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Impact of online language learning on psychological well-being

Abstract: The topic of the impact of online language learning on psychological well-being is gaining increasing attention due to the shift towards digital learning platforms. Online language learning offers convenience, flexibility, and a wide range of resources, which can positively influence individuals' self-confidence, cultural understanding, and sense of achievement. This study examines the influence of online language learning platforms on psychological aspects. The study was conducted through a google form survey consisting of 10 questions in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Research shows that using online language learning platforms can make people feel happier and less stressed. Learning a new language online reduces loneliness and provides confidence. These platforms can also help improve communication skills and understanding of different cultures. Setting goals, tracking progress, and receiving rewards on these platforms can help keep people motivated and interested in the learning process. The results, presented through tables and detailed analysis, indicate the positive impact of online language learning on reducing feelings of isolation, enhancing stress levels, and improving communication skills. The findings shed light on the potential benefits of online platforms in promoting psychological well-being through accessible learning opportunities.

Keywords: students, online platforms, learning, psychology, stress, motivation, communication.

Introduction

The advent of technology and the accessibility of online platforms have greatly influenced how people learn languages, leading to a significant shift from traditional classroom settings to online language learning platforms. This topic holds importance as it explores the potential positive effects that online language learning can have on individuals' psychological well-being. Language learning has long been associated with numerous cognitive benefits, such as improved memory, attention span, and problem-solving skills. However, the impact of language learning on psychological well-being has only recently garnered attention. Online language learning has become increasingly popular due to its convenience, flexibility, and wide variety of learning resources available. Blake (2008) discussed the role of technology in foreign language learning. Although the study did not directly address psychological well-being, it highlighted the potential of digital classroom technologies in transforming language learning experiences, which could have implications for psychological outcomes.

One aspect of psychological well-being that can be positively influenced by online language learning is self-confidence. As individuals acquire new language skills and gain proficiency through online platforms, their self-confidence in their language abilities can significantly improve. This boost in self-confidence can extend beyond language skills and positively impact other areas of life, such as social interactions, career opportunities, and personal growth. A study by Bai and Wang (2023) found that growth mindset, self-efficacy, and intrinsic value are important factors in promoting self-regulated learning and English language

learning achievements. As such, understanding the role of affective variables and informal digital learning of English can provide insights into learners' willingness to communicate in a second language (Lee & Drajati, 2019).

Online language learning also offers opportunities for increased cultural understanding and empathy. Engaging with different languages and cultures via online platforms can broaden one's horizons, fostering a sense of cultural awareness and empathy towards others. Wang (2018) emphasized the role of online platforms in broadening individuals' horizons and fostering a sense of cultural awareness and empathy towards others. Similarly, Gao and Zhang (2020) supported this notion, emphasizing that online language learning provides opportunities for increased cultural understanding and empathy. This exposure to diverse perspectives can lead to greater acceptance, tolerance, and respect for others, thus enhancing psychological well-being. Furthermore, online language learning can provide individuals with a sense of achievement and fulfilment. As they set learning goals, track their progress, and witness their language skills evolve, a sense of accomplishment is derived, which contributes to overall psychological well-being. This feeling of achievement can motivate individuals to continue learning and exploring new languages, providing a long-lasting positive effect on mental and emotional well-being. However, it is also important to acknowledge the potential challenges and limitations of online language learning on psychological well-being. Some individuals may experience feelings of isolation or lack of motivation due to the absence of direct human interaction in online learning environments. Additionally, self-discipline and effective time management may be necessary to ensure effective learning and prevent feelings of overwhelm or frustration.

Online language learning holds great potential for positively impacting individuals' psychological well-being by boosting self-confidence, promoting cultural understanding, and fostering a sense of achievement. The convenience, flexibility, and abundant resources available through online platforms make language learning more accessible and engaging. Despite potential challenges, the benefits of online language learning on psychological well-being cannot be overlooked. Further research and exploration of this topic are essential to fully understand the extent and nuances of its impact.

***Research question*:**

How do online language learning platforms affect adult learners' mental well-being?

Review of literature

The study examines the psychological dimensions that shape users' experiences on these platforms, focusing on stress reduction, motivation and engagement, personal development, social connection, and cognitive benefits. By understanding how different platforms impact these dimensions, we can identify their potential benefits, limitations, and implications for individuals' psychological well-being. The classification is based on an analysis by social psychologists J.A. Bargh and McKenna Kyle (2004), who have described psychological well-being, such as self-esteem and satisfaction with life. Table 1 describes the classification of online platforms based on psychological impact. It is divided into the following categories: stress reduction, motivation and engagement, personal development, social connection and cognitive benefits. The table highlights the consideration of researchers towards the categories.

Table 1. Classification of online platforms

Stress Reduction	the efficacy of such stress-reducing features and their potential to alleviate stress and anxiety.	Marchand (2012)
Motivation and Engagement	both internal and external motivational factors play a role in student engagement and learning outcomes	Cerasoli et al. (2014)
Personal Development	basic human needs for growth and meaning, indicating their crucial role in shaping an individual's personal development journey	Nguyen (2021)
Social Connection	a fundamental element of the relationship, encompassing cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and social aspects.	Vivek et al. (2012)

Cognitive Benefits	improvements in cognitive function, providing support for the cognitive benefits associated with specific training interventions.	Jaeggi et al. (2011)

Stress Reduction

One of the important elements analyzed is the impact of online platforms on users' stress levels. Platforms that offer stress-reducing activities, such as mindfulness and relaxation exercises, can contribute significantly to users' mental well-being. Stress and anxiety are prevalent among university students, particularly as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Wang and Zhao (2020) found that Chinese university students experienced higher levels of anxiety due to the pandemic, while Fawaz and Samaha (2021) reported that e-learning platforms have led to depression and anxiety disorders among undergraduate university students. In response to these concerning findings, stress management programs have been identified as essential tools in preventing and treating burnout among students and professionals (Romani & Ashkar, 2014).

To address the mental health challenges faced by university students, the efficacy of online platforms in reducing stress and anxiety has been explored. Online mindfulness courses are effective in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. Similarly, mindfulness and cognitive-behavioral therapy-based interventions have shown promise in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression (Boursier et al., 2020). Furthermore, the mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) program has been found to improve well-being and relaxation states in a longitudinal study (Krusche et al., 2013). However, mixed evidence has been found for the use of mindfulness-based interventions in reducing psychological distress in undergraduate medical students (Varker et al., 2019). Online platforms offering stress-reducing activities, such as mindfulness and relaxation exercises, have the potential to alleviate stress and anxiety among university students. Nevertheless, further research is needed to address the mixed evidence regarding the efficacy of such interventions and to identify the most effective strategies for reducing stress and anxiety.

Motivation and Engagement

Motivation and engagement are crucial factors in determining users' overall experience on online platforms. This dimension explores how platforms can facilitate goal-setting, progress tracking, and rewards to enhance users' motivation and engagement levels. Peters, Calvo, and Ryan (2018) highlight the significance of designing digital experiences to promote motivation, engagement, and well-being. They emphasize the role of digital interfaces in enhancing user experience and suggest that incorporating features for goal-setting, progress tracking, and rewards can positively impact user motivation and engagement. Reeve and Lee (2014) provide further insights into the relationship between motivation and engagement. They found that changes in motivation anticipate changes in engagement. Moreover, they tested the reciprocal relation that changes in students' classroom engagement led to corresponding longitudinal changes in their classroom motivation. This indicates that engagement and motivation are interrelated and mutually influence each other.

Overall, the studies reviewed provide valuable insights into the role of motivation and engagement on online platforms and highlight the significance of designing user-centered experiences to promote sustained engagement and positive user outcomes.

Personal Development

Online platforms that focus on personal development have gained significant popularity. The aspect investigates the way platforms can facilitate users' self-improvement through features such as educational content, skill-building exercises, and personal growth tracking. By analyzing the effectiveness of these tools, this research aims to shed light on how online platforms can be used as valuable resources for personal development. Nawrot & Doucet (2014) discuss the importance of time management support on online learning platforms to engage massive open online course (MOOC) students. They emphasize the need for features that facilitate effective time management to enhance student engagement and improve learning outcomes. This finding highlights the need for online platforms focusing on personal development to incorporate time management tools to better engage users and support their self-improvement efforts. Moreover, Irvine et al. (2015) conducted a randomized controlled trial to evaluate the effectiveness of a mobile web app in self-managing low back pain. The study demonstrated the potential of mobile applications in promoting self-management of health issues, suggesting that online platforms for personal development could leverage mobile technology to deliver interventions aimed at improving users' well-

being. In addition, Woerkom & Meyers (2018) discuss the effects of a strength intervention on personal growth initiative. This study provides evidence of the positive impact of interventions aimed at strengthening personal growth. The findings suggest that online platforms for personal development could incorporate similar interventions to empower users and promote their growth in various aspects of their lives. From the importance of time management support to the potential of mobile applications, image recognition, and personalized interventions, the findings suggest various avenues for enhancing the effectiveness of these platforms.

Social Connection

Human beings have an intrinsic need for social interaction, and online platforms can play a pivotal role in fulfilling this need. This dimension examines how platforms enable users to connect with others, fostering social relationships and enhancing social support networks.

Tomasello (2014) argues that human thinking and behavior are deeply rooted in social interaction. He emphasizes the importance of collaborative and cooperative activities in shaping human cognition, suggesting that social interaction is fundamental to human nature. Choudhury and De (2014) delve into mental health discourse on Reddit, focusing on self-disclosure, social support, and anonymity. Their research sheds light on how online platforms allow for social interaction and support, particularly in the context of sensitive topics such as mental health. Oh, Ozkaya and LaRose (2014) investigate the relationship between online social networking and life satisfaction. They emphasize the positive impact of online supportive interaction and perceived social support on users' overall life satisfaction, highlighting the role of online platforms in providing social support. By integrating and synthesizing the provided research findings, this literature review contributes to a deeper understanding of how online platforms facilitate human social interaction.

Cognitive Benefits

Online platforms can also provide cognitive benefits, such as improving cognitive skills, memory retention, and problem-solving capabilities. This feature explores the potential of different platforms, including educational applications and brain-training games, to enhance users' cognitive abilities. Papanastasiou et al. (2018) examined the effects of virtual and augmented reality on students' twenty-first-century skills and highlighted the positive impact of these technologies on cognitive abilities. These findings suggest that online platforms, including virtual reality applications, can contribute to the enhancement of cognitive skills among users. However, Sala and Gobet (2017) provided contradictory evidence, suggesting that video game training does not enhance cognitive ability. The comprehensive meta-analytic investigation conducted by Sala, Tatlidil, and Gobet (2017) raises questions about the effectiveness of video game training in improving cognitive skills. This contradictory evidence highlights the need for further research to clarify the cognitive benefits of different types of online platforms. The existing literature provides valuable insights into the cognitive benefits of online platforms, but several knowledge gaps exist. First, the long-term effects of online platform interventions on cognitive abilities require further investigation. Sala and Gobet (2017) emphasized the need for studies focusing on the sustainability of cognitive improvements resulting from online platform use.

The literature reviewed in this study provides a foundation for future research on the cognitive benefits of online platforms and highlights the importance of addressing existing knowledge gaps to advance our understanding of the potential of different platforms in improving cognitive skills, memory retention, and problem-solving capabilities.

Research Methodology

Population and sample

The population of the study is male and female aged 18 to 25 years. These are mainly students and workers in various fields interested in learning foreign languages. This age category was chosen to determine the influence of online platforms on the psychological aspects of the individual. Many of them were positive about the introduction of online platforms in the context of accessible learning.

Design of the study

The data collection tool of the study is a survey consisting of ten items that fall under three categories. The first category is about the influence of online platforms on stress reduction aspects. The second category determines the influence on motivation and further satisfaction with the results. The impact of online platforms on communication skills is represented in the third category. The survey was

conducted anonymously and sent to Google Forms. The pie charts obtained after answering the survey were grouped into tables for later analysis in the results section.

Research Results

The results demonstrate data of the respondents' answers about the three categories in the questionnaire. The impact of online learning platforms on stress reduction, motivation and communication skills was studied. The tables are followed by detailed paragraphs that explain how respondents answered ten items in the questionnaire.

Table 2. Impact of online platforms on stress reduction

Variable	Level	Counts	Total	Proportion	p
Online language learning has helped reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness in my life.	Agree	7	17	0.412	0.629
	Disagree	1	17	0.059	< .001
	Neutral	6	17	0.353	0.332
	Strongly Agree	2	17	0.118	0.002
	Strongly disagree	1	17	0.059	< .001
The flexibility of online language learning has positively influenced my stress levels.	Agree	6	17	0.353	0.332
	Disagree	2	17	0.118	0.002
	Neutral	5	17	0.294	0.143
	Strongly Agree	3	17	0.176	0.013
	Strongly disagree	1	17	0.059	< .001
Regular learning with the usage of online platforms has positively impacted my overall mental well-being	Agree	5	17	0.294	0.143
	Disagree	3	17	0.176	0.013
	Neutral	7	17	0.412	0.629
	Strongly Agree	1	17	0.059	< .001
	Strongly disagree	1	17	0.059	< .001

Table 2 illustrates the respondents' answers about the influence of online learning platforms on stress reduction. 41.2% of respondents ($p = 0.629$) agree with the statement that online learning platforms have helped them reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness. Only 5.9% of respondents ($p < 0.01$) showed disagreements at this point. Responses to the second statement show that the majority of respondents, 35.3% ($p = 0.332$) agree that the introduction of such platforms reduces stress levels. However, 11.8% of respondents disagree ($p = 0.002$).

Table 3. Impact of online platforms on motivation

Variable	Level	Counts	Total	Proportion	p
Learning languages online has positively impacted my overall sense of accomplishment and self-esteem.	Agree	7	17	0.412	0.629
	Disagree	2	17	0.118	0.002
	Neutral	5	17	0.294	0.143

Variable	Level	Counts	Total	Proportion	p
Online language learning platforms have increased my motivation to learn and explore new cultures	Strongly Agree	3	17	0.176	0.013
	Agree	6	17	0.353	0.332
	Disagree	2	17	0.118	0.002
	Neutral	2	17	0.118	0.002
	Strongly Agree	7	17	0.412	0.629
I feel a sense of achievement by online language learning journey.	Agree	9	17	0.529	1.000
	Neutral	3	17	0.176	0.013
	Strongly Agree	5	17	0.294	0.143
Online language learning has positively affected my ability to adapt to new challenges	Agree	9	17	0.529	1.000
	Disagree	1	17	0.059	< .001
	Neutral	5	17	0.294	0.143
	Strongly Agree	1	17	0.059	< .001
	Strongly disagree	1	17	0.059	< .001

Note. Proportions tested against value: 0.5.

Table 3 demonstrates the respondents' answers about the second category. Most respondents (p = 0.629) tend to agree with statements that this process has a positive effect on their motivation. It indicates strong statistical significance in agreement with the statement. Even though 11.8% of respondents (p < 0.118) showed disagreement in this aspect, we can still see a positive attitude towards online platforms.

Table 4. Impact of online platforms on communication skills

Variable	Level	Counts	Total	Proportion	p
Learning languages through online platforms has improved my cognitive abilities and problem-solving skills.	Agree	7	17	0.412	0.629
	Disagree	2	17	0.118	0.002
	Neutral	8	17	0.471	1.000
Online language learning has increased my confidence in my communication skills.	Agree	13	17	0.765	0.049
	Disagree	1	17	0.059	< .001
	Neutral	2	17	0.118	0.002
	Strongly disagree	1	17	0.059	< .001
Online language learning has provided me a connection with fellow language learners	Agree	7	17	0.412	0.629
	Neutral	6	17	0.353	0.332
	Strongl	4	17	0.235	0.049

Variable	Level	Counts	Total	Proportion	p
	y Agree				

Note. Proportions tested against value: 0.5.

Table 4 demonstrates the majority of respondents' answers and their optimistic attitude concerning the development in this particular aspect. 76.5% of respondents (p = 0.049) showed the tendency of the impact of online platforms on the increase of confidence in communication skills. Moreover, the respondents state improvements in problem-solving skills.

Research Discussion

The findings presented in this study shed light on the positive impact of online language learning on individuals' psychological well-being and communication skills. The results indicate that a majority of respondents agree that learning languages through online platforms has improved their cognitive abilities, problem-solving skills, and confidence in communication. This aligns with previous research emphasizing the role of online platforms in providing social support and enhancing overall life satisfaction.

Researchers have studied various psychological outcomes (Burke et al., 2010; Lavrinenko et al., 2019; Arpentieva et al., 2019) that provide data on feelings of loneliness, and life satisfaction. Our findings reveal the data of online language learning and its connections with fellow language learners, fostering a sense of community and support. This sense of community is crucial for individuals, especially in times of isolation and loneliness. The interaction with other students who share the same intentions would become beneficial and develop social skills. This interconnectedness amplifies the learning experience, promoting open-mindedness and cultural exchange. A group of other researchers indicates the failure of online social networking and its positive outcomes (Liu, X., & LaRose, R., 2008). The results of the study demonstrated the negative effect of online platforms towards school life satisfaction. However, our findings suggest that online language learning can serve as a valuable resource for personal development, offering opportunities for self-improvement and skill enhancement. Online language learning has revolutionized the way individuals connect, learn, and develop. This transformative mode of education fosters a sense of community and support among language learners while offering opportunities for personal growth and skill enhancement. With its flexibility, accessibility, and technological integration, online language learning continues to empower individuals on their journey towards acquiring new language proficiencies.

Conclusions

The study delved into the impact of online learning platforms on motivation, stress reduction, and mental health, ultimately revealing an optimistic perspective towards these platforms and their integration into everyday human life. The findings of this study strongly support the introduction and widespread use of online learning platforms in our lives. These platforms not only bolster motivation and enthusiasm for learning but also provide opportunities for stress reduction and foster positive mental health. The convenience, flexibility, and inclusive nature of online learning platforms make them invaluable tools for individuals seeking personal and professional growth. With further advancements and enhancements, these platforms have the potential to revolutionize education and transform the lives of learners worldwide

Research Recommendations

It is recommended that educators and online platform developers prioritize the influence of online learning platforms on learners' mental well-being. More research is needed about this issue to develop the learning process and put the findings into action.

Research Limitations

The study was conducted in the form of a survey. People from 18 to 25 years old, of different professions, were interviewed. The study only included a specific demographic group (e.g., young adults) in

Almaty, Kazakhstan. The study may not be generalizable to other populations with different preferences or needs. The survey included three main reasons: stress reduction, motivation and communication skills. The study only tested a psychological aspect.

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