492.
- Islam M 2019. Bangladeshi university students' perception about using Google classroom for teaching english. *Psycho-Educational Research Reviews*, 8(2): 57-65.
- Karaman Hüseyin Bugra, Coskun Arsla 2020. An Investigation of Adolescents' Levels of Exposure to cyberbullying in terms of social media attitudes and social appearance anxiety. *Psycho-Educational Research Reviews*, 9(3): 17-25.
- La Hanisi A, Risdiyana R, Dwi Utami Y, Sulisworo D 2018. The use of WhatsApp in collaborative learning to improve English teaching and learning process. *International Journal of Research Studies in Educational Technology*, 7(1): 29- 35. <http://doi.org/10.5861/ijrset.2018.3004>.
- Nasr E, Mustafa E 2018. The impact of YouTube, Skype and WhatsApp in improving EFL learners' speaking skill. *International Journal of Contemporary Applied Researches*, 5(5): 18-31.
- Nihayati A, Indriani L 2021. EFL students' perspective on Whatsapp as media of online teaching and learning in COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Research on Language Education*, 2(1): 44-52.
- Nsabayezu E, Iyamuremye A, Kwitonda J, Mboniyirivuze A 2020. Teachers' perceptions towards the utilization of WhatsApp in supporting teaching and learning of chemistry during COVID-19 pandemic in Rwandan secondary schools. *African Journal of Educational Studies in Mathematics and Sciences*, 16(2): 83-96.
- Oktaviani L, Mandasari B 2020. Powtoon: A digital medium to optimize students' cultural presentation in ELT classroom. *Teknosastik: Jurnal Bahasa dan Sastra*, 18(1): 33-41. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33365/ts.v18i1.526>.
- Ozaydin L, Nilay K, Merih T, Sevim K 2017. Resource room implementation in a secondary school and on-the-job training of teachers. *Psycho-Educational Research Reviews*, 6(2): 111 -137.
- Ramadan M 2020. The role of distance education in resolving the problems of the New Corona Epidemic. *Educational Journal, Sohag University, Faculty of Education*, 77(2): 1531-1543.
- Siemieniecka D, Wioletta K, Kamila M, Malgorzata Sk 2017. The potential of interactive media and their relevance in the education process. *Psycho-Educational Research Reviews*, 6(3): 1.
- Suryana I, Hidantikarnillah V, Murwantono M 2021. A narrative inquiry of language teachers' perceptions and experiences in using WhatsApp during New Normal Post-Covid-19 era. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 6(1): 55-70. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.6.1.55-70>.
- Tahoon Rehab 2021. Effects of test anxiety, distance education on general anxiety and life satisfaction of university students. *Psycho-Educational Research Reviews*, 10 (1): 107-117.
- Tatar E, Muzaffer O 2013. Prospective primary mathematics teachers' opinions about the use of computers in teaching and learning. *Psycho-Educational Research Reviews*, 2(1): 103.
- Ubaedillah U, Pratiwi DI, Huda ST, Kurniawan DA 2021. An exploratory study of English Teachers: The use of social media for teaching English on Distance Learning. *Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 5(2): 361-372.
- Zalat MM, Hamed MS, Bolbol SA 2021. The experiences, challenges, and acceptance of e-learning as a tool for teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic among university medical staff. *PLoS ONE*, 16(3): e0248758. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0248758>

Paper received for publication in December, 2021
 Paper accepted for publication in December, 2021