

Acceptance and Attitudes: Investigating EFL students' perceptions of learning platforms at Sona University Extension

Aceptación y actitudes: Investigación de las percepciones de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera sobre las plataformas de aprendizaje en la Extensión Universitaria de Soná

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Abstract

This paper examines one of the most important aspects related to the attitudes of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students at the University of Panama toward the use of learning platforms. It investigates their explicit acceptance of these tools to support their learning process. This research, conducted with 29 students from all levels of the English Department within the Faculty of Humanities, took place during the second semester of 2026. Using a Descriptive approach with a quantitative design. With approval, a closed-ended survey was administered in person during class time to gather student perspectives. Results show important insights into how these platforms are perceived and utilized by EFL learners. Significantly, the use of platforms affects students' learning process, and findings demonstrate a high level of student approval regarding platform interaction and highlight a valuable positive impact on the quality of the educational process.

Keywords: EFL students, attitudes, learning platforms, acceptance, perception.

Resumen

El artículo examina uno de los aspectos más importantes de las actitudes de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) de la Universidad de Panamá hacia el uso de plataformas de aprendizaje. Se investiga explícitamente su aceptación de estas herramientas para apoyar su proceso de aprendizaje. Esta investigación, realizada con 29 estudiantes de todos los niveles del Departamento de Inglés de la Facultad de Humanidades, se llevó a cabo durante el segundo semestre de 2025. Utilizando un enfoque descriptivo y un diseño cuantitativo. Con la aprobación de la administración, se administró una encuesta cerrada de forma presencial durante el horario de clase para recabar las perspectivas de los estudiantes. Los hallazgos muestran información importante sobre cómo los estudiantes de EFL perciben y utilizan estas plataformas. Significativamente, el uso de plataformas afecta el proceso de aprendizaje de los estudiantes, y los hallazgos

demuestran un alto nivel de aprobación de los estudiantes respecto a la interacción en la plataforma y ponen de manifiesto un impacto positivo en la calidad del proceso educativo.

Palabras clave: Estudiantes de EFL, actitudes, plataformas de aprendizaje, aceptación, percepción.

Introduction

Teaching and learning resources have undergone significant changes due to the expansion of information technology, particularly the development of computer networking. Shelly, (2010) noted that digital technology fosters increased engagement in creative endeavors, transforming audiences into active creators. The access to material, together with the distribution and presentation of information, has produced excellent and varied changes. Learners can access computers and the internet to obtain information without the limitations of time and space, giving them greater independence to choose the content and methods of learning. Hamilton, (2015) wrote about the integration of technology in classes in which *"students should be able to use their knowledge of technology to generate new ideas, products, and processes. They apply what they already know about how technologies work to new digital settings to accomplish meaningful work"* (p.23).

Additionally, Assaf and Solhi, (2023) stated that the teaching-learning process is speedily transitioning to a hybrid system. In recent years, advances in teaching English at universities in this country have changed with the integration of technology and the new roles for teachers and students in virtual learning environments and cloud-based platforms for team collaboration and communication.

Nanayakkara, (2007) proposed a three-factor framework (individual, system, and organization) for understanding e-learning adoption, while Sun *et al.*, (2008) assessed adoption factors using six dimensions: student, instructor, course, technology, design, and environment. In developing countries, institutions of higher education have been integrating Learning Management Systems into their curricula as central components (Rahayu *et al.*, 2022).

Researchers have studied how information technology has evolved in educational institutions:

Information technology was seen as a combination of computing, microelectronics, and telecommunications. The Microelectronic Education program promoted curriculum development, teacher education, resource organization, and support. The most recent attempt to make a radical difference to the use and availability of computers in schools was

the National Grid for Learning, promising all schools better connections to the numerous resources of the international information superhighway (Cullingford & Haq, 2009, p. 5).

Evaluating the effectiveness of technology integration involves integrating adequate technology into the curriculum, which requires planning, time, dedication, and resources. *Because it is important to determine whether integration strategies are working, teachers, schools, and school districts should take steps to evaluate the effectiveness of their technology integration* (Shelly et al., 2010, p. 404).

Students in online environments actively participate in collaborative teaching and learning processes. It influenced a new way of learning in which students transformed a teacher-led technological activity that offered no personalization into a project that reflected their concerns and perspectives, while also demonstrating their ingenuity and collaborative skills. To sum up, this online learning modality creates engaging and enriching experiences by offering distinctive features that enhance interaction and the overall educational context (Hamilton, 2015).

In this new era of education, there is a proliferation of software, tools, applications, and learning platforms dedicated to language acquisition. A learning management system (LMS) enables instructors to quickly build course websites. These platforms serve as resource providers to complement face-to-face teaching, serve as virtual learning environments in blended or hybrid modalities (where partial or online activities partially substitute for in-person instruction), or as the primary delivery method for fully online distance learning programs. Irzawati, (2021) notes that digital platforms create a great, enjoyable learning environment for students through the tools and resources they offer.

Khan and Qudrat-Ullah (2021) described important aspects of the Learning Management System:

Learning management systems (LMSs) have become an essential software for faculty and students in their teaching and learning process. It is a computer software that facilitates electronic learning. The LMS is composed of computer software that incorporates functions for teaching, evaluating, and administering courses. It is used for content delivery, course registration, tracking, reporting, and also for administration (p.13).

Rojabia, (2020) examined students' satisfaction with their learning experiences and the environments in which they learned. Researchers have investigated the implementation of Microsoft Teams as an online platform for educational purposes:

Many online learning platforms, such as Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, and University Learning Management Systems, assist the lecturers and students in teaching and learning. Online learning platforms will eventually replace traditional physical classes. One of the efficient and effective platforms is Microsoft Teams. Microsoft Teams (MS Teams) will let students and lecturers meet virtually. Additionally, when using MS Teams, it can serve as a hub for all Microsoft applications, including Microsoft Forms, Microsoft Stream, SharePoint, OneDrive, and many others (Azam *et al.*, 2021, p.116).

Although there is a well-documented presence and advantages of virtual learning environments (VLEs) in modern education (Barker & Gossman, 2013), the number of online platforms in Panamanian education is notorious; a thorough understanding of students' attitudes toward these environments, specifically for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) acquisition, remains limited. Although platforms such as Microsoft Teams and others are recognized for their potential to improve teaching quality, student learning, and engagement (Learning Environments Research, n.d.), further research is needed to explore how university EFL students perceive and interact with VLEs in their language-learning experiences.

This lack of in-depth understanding could impede the effective implementation and optimization of online resources to support EFL learning outcomes and the broader adoption of blended learning strategies within the faculty. Subsequently, it is important to recognize the level of students' acceptance of digital platforms before implementing them in their classes (Moonma, 2021).

This paper attempts to investigate the EFL Students' Perceptions of Learning Platforms at Sona University Extension. The aim is to ascertain its acceptance as part of their learning process. Consequently, this study contributes to the understanding of English language learning and teaching and expands the increasing research on the integration of learning platforms in the English language education at the University of Panama.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research approach to investigate EFL students' perceptions of Learning Platforms at Sona University Extension. The collection of numerical data is essential to analyze attitudes in quantitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The data collection instrument was based on closed-ended survey questions in surveys for quantitative research. The survey was administered face-to-face during class with the administrator's prior

permission. The participants were 29 EFL students enrolled at all levels of the English Department within the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Panama. Data were collected during the second semester of 2025.

The instrument employed several Likert-scale statements (Likert, 1932). It provides different statements to which students responded using a 5-point Likert scale:

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

The questions were structured to measure key variables, including:

- Learning process: Students' satisfaction with the learning process. 10 questions
- Teaching process: Students' satisfaction with the teaching process. 5 questions
- Overall Attitude/Acceptance: General questions about their willingness to use the platforms and their overall satisfaction.

Design

This research used both descriptive and quantitative approaches. A survey was applied to 29 students at all levels of English careers. Descriptive because the questionnaire was addressed to discover how students use some interactive teaching/learning platforms. Also, it is quantitative because it shows a measure of the number of preferred platforms used during regular classes.

Procedure

The survey was designed with the primary purpose of investigating the acceptance and aptitude of English students when using learning platforms to enhance their language abilities. Seventy students from different levels answered the questionnaire. Collecting data was not difficult because the students were quick to respond and participate.

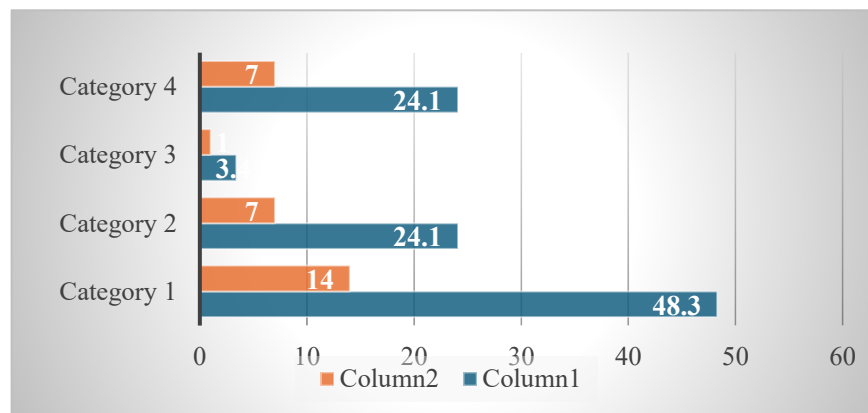
The research instrument was validated by a group of experts who provided feedback on developing strong and meaningful questions.

Results.

In this section, the results obtained from a student survey administered during the second academic term of 2025. The data focus on students' perceptions of the use of learning platforms such as Teams, Moodle, and Classroom in the learning process at Sona University Extension.

Figure 1

Do the platform activities help me consolidate what I learned in class?

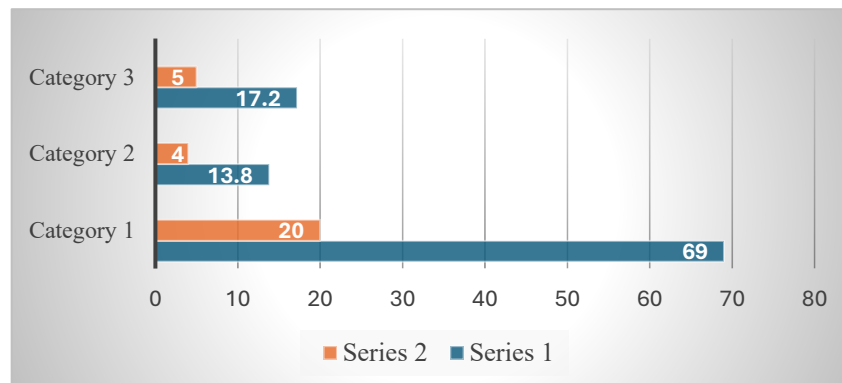


Note: Survey questions were formulated during the 2025 second academic term.

The results of this question showed that 48.3% of the responses were positive, suggesting that students consider the activities proposed by professors to play a significant role in English learning. However, the strongest one was 24.1 %. A 24.2% difference in agreement shows that the students were highly in favor of using platforms.

Figure 2

Do the learning platforms adapt to my needs?

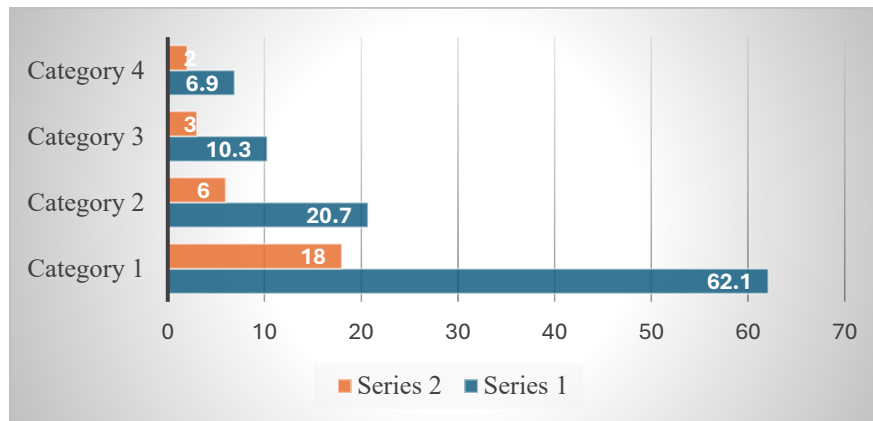


Note: Survey questions were formulated during the 2025 second academic term.

Regarding this result, the 69% considered that learning platforms are adapted to their learning needs. On the other hand, categories two and three together account for 31%. It can be observed that Category One received the highest acceptance.

Figure 3

Do professors provide clear instructions for using the platforms?



Note: Survey questions were formulated during the 2025 second academic term.

In this section, the results are shown in a chart. The items were focused on Students' satisfaction with the learning process, specifically regarding the use of learning platforms at the University of Panama.

Table 1

Learning platforms

Item	Category - 1	Category - 2	Category - 3	Category - 4
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
The Teams learning platforms, Moodle, and Classroom, are easily accessible.	65.5	24.1	10.3	
Notifications received through Teams, Moodle, and Classroom are helpful and timely.	55.2	37.9	6.9	
The Teams learning platforms, Moodle, and Classroom, are easily accessible.	69	24	6.9	
I feel comfortable using Teams, Moodle, and Classroom platforms, even without help.	69	20.7	3.4	
The tools provided when using the Teams, Moodle, and Classroom platforms are easy to use.	58.6	27.6	13.8	
The visual design provided by the Teams, Moodle, and Classroom platforms is pleasing.	62.1	34.5	3.4	
The platforms, Teams, Moodle, and Classroom help me improve communication with my professors.	48.3	41.4	6.9	3.4

The Teams, Moodle, and Classroom platforms are operating stably and free of recurring technical issues.	58.6	37.9	3.4	
I find the Teams, Moodle, and Classroom platforms easy to use.	65.5	27.6	6.9	

Note: Survey questions were formulated during the 2025 second academic term.

Regarding the item, "the Teams learning platforms, Moodle, and Classroom are easily accessible", with a strong agreement selection of 65.5 percent. The second item, "The visual design provided by the Teams, Moodle, and Classroom platforms is pleasing," received 62.1% of the votes. Moreover, the third selection, with strong agreement, at 65.5 percent, "I find the Teams, Moodle, and Classroom platforms easy to use." These items provide an overview of the acceptance of Moodle and Classroom as learning platforms, as well as how they are perceived during use, which is generally considered easy.

Discussion

The use of learning platforms increases students' learning autonomy, as they maintain their interest in working on what they need to know, discover, and figure out. Moodle and classroom platforms, each with its unique functionality, help make the learning process more pleasant and encourage students to identify potential difficulties, which is one of the strongest student abilities they can explore. However, teachers' guidance is crucial to align platforms with learners' engagement to support self-instruction. Those results are shown in the results of Figure 1.

In addition, students' perceptions regarding the interaction of professors and platforms showed high acceptance, which is positive for enriching the teaching-learning process. On the other hand, according to the results in Figure 2, platforms are adapted to students' needs. It seems that, thanks to the platforms' versatility, students can explore new research topics that could significantly enhance their ability to meet the required competencies.

Additional adaptations, tools, advantages, and disadvantages may be included to demonstrate that platform use can influence learners' perceptions. According to Table 1, one of the most remarkable items to be addressed received positive acceptance regarding the versatility of using the platforms, which is a real advantage that connects students' interests, teachers' guidance, and platform utility.

Finally, the topic focused on knowing a possible negative barrier that could be a bias in learning with the support of professors due to the use of platforms, as shown in Table 1, the result was 3.4, which proves a minimal amount of the use of platforms to limit professor and students' interactions. Now, it is remarkable to continue observing students' behavior when using learning platforms as tools to help reach comprehension and understanding of a target topic.

Conclusion

The University of Panama has opted to use the Moodle platform, alongside other platforms, to create a new learning style trend. Since COVID-19, students and professors have needed to migrate toward a system that allows them to engage in a real learning context. Advantages and disadvantages were analyzed, and through their use, the effectiveness could be tasted.

This research was motivated by the desire to understand students' perceptions of the use of certain platforms and yielded relevant data. The professor's guidance on creating meaningful activities that enhance students' engagement and motivation to use the platforms was very satisfying to discover. Also, the flexibility of platform use was another significant result, as shown in students' answers.

The positive students' perception of the use of the platforms as a learning tool helper might be focused on some didactic resources such as forums, videos, and chat for discussions, uploading fields, and, most remarkably, the limited time to perform the assignments, creating on student the capacity to work at their own pace but with limited time. Another positive feature of the platforms that might be the focus of the next study might be the way of evaluation that platforms offer, and how students and professors administer this important element during the teaching and learning process.

It is crucial that the University of Panama continue exploring, using, and administering tech platforms to make higher education instruction more effective and motivating for students to engage with.

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