Ronaki International School - Erbil (RISE) Students' Attitudes Toward Online Assignment in Learning Management System (LMS)

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Abstract: The concept of online has become a vital part of today's students' lives. This study studied the academic development of students at a private international school in Iraq in connection to the online assignment component of the Learning Management System (LMS). A pre-test conducted to the students at the beginning of the study revealed that their levels were comparable. 14 girls and 14 boys, respectively, were assigned to the control and experimental groups. The duration of the trial was six weeks. In the fifth week of the study, the questionnaire was administered to the students using Google Forms. On the sixth and final week of the study, students were interviewed face-to-face and given a post-test. Based on the collected data and the 13% post-test difference, it was found that students preferred the online assignment technique and, as a result, were more successful. When the results to the student poll were reviewed, the students highlighted that the traditional method was more secure than the internet system. In general, research indicates that contemporary pupils are more open to online tasks.

1. Introduction

There has been a significant increase in the use of distant education and information technologies over the past twenty years. Being the most rapidly increasing online and offline technologies acknowledged by society (Çelik et al., 2022a). Moreover, training students to be self-directed lifelong learners requires a solid foundation in both the learning and teaching processes, as well as rigorous assessment (Ulker & Yildiz, 2021). Hence, assignments are an essential component of school and play a crucial role in attaining a decent education. Keeping kids engaged for the duration of a class is challenging, so it's important to have a toolbox full of strategies at your disposal. Language instruction can benefit from participation in extracurricular activities. Students get the opportunity to apply what they have learned in class at home, so solidifying their understanding. (Abdulrahman et al., 2018; Tosun & Yildiz, 2015).

The majority of children view schoolwork as a burdensome chore (Cooper, 1989). Maintaining the same environment at home for adolescents who spend an average of 5-7 hours each day studying at school is difficult for both the students and their parents. Modern educators may do homework more enjoyable by

employing technology instead of archaic methods. Using technology and the internet is a significant strategy for achieving this goal (Celik, 2019; Küçük, 2023a).

For instance, teachers rely heavily on technology to facilitate language acquisition for their students. Therefore, the adoption of digital assignment platforms by teachers will result in good changes for both them and their students. Students will not be bored while completing their assignments, and they will do it in the digital environment with which they are familiar, while teachers save time and receive faster feedback (Biyikli et al., 2019; Yildiz, 2021).

In recent years, Internet usage has expanded in popularity, and online expression among educators has become widespread (Derevensky et al., 2019). Online platforms have considerably benefited educators. It enabled online homework assignments, online feedback, and online analysis of student responses. Often, online educational activities benefit both the teacher and the student. Internet access facilitates teachers' and students' access to materials that would otherwise need considerable time and money to acquire. When online homework initially entered the educational realm, its capability was limited to true/false questions. Subsequent versions incorporated more sophisticated mechanisms that made the educators' jobs easier. Owing to these systems, teachers save considerable time while grading students' homework, allowing them to focus on their own academic development as well as that of their students (Gaffney, 2010).

Online tasks have been shown to be beneficial, especially during the pandemic. Owing to the teachers' inability to physically contact the kids, both they and the students had to adapt to the online concept. Google Classroom, Zoom, Coursera, and Blackboard are some of the most often utilized online systems. Due to these services, students were able to take their classes online and complete their homework electronically. This enabled students to simultaneously accept technology and learn in an environment that best suits them (Bahasoan et al., 2020).

2. Literature Review

Many studies on the significance of online assignments have been undertaken, and in these studies, traditional and digital assignment systems have been compared. Burch and Kuo (2010) conducted a one-year study at the College of Algebra in one of their studies. In this study, traditional and online tasks were contrasted. In this study, the online assignment system is integrated into a textbook. This method offers benefits, such as allowing pupils to attempt several responses and providing hints. Thereafter, students were given the option to obtain online comments. According to the conclusions of the study, the online assignment system increases student motivation and willingness to work. Selecting activities to excite students and leading them toward the learning goal are also important parts of the educational process (Çelik et al., 2022b; Yildiz, 2022; Küçük, 2023b). The online assignment system is common and substantial in all nations with access to technology. Hauk et al. (2015) investigated the effect of online assignments on the academic achievement of American students. In this study including 439 students in 19 classrooms, twelve classes used an online assignment system, and seven classes used the traditional assignment technique. After analyzing the study's findings, it was established that the online assignment technique had the same effect on students' mathematical achievement as the traditional assignment system. All research conducted indicates that online assignments have a positive effect on student achievement.

Biktimirov and Klassen (2008) examined the effects of online assignments on student performance. This study is a Web-based software in the finance class that provides students with assignments and test-taking tips. The growth of students that participate in this program has been found to improve.

The online assignment approach has not only been attempted in recent years but also in the past. Bridge and Appleyard (2008) obtained impressive results in their study of online schoolwork and its effects. In their study, they sought the opinions of forty-seven students on online submission. The Digital Learning Environment the BlackboardTM program was selected for the study, and student input on the conventional method and online submission was received. According to 88% of students, completing homework online saves both time and money. Significantly, ninety percent of adolescents prefer to receive feedback online rather than in conventional ways. The assumption is that students are more helpful and like working in online environments. Despite all these outstanding qualities, the students highlighted a concern. There is a general lack of confidence in online sites. They feared the uploaded tasks could be lost in the digital environment.

Gaffney et al. (2010) examined the benefits of online assignments in three unique categories. Secondly, they discovered that timely assignment feedback enhances student learning. Students studied more attentively after observing instantaneous results and obtaining feedback on their homework assignments and presentations (Bangert-Drowns et al., 1991). Second, it was emphasized that online assignment students would not suffer uncertainty. This is due to the fact that the student is aware of all the processes involved in online assignment systems and follows them progressively. Everything is within the control of the student. Current students were born in the technological age. The majority of students are skilled with computers and like spending time in front of them. Students will be more motivated to finish their homework if pre-assignments are provided. Moreover, because online assignments have due dates, students will not procrastinate on their schoolwork (Bonham et al., 2001; Küçük, 2023b).

A long-standing debate has surrounded the question of whether or not assignments enhance student performance. Some studies indicate that assignments have little effect on student performance. Peters et al. (2002) assessed whether or not management classroom assignments promote student development. According to the statistics, not only do assignments negatively affect student performance, but students also obtain poorer scores on multiple-choice exams. Numerous further research has shown that providing homework does not improve student performance. In her research on the intermediate algebra classroom, Weems (1998) found little evidence that assignments boost students' educational levels. In the control class, she did not compel pupils to complete homework, but she did so in other classes. According to the exam results, there was no noticeable change. Why some kids enjoy doing homework while others do not, and why some students succeed with minimum effort while others fail, is a topic that has been extensively discussed (Smith, 2014). Foreign language instructors typically assign and monitor a significant number of assignments. According to Celik (2017), foreign language instructors usually give and monitor a significant amount of homework. The main purpose of this is a language learning process. In this process, the student's progress must be followed, and the evaluations should be shared with the student with appropriate academic methods. Rosário et al. (2015) suggested that students plagiarize or do not complete their assignments because teachers do not examine the homework they offer or have limited control over

the assignments. Paudel (2012) suggested that pupils' lethargy is the result of teachers failing to verify their homework.

2.1 Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The goal of this study is to explore the positive and negative impacts of online assignments on student performance by collecting student feedback on online assignments. Since there are few articles written in Iraq on Google Scholar on this subject, it was decided to perform this study. Students were administered a pre-test, questionnaires using Google Forms, interviews were done, and a post-test was administered to collect and analyze data. The following research questions were asked using this framework:

- Is the Online Assignment in Learning Management System (LMS) a motivating factor when making student assignments?
- Will there be an improvement in the academic performance of the students in the control group who follow the online assignment?
- Is there a significant difference between students who follow the online assignment method and those who follow the traditional assignment method?

3. Methodology

In this study, the mixed method was used to combine qualitative and quantitative data. The reason for using a mixed method design is to classify the data we obtained, cross-check and ensure the validity (Greene, 2006). The Oxford Placement Test was applied as a pre-test to determine the levels of the control group and experimental group students at the beginning of the study, and no serious differences were observed in the student levels. Placement tests are a very useful method to measure student levels (Belfield & Crosta, 2012). Afterward, a questionnaire was applied to the students via Google Form, then one-to-one interviews and a post-test were applied to the students.

3.1 Participants

A total of 28 students, 14 girls, and 14 boys, participated in this study. The students' English level is elementary according to Oxford Placement Test, and they are all in the seventh grade. As a nation, the students are 6 Turkish, 2 Arabic, and 20 Kurdish. This study was carried out in a private international school affiliated to Stirling Education Company in the academic year 2019-2020. The students participating in the study had previously worked with the LMS and were familiar with the system. The school administration also supports the use of the LMS system and recommends its use by teachers. The official language of instruction of the school is English. Only local courses are taught in their own language.

Table 1: Participants` Frequency in Terms of Gender, Age, and Nationality

Variable(s)	Option	F	%
Gender	Female	14	50
	Male	14	50
Age	12	8	29
	13	20	71
Nationality	Turkish	6	21
	Arabic	2	7
	Kurdish	20	71
Total		28	100

3.3 Materials

In the study, the elementary course book of Oxford Publications was used. In the experimental group, male students used the Learning Management System (LMS) provided by Stirling Education Company to schools and delivered their assignments via LMS. In the other control group, a group of fourteen girls submitted their homework, which is a traditional method, to the notebook with a pencil and via the activity book.

4. Findings

The findings in this section were collected under 3 main headings: questionnaire, face-to-face interview, and descriptive analysis. For this reason, each section has been examined separately, and the details are as follows.

4.1 The Analysis of the Questionnaire

Table 2: Students` opinions on sending assignments online or the traditional method.

ITEMS	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. I am in favor of Learning Management System (LMS).	20	71	4	14	2	7	2	7	0	0
2. I prefer the traditional assignment system.	0	0	2	8	2	8	20	83	0	0
3. It is easy to submit assignments on the internet.	8	29	5	18	5	18	4	14	6	21
4. Sending assignments on LMS saves me time.	15	54	5	18	5	18	2	7	1	4
5. Traditional method is more trustworthy than online platforms.	14	50	6	21	4	14	2	7	2	7

As seen in the table above, a study consisting of a total of 5 questions and in which 28 students participated was applied to get the students' opinions about submitting their assignments using online or traditional methods.

In Item 1, a question was asked about the students' opinions about the Learning Management System (LMS) and whether they like this system that helps with online assignment submission. Twenty (71%) of the 28 students that participated in the study expressed satisfaction with the online Learning Management System. This information indicates that pupils enjoy working on internet platforms. Four pupils (14%) responded in the affirmative. Two neutral and two disagreeing students accounted for 14% of all students. Conversely, none of the students selected the option for strong disagreement. These data indicate that the majority of students are associated with technology and the LMS system.

In Item 2, the statement "I prefer the traditional assignment method" was presented to the students. This statement was directed to both the control group and the experimental group. None of the participants chose 0 (0%) strongly agree about the traditional assignment method. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that most of the students, no matter how much they are in the control or experimental group, like the online assignment more. 2 of the students (8%) chose the option to agree. This data shows that only a few people tend to the traditional method. 2 of the students (8%) chose the neutral option. 20 (83%) of the participants chose the disagree option. The fact that the majority chose this option shows that the students, even in the control group, prefer the LMS platform. None of the students (0%) chose the strongly disagree option.

In Item 3, students were asked if they had any difficulties in submitting their assignments via the online platform. The statement was as follows; It is easy to submit assignments on the internet. Eight of the students (29%) chose strongly agree. Five (18%) chose the option to agree. When we examine the first two options, it turns out that half of the students have no problems in sending assignments through online platforms. 5 (18%) of the students chose this option as neutral. Four (14%) disagree, and 6 (21%) strongly disagree. Contrary to the first two options, in the last two options, the city wall has presented the truth to us. No matter how much they like online platforms, students reported that they encountered difficulties while sending assignments.

In Item 4, it was presented whether the LMS system was effective in saving the participants' time. Half of the students, 15 (54%) students strongly agreed. Option 1 proves to us that participants save time when they use the LMS platform. 5 (18%) students chose to agree, 5 (18%) were neutral, and 3 students (11%) disagree and strongly disagree, respectively. What can be deduced from this is that both the control group and the experimental group reported that sending assignments via LMS contributed positively to timesaving.

In Item 5, the statement "Traditional method is more trustworthy than online platforms" was presented to the students. Half of the students, 14 (50%) participants, marked the strongly agree option and reported that the traditional method is safer. Six (21%) of the participants chose the option to agree, 4 (14%) were neutral, 2 (7%) disagree, and 2 (7%) strongly disagree. The last statement reveals the truth about water. Although the majority of the participants liked the online assignment method, 85% found that the traditional method was more secure.

This is due to the electrical and internet outages that occur when students submit online assignments, the fact that their submissions do not reach their instructors, the fact that they occasionally forget their passwords, and the concern that their submissions will be lost.

4.2 The Analysis of the Interview

In this section, all of the 28 students were interviewed face-to-face, and their views on online assignments and traditional assignments were asked. Some of the participants' views are as follows.

I find working on internet platforms extremely enjoyable and time efficient. I am a person who rapidly becomes bored due to my disposition, however interacting with something online motivates me. Online Lesson Management System (LMS) has facilitated my work. Our teacher uploads our homework assignments to the platform, and we return them after completing them. (Student 3)

I have never attended an international school, and my knowledge of technology is limited. I am envious that my friends are good at this, and I aspire to be just like them, but I suppose it will take time. Since I am accustomed to it, I believe the conventional assignment system is more appropriate for me. I fear that my peers will refer to me as a conventional student. If given the option, I would prefer to complete all of my assignments and e-lessons online. My family gave me a computer for my birthday, and I was required to spend time in computer environments. I enjoy playing computer games frequently. I must complete my online homework before I am granted access to play games. It is quite tedious for me to sit at the table and attempt to write. Over half an hour is required to complete a one-page assignment on paper, while I

complete it in five minutes on the computer. The (Student 7) LMS Program has been quite beneficial to me. With internet access, I could complete my homework in any situation and submit it to my teacher. In addition, I experienced internet disconnections, was unable to enter the system despite having a login and password, some of my homework did not reach my teacher, and I was unable to send all of my assignments due to a file size limit. (Student 17)

I was initially unsure on how to use the LMS system. The administration of the school provided us seminars on this topic and instructed us on how to utilize the program. In addition, YouTube tutorial videos demonstrated each stage of the process. As a result, I reviewed the films where I had difficulties and was able to effortlessly overcome them. (Student 21)

In the study done by our instructor, I participated as a control subject. I voluntarily joined this group by asking my teacher. I have no faith in anything on online platforms. What will we do if hackers gain control of the system? Who can guarantee that my uploaded personal information will not one day pose harm to me? Doing my homework using a pen and notebook makes me feel more secure and safe. (Student 23)

Using the LMS for my tasks was a novel experience for me. It taught me how to use internet platforms and how to rapidly submit my homework to my teacher. I loved my teacher's response to the assignment I turned in, and I shared it with my family, who were proud of me after reading it. I won't let this opportunity pass without contributing, and I believe it would be beneficial for both students and teachers to expand this platform further. (Student 27)

4.3 Descriptive Data Analysis

The reason for our pre-test application at the beginning of the study was to determine whether there was a level difference between the students in the control group and the experimental group. When the test results were examined, the net average of the control group was 17, and the net average of the experimental group was 16 out of 30 questions.

At the end of six weeks, a multiple-choice Post-test consisting of 100 questions was administered to both groups. In the test results, the average of the experimental group was 78%, and the average of the control group was 65%. With this information, it has been determined that young people living in the age of technology, studying with their favorite methods contribute positively to their academic performance.

Table 3: Independent Samples Test analysis

Variables	Groups	Number	Mean
Pre-test	Control	14	17
Pre-test	Experimental	14	16
Post-test	Control	14	65
Post-test	Experimental	14	78

4.3.1 Reasons for the Success of the Students in the experimental group

There are various reasons for the 13% difference that emerged between the students in the experimental group and the control group.

- While the students in the experimental group were doing their homework on the computer, it was advantageous for them to quickly look up the words they did not know from the online dictionaries and continue their homework.
- Uploading short videos about the subjects by the teachers and watching these videos by the students allowed them to better understand the subject and make the acquired knowledge permanent.
- No matter how small a detail, students did not waste paper and pencils. They did their homework digitally and delivered them to their teachers.
- Students saved time by making assignments that they thought were long and boring, even taking long hours, in a very short time.
- While doing their homework, the students had the opportunity to help each other through online chat applications.
- The fact that their teachers gave quick feedback on the assignments submitted by the students motivated the students more.
- The students in the experimental group had the chance to correct the mistakes they made while making assignments faster, and they were able to reach the right information faster.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was conducted to see how students feel about online assignments. In this instance, a pre-test was given to the students. The Google Form was then extracted with a questionnaire. To obtain information from the students directly, face-to-face interviews were done. A post-test was conducted at the conclusion of the study to compare the academic growth of the experimental and control groups.

According to the study's findings, pupils favor online assignments over traditional ones. Even some students in the control group who adhered to the standard method system desired to remain in the experimental group if it were possible. Students were most intrigued by the notion that the online assignment system was fast and computer-based. Clearly, these advantages are coupled with disadvantages. It was noted that several participants had trust concerns with the online method. The children were concerned about the risk of losing information submitted to the Internet system, which could constitute a threat to their private lives in the future.

This study will serve as a helpful resource for educators investigating the effect of online assignments on student academic development. This study is also valuable for educators who evaluate students' aptitude for traditional or online assignment systems. Based on their gender and school environment, girls and boys were assigned to control and experimental groups in this study. In future studies, combining male and female participants will yield more exact results. In addition, 28 students participated in this study. Raising the number of students will provide a more comprehensive analysis of the data.

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