FIRST-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ONLINE ENGLISH LEARNING

By

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ABSTRACT

Online learning gained significant traction during the COVID-19 pandemic, however, it continues to be a viable learning method following the reopening of the world. The researcher identified the need to determine the value of online learning after the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training announced in 2021 an allowance of 30% online teaching for Vietnamese universities. Hence, the researcher aimed to discover the perceptions of the benefits and challenges of online English learning among university students in Hanoi. The study collected quantitative data through an online questionnaire from 100 first-year undergraduate students from various universities in Hanoi. The descriptively analyzed data revealed that the students considered the organization of online lessons and courses to be most beneficial, followed by the convenience of online learning. Students felt strongly that teachers clearly communicate lesson contents, that they can study flexibly online, that online class activities are explained well, and that their performances are evaluated fairly by their teachers. In terms of challenges, the students indicated that they mainly experience social issues. In particular, students expressed that they experience isolation from their peers and teachers and that they receive feedback in an untimely manner from their teachers. Surprisingly, most students indicated that they rarely if ever experience technical issues when learning online.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

In recent years, online learning has become a more viable option for educational institutions, especially during the pandemic. However, as the pandemic's severity declined and offline learning restrictions were lifted, the continuation of online learning was considered. In present times, uncertainty exists about whether online learning should continue and what the benefits and challenges are. In Vietnam, the government has become more open to online learning, since Circular 17 of the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training stated in 2021 that undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Vietnamese universities may teach 30% of a program online (Ha and Anh, 2022). Accordingly, the researcher has identified the need to determine the value of online learning in the context of tertiary education in Vietnam. Consequently, the researcher decided to investigate the perceptions of first-year undergraduate students on the effectiveness of online English learning.

2. Structure

This study is divided into six main parts: 1) Introduction; 2) Literature review; 3) Research design; 4) Presentation of findings; 5) Discussion of findings, and 6) Conclusion. Following these are the references and appendices.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Online Learning

The term 'online learning' is one of many that refers to a form of education that is "institution based, formal…where the learning group is separated, and where interactive telecommunications systems are used to connect, learners, resources, and instructors" (Simonson et al., 2015, p. 54). In addition to being termed 'distance learning/education' by some researchers, such as Simonson et al. (2015), online learning can also be called virtual learning, e-learning, or online education (Smart & Cappel, 2016).

In terms of how online learning is implemented, computers and the Internet have been the primary enablers that allow users to interact in real time. There are a variety of online platforms that can be used to facilitate online learning, such as Google Classroom, LIBRI, and Google Meet (Xhaferi & Xhaferi, 2020).

According to Simonson et al. (2015), there are four essential components of online learning. Firstly, it is institution based, which means that the study program is facilitated by an educational institution, such as a school, college, or any other nontraditional institution. Secondly, there is distance between the educator and the students. This distance can be geographical, as well as chronical, as some online learning programs incorporate recordings of lecturers that are viewed by students later on. Thirdly, there are interactive telecommunications involved in the learning process, such as computers and video conferencing software. Lastly, resources and data are shared among learners and educators. Generally, instructors provide learners with resources that follow an instructional design.

In relation to the final component of online learning, Almahasees et al. (2021) emphasized that online learning is student-centric. This refers to how students become facilitators of learning in an online setting as they provide students with resources and tools for knowledge sharing, transference, and extension. To emphasize the importance of curriculum in online learning, Gray and DiLoreto (2016) expressed that course structure and organization are key elements of a successful online learning program. Online courses must progress logically, be user-friendly, and clearly set the objectives for the students.

2. Benefits of Online Learning for Students

Numerous researchers have expressed, as well as proven, that online learning has benefits for students. According to Song et al. (2004), one of the major advantages of online learning is the flexibility that it offers students in terms of group work. In a physical setting, students (at the tertiary level) must often arrange times and places to meet, however, online learning greatly enhances students' flexibility when doing group projects. Xhaferi and Xhaferi (2020) also stated that online learning enhances flexibility and convenience as students can determine their own locations, and often times, for learning. Nasution et al. (2022) indicated that online learners have more time to spend with family or other activities, since they save time on physically going to classes. This also leads to them saving money on transportation costs. Moreover, Xhaferi and Xhaferi (2020) indicated that online learners have more control over their learning. This relates to the fourth component of distance education as learners generally have access to a wide range of online resources. Additionally, Almahasees et al. (2021) stated that online learning is an effective emergency learning method. The Covid-19 pandemic served as a primary example of how online learning can be used to offset societal dangers and ensure that learning continues to take place. This is supported by Nasution et al. (2022) who stated that the "COVID-19 pandemic has proven the need for tools and methodologies to support student self-learning and formative assessment practices in the context of distance education", which is exactly what online learning does (p. 1537).

3. Challenges of Online Learning for Students

While online learning can greatly benefits students, there are also several challenges that schools, teachers, and students confront. Song et al. (2004) indicated that students might experience a delay in feedback from their teachers. For instance, an offline learner could simply walk up to their teacher and ask a question, whereas an online learner might only be able to send an email, after which they would have to wait for a response. Moreover, the fact that an online learner is physically separated from their teachers and peers could lead to feelings of isolation and a lack of community (Song et al., 2004). Gillet-Swan (2017) expressed that students might also experience difficulties interacting with their peers and teachers due to the limitations of the online platforms. Apart from this, Adedoyin and Soykan, (2020) stated that assessment methods are often not as effective as in offline learning, since "instructors are limited to proxy supervision of learners

making it impossible to regulate and control cheating" (p. 5). Gillett-Swan (2017) also expressed concern about this challenge when she stated that "assessment practices are often limited in the variety and modes in which they are allocated in the online environment" (p. 22). Furthermore, Adedoyin and Soykan, (2020) indicated that some students might not possess the technological proficiency, or even the technology itself, to participate in online learning, which places them at a tremendous disadvantage compared to their peers. Also, students might receive instructions from teachers who are not trained in effective online teaching practices and methods, which can negatively impact students' quality of learning.

4. Previous Studies

Numerous previous studies have investigated various aspects of students' perceptions of online learning.

For instance, Kim et al. (2005) conducted a study to discover the perceptions of online MBA students about the benefits and challenges of online learning. The study conducted qualitative data by interviewing 100 second-year MBA students, as well as surveying them. The results showed that students had positive perceptions of virtual teaming and felt that it helped to prepare them for the global business environment.

Additionally, Song et al. (2004) investigated graduate students' perceptions of online learning. 76 graduates were asked to complete a questionnaire and nine graduates participated in interviews. The findings were that course design, learner motivation, time management, and familiarity with online tools were perceived by the participants to impact online learning success. On the other hand, technical problems, lack of community, time constraints, and difficulties in understanding course objectives were the major challenges perceived by the participants.

In the Vietnamese context, Kang and Duong (2021), investigated the components of online learning that were beneficial and challenging for online learners. The study included undergraduates in Business and English at a university in Ho Chi Minh City. It collected quantitative data from an online questionnaire and qualitative data from interviews. The results showed that flexibility, online tools, familiarity with online technologies, and lesson delivery were considered beneficial components by the participants. In contrast, internet access, technical problems, maintaining focus, and lack of community was perceived by the participants as challenging factors.

5. Research gaps

After conducting a thorough literature review about the topic of students' perceptions of online learning, the researcher discovered that extensive research has already been conducted on the topic, particularly at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there appeared to be little research, in the Vietnamese context specifically, in 2022, which is two years after the pandemic started. Furthermore, the researcher perceived a need for a study focused on first-year students specifically. First-year students would have spent enough time studying English to develop their own learning habits, however, they are also at a critical phase in their tertiary education which will lay the framework for a more complex academic journey. Therefore, they are at an intersection of experience from previous learning and anticipation of future learning. Accordingly, the researcher believed that there was a gap in the research topic concerning the perceptions of first-year undergraduate students on online learning, especially in the Vietnamese context. This led to the creation of the following research questions:

1. What are first-year undergraduate students' perceptions of the benefits of online English learning?

2. What are first-year undergraduate students' perceptions of the challenges of online English learning?

The answers to these questions are expected to help future researchers, as well as educators, to better understand the prevailing challenges that first-year undergraduate online English learners must confront, as well as the aspects of online learning that are perceived to be most advantageous for them.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Research method

This research conducted quantitative research through the survey method. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), "a survey design provides a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population" (p. 207). Since the researcher's primary aim was to collect data about a population's attitudes and opinions of online learning, the survey design was appropriate.

1. Research context and participants

In terms of the context of the study, the researcher investigated first-year undergraduates in Hanoi, Vietnam. As the researcher was established in Hanoi, settlements in other regions of the country were not feasible for involvement. The 100 first-year undergraduate students were from various universities in Hanoi, Vietnam. The researcher chose 100 participants based on Mertens (2015) who stated that a minimum of 100 participants are needed for a reliable survey.

2. Aims and research questions

The researcher aimed to discover and verify the perceived benefits and challenges of online English learning according to first-year undergraduate students. Additionally, the researcher aims to provide educators with insight into the challenges of students so that those challenges can be addressed, and the overall online learning experience improved. Hence, the following research questions were created:

1. What are first-year undergraduate students' perceptions of the benefits of online English learning?

2. What are first-year undergraduate students' perceptions of the challenges of online English learning?

3. Data collection instruments

Quantitative data was collected, since it is an effective approach to test objective theories about a population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researcher used an online questionnaire, which contained 4-point Likert-scale questions that measured the participants' agreement with statements

related to the benefits and disadvantages of online English learning. The statements related to both benefits and challenges were categorized into four groups respectively. These groups were based on benefits and challenges identified by previous research and were organized as follows:

Table 1

Questionnaire categories with sources

Part	Category	Source
B. Benefits	Organization	Kang and Duong (2021)
	Activities	Kang and Duong (2021)
	Convenience	Song et al. (2004) Xhaferi and Xhaferi (2020)
	Evaluation and monitoring	Nasution et al. (2022)
C. Challenges	Content and activities	Adedoyin and Soykan (2020)
	Technical	Adedoyin and Soykan (2020)
	Evaluation	Song et al. (2004)
	Social	Gillet-Swan (2017)

4. Data collection procedures

The quantitative data was collected from the participants by use of a Google form. The researcher sent the link to the participants, after which they were given two weeks to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to more than 100 participants to ensure that the 100-response target was achieved. After 100 participants had responded to the questionnaire, the form was closed.

5. Data management and analysis

After the data was collected, the researcher transferred it to an Excel spreadsheet for numerical conversion and coding. The 4-point Likert-scale responses were changed as follows: strongly disagree = 1; disagree = 2; agree = 3; strongly agree = 4. The researcher also assigned codes to each of the statements. The coding was as follows:

Table 2

Coding of categories

Part/Category	Code
Benefits	
Organization	**B.ORG.[number]**
Activities	**B.ACT.[number]**
Convenience	**B.CON.[number]**
Evaluation and monitoring	**B.EVA.[number]**
Challenges	
Content and activities	**C.CON.[number]**
Technical	**C.TEC.[number]**
Evaluation	**C.EVA.[number]**
Social	**C.SOC.[number]**

The changed and coded data was then transferred to SPSS software. The researcher used SPSS to analyze the data descriptively, since it is an effective way to determine the characteristics and perceptions of a sample (Pallant, 2005). The analysis focused on the mode and mean values, with mode values showing the most common responses for each statement and the mean values enabling comparison between the categories.

6. Ethical considerations

Concerning the ethical considerations, the researcher first obtained permission from the participants. They were thoroughly informed about the research purpose and their anonymity was guaranteed. Participants were also asked to sign a consent form before starting the questionnaire, which indicated that they understood their role in the research, as well as their privacy rights.

IV. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

1. Perceptions of the benefits of online English learning

This section presents the quantitative findings of the students' perceptions of the benefits of online English learning. The items are presented according to the four categories in the questionnaire, namely organization, activities, convenience, and evaluation and monitoring. Following this, a summary with the mean values is shown.

1.1. Organization

Table 3

Perceptions of organization benefits

	N		Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation
	Valid	Missing			
B.ORG.1	100	0	3.48	4	.643
B.ORG.2	100	0	3.10	3	.835
B.ORG.3	100	0	3.56	4	.556
B.ORG.4	100	0	3.51	4	.541
Average	100	0	3.41	4	..644

The findings revealed that most participants strongly agreed that lesson contents are clearly communicated in online classes (B.ORG.1: mode = 4). Furthermore, it was strongly agreed by most that they are guided toward new topics during their online lessons (B.ORG.3: mode = 4) and that the online lesson and course structures are well-organized (B.ORG.4: mode = 4). Similarly, the majority agreed that lesson objectives are clearly stated in online lessons (B.ORG.2: mode = 3).

1.2. Activities

Table 4

Perceptions of activities benefits

| | N | | | | Std. |
	Valid	Missing	Mean	Mode	Deviation
B.ACT.1	100	0	3.06	3	.789
B.ACT.2	100	0	2.98	3	.910
B.ACT.3	100	0	2.41	2	.900
B.ACT.4	100	0	3.01	3	.835
Average	100	0	2.87	3	.859

The collected data showed that the majority of the participants agreed that the activities in online lessons are clearly explained and introduced (B.ACT.1: mode = 3). They also agreed that the activities are creative and innovative (B.ACT.2: mode = 3), and that they are effective in achieving the lesson aims (B.ACT.4: mode = 3). However, most participants disagreed that the activities engage them in the lessons (B.ACT.3: mode = 2).

1.3. Convenience

Table 5

Perceptions of convenience benefits

| | N | | | | Std. |
	Valid	Missing	Mean	Mode	Deviation
B.CON.1	100	0	3.59	4	.588
B.CON.2	100	0	3.46	4	.658
B.CON.3	100	0	3.14	3	.766
B.CON.4	100	0	3.01	3	.835
Average	100	0	3.30	4	.712

Based on the data, the researcher determined that most participants strongly agreed that online learning enables them to have flexible schedules (B.CON.1: mode = 4), as well as learn from different locations (B.CON.2: mode = 4). Similarly, the majority agreed that they can learn online with many different devices (B.CON.3: mode = 3) and also easily access lesson/course content and materials (B.CON.4: mode = 3).

1.4. Evaluation and monitoring

Table 6

Perceptions of evaluation and monitoring benefits

	N				Std.
	Valid	**Missing**	**Mean**	**Mode**	**Deviation**
B.EVA.1	100	0	2.36	2	.871
B.EVA.2	100	0	2.43	2	.913
B.EVA.3	100	0	2.93	3	.902
B.EVA.4	100	0	1.80	1	.804
Average	100	0	2.38	2	0.873

The data showed that the majority of participants agreed that their performance is evaluated fairly when learning online (B.EVA.3: mode = 3). However, most disagreed that the requirements for assignments and tests are clear (B.EVA.1: mode = 2) and that the teacher provides them with useful feedback (B.EVA.2: mode = 2). Moreover, most strongly disagreed that there are sufficient opportunities for participation in online lessons (B.EVA.4: mode = 1).

1.5. Summary
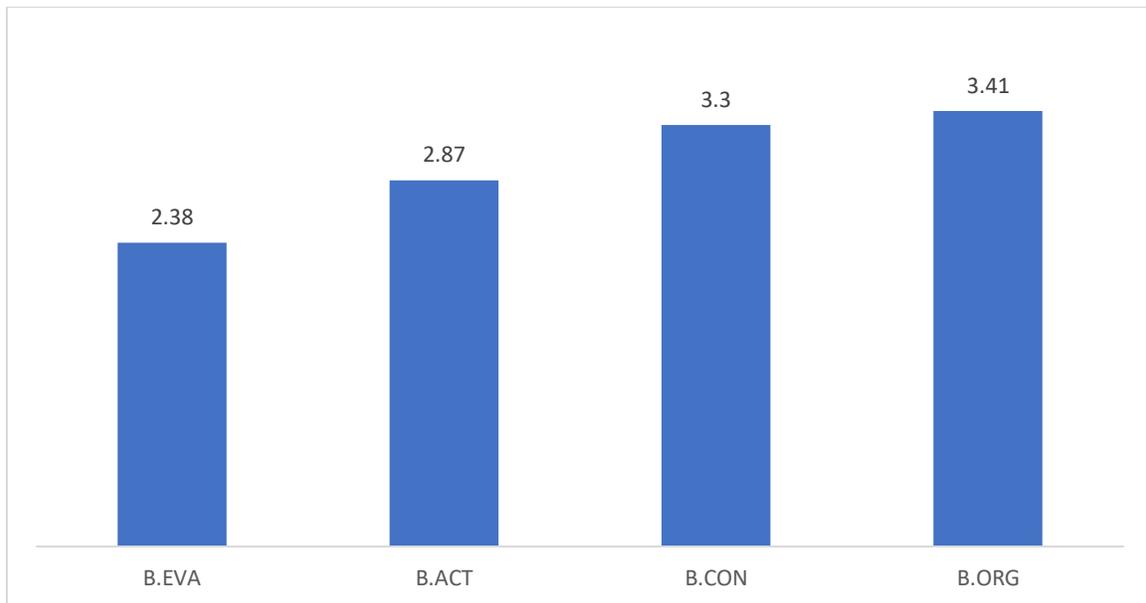
Figure 1

Mean values of benefit categories

The chart above indicates that the highest level of agreement was with the statements related to organization benefit, since the average mean was 3.41 (B.ORG: mean = 3.41). This is closely followed by convenience benefits with an average mean of 3.3 (B.CON: mean = 3.3), then activities benefits (B.ACT: mean = 2.87), and finally evaluation benefits with the lowest mean of 2.38 (B.EVA = 2.38).

2. Perceptions of the challenges of online English learning

This section presents the quantitative findings of the students' perceptions of the challenges of online English learning. The items are presented according to the four categories in the questionnaire, namely content and activities, technical, evaluation, and social. Following this, a summary with the mean values is shown.

2.1. Content and activities

Table 7

Perceptions of content and activities challenges

| | N | | | | Std. |
	Valid	Missing	Mean	Mode	Deviation
C.CON.1	100	0	2.32	2	.827
C.CON.2	100	0	1.71	1	.844
C.CON.3	100	0	1.86	1	.954
C.CON.4	100	0	2.37	2	.872
Average	100	0	2.07	2	0.874

The quantitative findings revealed that most participants disagreed that the online lessons are not interesting to them (C.CON.1: mode = 2) and that they do not enjoy participating in class (C.CON.4: mode = 2). Furthermore, the majority strongly disagreed that activities in online lessons last for too long (C.CON.2: mode = 1) and that the content does not offer them much value (C.CON.3: mode = 1).

2.2. Technical

Table 8

Perceptions of technical challenges

| | N | | | | Std. |
	Valid	Missing	Mean	Mode	Deviation
C.TEC.1	100	0	2.24	2	.793
C.TEC.2	100	0	1.81	1	.813
C.TEC.3	100	0	1.60	1	.739
C.TEC.4	100	0	2.14	2	.792
Average	100	0	1.95	2	0.784

The data showed that most of the participants disagreed that they often experience internet connection problems while learning online (C.TEC.1: mode = 2). Most also disagreed that their teachers often experience technical difficulties during online classes (C.TEC.4: mode = 2). Furthermore, the majority strongly disagreed that their devices are too slow for learning online (C.TEC.2: mode = 1) and that they experience problems with online learning software (C.TEC.3: mode = 1).

2.3. Evaluation

Table 9

Perceptions of evaluation challenges

| | N | | | | Std. |
	Valid	Missing	Mean	Mode	Deviation
C.EVA.1	100	0	2.25	2	.880
C.EVA.2	100	0	1.82	1	.821
C.EVA.3	100	0	2.08	2	.813
C.EVA.4	100	0	3.43	4	.655
Average	100	0	2.40	2	0.792

Based on the findings in the table above, the researcher determined that most participants strongly agreed that it takes long for their teachers to respond to their questions and give them feedback (C.EVA.4: mode = 4). In contrast, most disagreed that assignments and tests of online classes are too difficult (C.EVA.1: mode = 2). Additionally, the majority disagreed that the instructions about assignments and tests are unclear (C.EVA.3: mode = 2). Moreover, most strongly disagreed that they do not have enough time to finish their assignments and tasks (C.EVA.2: mode = 1).

2.4. Social

Table 10

Perceptions of social challenges

| | N | | | | Std. |
	Valid	Missing	Mean	Mode	Deviation

C.SOC.1	100	0	3.52	4	.559
C.SOC.2	100	0	3.02	3	.829
C.SOC.3	100	0	3.41	4	.698
C.SOC.4	100	0	2.99	3	.904
Average	100	0	3.24	4	0.748

The collected quantitative data revealed that most participants strongly agreed that they feel isolated from their peers and teachers when they study online (C.SOC.1: mode = 4) and that it is difficult for them to work in groups online (C.SOC.3: mode = 4). Furthermore, most agreed that they struggle to communicate with their peers and teachers when learning online (C.SOC.2: mode = 3), as well as that there is a lack of community in the online classroom environment (C.SOC.4: mode = 3).

2.5. Summary
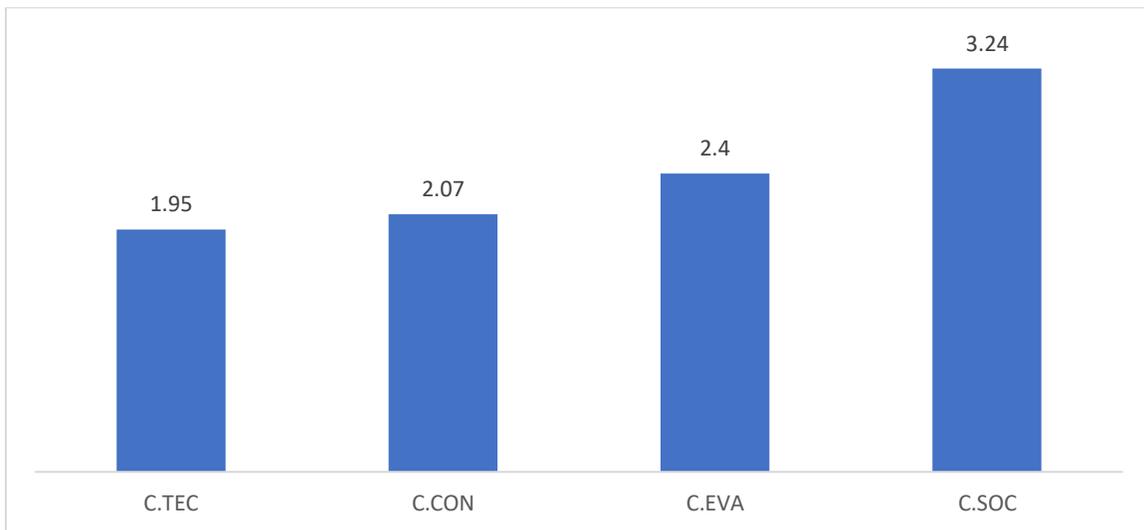

Figure 2

Mean values of challenges categories

The data displayed in the chart above indicates that the challenges associated with the social category were agreed with most (C.SOC: mean = 3.24), whereas the evaluation category was second (C.EVA: mean = 2.4). The content and activities category was third (C.CON: mean = 2.07), and the technical category was last (C.TEC: mean = 1.95).

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

1. Perceptions of the benefits of online English learning

After analyzing the findings, the researcher found that the participants perceived agreed with most of the benefits of online English learning. Specifically, the organization of online lessons and courses were viewed most favorably, followed by the convenience of online learning, the activities used in lesson, and then the evaluation of students.

Concerning the organization of online lessons and courses, students felt strongly that teachers clearly communicate the contents of lessons. This, combined with the strong perceptions that teachers successfully guide students towards new topics and structure lesson and courses well suggests that students have favorable attitudes towards the ways that teachers compose the lessons and transition between content. This coincides with Kang and Duong's (2021) study that showed that lesson delivery is a benefit for students.

Regarding the convenience of online learning, the students felt strongly that their schedules are flexible when they learn online and that they can learn from different locations. Furthermore, they felt that they can learn with different devices and easily access course and lesson materials. Kang and Duong (2021) also found that flexibility is perceived to be a beneficial component of online learning.

In terms of the activities that are implement in online lessons, most students felt favorable towards the way the activities are explained, the creativity of the activities, and how they manage to achieve the lesson aims. However, it was found that most students are not sufficiently engaged by the activities during the lesson. This suggest problems with activity implementation, since students feel positive about the design, but are unable to be actively engaged.

The category of evaluation and monitoring was the least favorable of the benefits. While most students felt that their performance is evaluated fairly, they admitted that the requirements for assignments and tests and unclear and that the teacher does not always give them useful feedback. Moreover, they felt that not near enough opportunities for participation in class. This phenomenon could explain the perceptions of lack of engagement in activities and lack of useful feedback. If

students do not have the chances to test their proficiency in class, then it could lead to dissatisfaction in other areas of the online learning experience.

2. Perceptions of the challenges of online English learning

The quantitative data revealed that students experience a moderate number of challenges when learning English online. Of the four investigated categories, social interactions were by far the most challenging, followed by evaluation, content and activities, and technical.

Regarding the social category, students felt strongly that they online study causes isolation from their peers and teachers. They also felt that there is a lack of community in online classrooms. These findings are similar to Song et al.'s (2004) and Kang and Duong's (2021) discoveries. Additionally, students indicated that they struggle to communicate with their teachers and peers and that it is difficult for them to work in groups online. The fact that they struggle to communicate with their peers could be the reason they experience groupwork difficulties online, which suggests that teachers should find a solution to better facilitating groupwork and communication activities

Concerning evaluation, most students felt that their teachers responded to their questions and gave feedback in an untimely manner. Of the four challenges in this category, this was the only issue. The previous studies in this research did not discover this issue, therefore, it appears to be a new phenomenon. The researcher speculates that this perceived lack of timely feedback could be due to students' expectation to receive near-immediate feedback (as they do in a traditional classroom). Apart from this, the students perceived the assignment and tests to be of an appropriate difficulty and have clear instructions.

In terms of content and activities, most students did not indicate that they experience related challenges. In fact, the findings suggest that students are satisfied with the length of the activities, and that the content of the lessons offer them much value. Therefore, students do not appear to be negatively affected by the content and activities of the lesson, except for the engagement that the activities offer, as was determined in the previous section.

Lastly, students surprisingly stated that they do not struggle with technical problems. In contrast to Song et al.'s (2004) and Kang and Duong's (2021) studies, the students perceived few to no internet connection problems. Furthermore, they felt confident that their devices are fast enough for learning online and that they have no problems with online learning software. These lack of

issues could stem from stable internet connections and access to highly performance devices in the city, as well as relatively high technological proficiency among the students.

VI. CONCLUSION

1. Implications for language teaching

The findings of this study led to implications for researchers and teachers regarding language teaching.

For researchers, the study provides valuable insight about students' perceptions of the benefits and challenges of online English learning which could be used to direct future studies. Specifically, this study informs researchers that students experience problems with lack of timely feedback from their teachers. This can lead to new research questions and aims about what a realistic timeframe for feedback is and how feedback differs between traditional and online classes.

Additionally, teachers can gain value from the findings of this study. Firstly, the findings show that students struggle to communicate with one another and participate in groupwork activities. This discovery can compel teachers to reflect on the efficiency of the communication tasks that they implement in the online classroom and cause them to reflect on how these tasks can be adapted to facilitate better levels of interaction. Secondly, it was found that students feel inadequately engaged by activities in the online classroom. Accordingly, teachers can consider the levels of engagement they receive from students in their classes and determine whether there is a need for revised activities. Lastly, social isolation was identified as a significant challenge for students. Taking this into account, teachers can seek ways to foster more social involvement in their online classes.

2. Limitations of the study

The researcher identified two main limitations of this study.

Firstly, the study only relied on the quantitative method, due to restrictions of the study length. Therefore, certain perceptions, such as the challenge of engagement, could not be further pursued by interviewing the students who expressed such concerns.

Secondly, the research scope was limited to the Hanoi area due to the researcher's familiarity with the region. Although the adequate sample size led to an accurate reflection of the first-year

undergraduate student population in Hanoi, it is not as reliable for other parts of the country, specifically areas outside of the main cities.

3. Recommendations for future research

To address the limitations mentioned above, the researcher has made two recommendations for future research.

Firstly, researchers can conduct a mixed methods research to further investigate new phenomenon. Such research can enhance the findings of this study by verifying the perceptions of the benefits and challenges of learning English online in a similar scope and then gaining deeper insights through an interview component.

Secondly, researchers can expand the scope of the study to accurately reflection the perceptions of students in other parts of the country. The researcher suggests that other researchers investigate similar categories of benefits and challenges so that the findings of other studies can be compared to this study to generate a valid comparison of perceptions of first-year undergraduate students from different areas in Vietnam.

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APPENDICES

1. Project information and consent form

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking the time to take part in this survey. Your responses in this survey will contribute to my study titled "First-year undergraduate students' perceptions of the effectiveness of online English learning". The aim of this study is to determine the perceptions of first-year undergraduate students of the benefits and challenges of online English learning. Your responses will be analyzed along with 99 other participants to determine the perceptions of students in Hanoi.

Before commencing the study, please read the following statements which provide more information about your role in this study.

• Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

• You have been sufficiently informed about the purpose of the study and your involvement through the survey.

• Your responses will only be used for the research purposes of this study and will not be commercially distributed to any other individuals or organizations.

• Any personal information that you provide will not be distributed and will be stored privately and securely by the researcher.

By ticking the box below, you consent to participating in this study and acknowledge that you understand all that has been stated above.

☐ I acknowledge that I have read the information above and understand all that I have read. I consent that my responses may be used in this study in the capacity that has been described to me.

2. Questionnaire

PART A: Personal Information

1. What is your email address?

_____

2. What is your age?

_____

3. Have you studied English online before?

_____

4. Are you currently studying English online?

_____

PART B: Perceptions of the benefits of online English learning

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about the benefits of online English learning by ticking the corresponding option.

#	Statement	Options			
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Organization					
1	Lesson contents are clearly communicated.				
2	Lesson objectives are clearly stated.				
3	Students are guided towards new topics.				
4	Lesson and course structures are well-organized.				

	Activities				
5	Activities are clearly introduced and explained.				
6	Activities are creative and innovative.				
7	Activities engage me in the lesson.				
8	The activities are effective for achieving the lesson aims.				
	Convenience				
9	My schedule is flexible when I learn online.				
10	I can learn online from many different locations.				
11	I can learn online with many different devices.				
12	I can easily access lesson/course content and materials.				
	Evaluation and monitoring				
13	Requirements for assignments and tests are clear.				
14	The teacher provides me with useful feedback.				
15	My performance is evaluated fairly.				

#	Statement				
16	There are sufficient opportunities for participation in class.				

PART C: Perceptions of the challenges of online English learning

Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about the challenges of online English learning by ticking the corresponding option.

#	Statement	Options			
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Content and activities					
1	The lessons are not interesting to me.				
2	Activities last for too long.				
3	The content does not offer me much value.				
4	I do not enjoy participating in the class.				
Technical					
5	I often experience internet connection problems.				
6	My device is too slow for learning online.				
7	I experience problems with the online learning software.				

8	My teacher often experiences technical difficulties.				
Evaluation					
9	Assignments and tests are too difficult.				
10	I do not have enough time to finish my assignments and tests.				
11	Instructions about assignments and tests are unclear.				
12	It takes long for my teacher to respond to my questions or give feedback.				
Social					
13	I feel isolated from my peers and teachers when I study online.				
14	I struggle to communicate with the teacher and my peers.				
15	It is difficult to work in groups online.				
16	There is a lack of community in the online classroom.				

THIS IS THE END.

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY.

3. Analyzed quantitative data

B.ORG.1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	2	5	5.0	5.0	6.0
	3	39	39.0	39.0	45.0
	4	55	55.0	55.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.ORG.2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	2	18	18.0	18.0	22.0
	3	42	42.0	42.0	64.0
	4	36	36.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.ORG.3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	3	38	38.0	38.0	41.0
	4	59	59.0	59.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.ORG.4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	3	45	45.0	45.0	47.0
	4	53	53.0	53.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.ACT.1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	2	16	16.0	16.0	20.0
	3	50	50.0	50.0	70.0
	4	30	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.ACT.2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	7	7.0	7.0	7.0
	2	21	21.0	21.0	28.0
	3	39	39.0	39.0	67.0
	4	33	33.0	33.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.ACT.3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	15	15.0	15.0	15.0
	2	42	42.0	42.0	57.0
	3	30	30.0	30.0	87.0
	4	13	13.0	13.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.ACT.4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	5	5.0	5.0	5.0
	2	19	19.0	19.0	24.0
	3	46	46.0	46.0	70.0
	4	30	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.CON.1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	2	2	2.0	2.0	3.0
	3	34	34.0	34.0	37.0
	4	63	63.0	63.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.CON.2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	1	1.0	1.0	1.0
	2	6	6.0	6.0	7.0
	3	39	39.0	39.0	46.0
	4	54	54.0	54.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.CON.3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	17	17.0	17.0	19.0
	3	46	46.0	46.0	65.0
	4	35	35.0	35.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.CON.4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	2	22	22.0	22.0	26.0
	3	43	43.0	43.0	69.0
	4	31	31.0	31.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.EVA.1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	15	15.0	15.0	15.0
	2	45	45.0	45.0	60.0
	3	29	29.0	29.0	89.0
	4	11	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.EVA.2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	15	15.0	15.0	15.0
	2	41	41.0	41.0	56.0
	3	30	30.0	30.0	86.0
	4	14	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.EVA.3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	8	8.0	8.0	8.0
	2	20	20.0	20.0	28.0
	3	43	43.0	43.0	71.0
	4	29	29.0	29.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

B.EVA.4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	42	42.0	42.0	42.0
	2	38	38.0	38.0	80.0
	3	18	18.0	18.0	98.0
	4	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.CON.1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	14	14.0	14.0	14.0
	2	49	49.0	49.0	63.0
	3	28	28.0	28.0	91.0
	4	9	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.CON.2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	51	51.0	51.0	51.0
	2	30	30.0	30.0	81.0
	3	16	16.0	16.0	97.0
	4	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.CON.3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	47	47.0	47.0	47.0
	2	26	26.0	26.0	73.0
	3	21	21.0	21.0	94.0
	4	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.CON.4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	13	13.0	13.0	13.0
	2	50	50.0	50.0	63.0
	3	24	24.0	24.0	87.0
	4	13	13.0	13.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.TEC.1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	15	15.0	15.0	15.0
	2	53	53.0	53.0	68.0
	3	25	25.0	25.0	93.0
	4	7	7.0	7.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.TEC.2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	42	42.0	42.0	42.0
	2	37	37.0	37.0	79.0
	3	19	19.0	19.0	98.0
	4	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.TEC.3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	53	53.0	53.0	53.0
	2	36	36.0	36.0	89.0
	3	9	9.0	9.0	98.0
	4	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.TEC.4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	20	20.0	20.0	20.0
	2	51	51.0	51.0	71.0
	3	24	24.0	24.0	95.0
	4	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.EVA.1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	20	20.0	20.0	20.0
	2	44	44.0	44.0	64.0
	3	27	27.0	27.0	91.0
	4	9	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.EVA.2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	41	41.0	41.0	41.0
	2	39	39.0	39.0	80.0
	3	17	17.0	17.0	97.0
	4	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.EVA.3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	23	23.0	23.0	23.0
	2	52	52.0	52.0	75.0
	3	19	19.0	19.0	94.0
	4	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.EVA.4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	2	2.0	2.0	2.0
	2	3	3.0	3.0	5.0
	3	45	45.0	45.0	50.0
	4	50	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.SOC.1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	3	42	42.0	42.0	45.0
	4	55	55.0	55.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.SOC.2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	4	4.0	4.0	4.0
	2	21	21.0	21.0	25.0
	3	44	44.0	44.0	69.0
	4	31	31.0	31.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.SOC.3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	3	3.0	3.0	3.0
	2	3	3.0	3.0	6.0
	3	44	44.0	44.0	50.0
	4	50	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

C.SOC.4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1	8	8.0	8.0	8.0
	2	17	17.0	17.0	25.0
	3	43	43.0	43.0	68.0
	4	32	32.0	32.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	