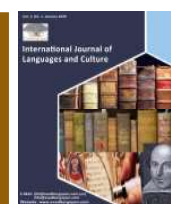




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Research Paper

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Exploring Teacher's Attitudes, Perceptions, and Challenges Towards the Use of Mobile Assisted Language Learning

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Abstract

The present study aimed to explore the teachers' perspectives on Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), India. The perception includes their attitudes, teaching experiences, and difficulties they encounter when using MALL. To this end, 119 ESL teachers' survey data were collected to investigate their perspectives on using MALL. The data of this study were collected through the questionnaire to test the hypothesis. The result revealed a positive perspective of MALL, stating that it is beneficial and has the potential to enhance teaching through the smartphone. In contrast, analyses also revealed that teachers lacked the technical skills/knowledge required to use smartphones for academic purposes. They showed significant challenges in teaching experiences and developing MALL activities. This study tries to shed light on implementing MALL in English Language classrooms. This study concludes with recommendations on enhancing MALL and suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL), Perspective English Teachers, behavioral changes, English as a Second Language (ESL), M-Learning

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1. Introduction

M-learning enables students to access educational resources at any time and from any place with the help of mobile devices and the internet (Lan and Sie, 2010). There is currently a growing interest in how mobile technology might formally support the growing usage of portable digital devices by students, including computers, netbooks, tablets, smartphones, digital cameras, MP3 players, and Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) both inside and outside of the classroom around the world (Uzunboylu and Ozdamli, 2011a; Cheon et al., 2012). Teachers improve and promote learning and performance both inside and outside of the classrooms with the help of mobile learning (Martin and Ertzberger, 2013). Thus, mobile technology must be integrated into higher education (Kobus et al., 2013). Students shall have a greater level of education and help in the nation's economic production. Numerous studies also suggest that students have positive perceptions regarding m-learning and are rapidly utilizing a wide range of mobile device features (Cheon et al., 2012).

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When mobile phones are used exclusively for language acquisition, “digital natives” are the term used to describe students today who commonly use mobile devices (Prensky, 2001). The mobile learning strategy is a recent development in the digital age, which can be used to enhance education (Chang and Hwang, 2019). Mobile learning is also known as Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) (Martin and Ertzberger, 2013). MALL is being used to teach language skills to the learner due to the serious impact of Covid-19. Major elements of global society and educational institutions now face uncertainty due to the Covid-19 pandemic. MALL is a digital platform for learners which provides access to digital applications such as google classroom, zoom, moodle, etc. M-Learning provides high-quality online learning experiences for schools, colleges, and universities. Ogata and Yano (2005), Have introduced Five MALL characteristics, including accessibility, interactivity, immediateness, and permanency, which are used to place educational activities.

The application of MALL would be efficient and convenient for the language learner, but it is challenging to evaluate learners’ academic performance and attitude. Thus, we must ensure that m-learning technology is being used constructively. If the learner is only dependent on virtual classrooms and is away from traditional classes he/she will face difficulties and uncertainties in acquiring language, which will affect the learner’s attitude and performance. According to Traxler and Kukulska-Hulme (2005), technology offers huge benefits to language learners’ learning activities, such as instant assistance through the use of online resources, and gives students more opportunities for collaboration and interaction in both formal and informal settings. However, the pandemic has negatively affected the mental and physical health of the students (Farheen and Jawed, 2022). Nevertheless, much of the existing research on MALL focuses on implementation in classes (Chinnery, 2006; Burston, 2015; Hedjazi Moghari and Marandi, 2017; Loewen et al., 2019) they explored the success and efficacy of MALL for English language learning and teaching. There is an increasing need to investigate teachers’ perspectives on using M-learning because many students use mobile or tablet devices to read and write more frequently while they are in language classes (Zhang, 2015; Park et al., 2020; Reiber et al., 2021). Much of the research on student’s perspective on the utilization of MALL in ESL classrooms have been discussed (Garg, 2020; Devan, 2020; Farheen Anjum and Jawed, 2022; Raheem et al., 2022), but studies that examine at teachers’ perspectives on MALL are scarce. Therefore, an exploratory study is required to examine teachers’ perspectives. ESL teachers’ opinions on MALL usage, including their levels of competence, attitudes, and obstacles that can limit MALL implementation in colleges. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap and add to the body of literature. This study also examines the factors that affect how ESL teachers use MALL.

2. Objectives

- To explore the differences in attitude, perception and challenges using MALL
- To analyze the differences in attitude perception and challenge between levels of teaching experiences.

3. Hypothesis

H₁: There will be no significant difference between males and females in attitude.

H₂: There will be no significant difference between males and females in perception.

H₃: There will be no significant difference between males and females on challenges.

H₄: There will be no significant difference between levels of teaching experience on attitude.

H₅: There will be no significant difference between levels of teaching experience on perception.

H₆: There will be no significant difference between levels of teaching experience on challenges.

4. Literature Review

The relevant studies are given a general overview in this section. The current study fills some knowledge gaps in this area of research by placing it within the larger framework of MALL and its effects on teachers and students. The idea of using technology to learn as a learner was first put up by Hubbard (2009), who contended that the only way to truly understand the challenges that learners face is to genuinely put oneself in their shoes and carry out tasks as a learner. There are many arguments in favor of this behavior, including the fact that it is simpler to predict precisely what problems may occur and what kinds of support are required to deal with them. Teachers and researchers won’t have a better grasp of learner needs, which can result in a better learning experience until they have placed themselves in learners’ shoes. A rapidly growing literature on MALL suggests several benefits of utilizing mobile technology as a new educational tool. It is possible to foster a sense of community by giving students control over what, where, when, and how they learn (Laura Naismith, 2006; Kukulska-Hulme and Shield, 2008; Kukulska-Hulme, 2009; Cheon et al., 2012). These factors are frequently included in learning strategies. Recent studies indicate that using mobile phones as mobile learning tools

also has some disadvantages, such as the small screen sizes, short battery lives, high cost of mobile devices, accessibility, connectivity, and attitude issues that causes distraction and interruptions in classrooms (Hockly, 2013; JISC, 2013). In addition to these advantages and difficulties of mobile learning (Corlett and Naismith, 2006) state that students' smartphone ownership is a crucial success factor for mobile learning programs. According to Naismith and Corlett (2006), devices should either be offered "for" students or "by" students. In other words, children must own this technology.

Few studies investigate teachers' role in using MALL in m-learning, given their importance. For example Wan *et al.* (2018) conducted a study in Malaysia among vocational college students. However, applying MALL in vocational institutions has received less research. Therefore, their study aimed to ascertain how students in Malaysia perceived the use of MALL in ESL instruction. The findings indicated that respondents have a positive opinion of MALL usage. The Perceived Usefulness (PU) of MALL and Perceived Ease of use of MALL (PEoU) were largely agreed upon by respondents. It is believed that the results of this study will help linguists and educators understand more about language planning and MALL-related legislation. Additionally, students would have more chances to learn English outside of the classroom by better understanding on how to use MALL.

Abdulabbas (2021), conducted a study on *ESL Teachers' Perceptions of Using Technology in their Teaching*, which resulted in variations among several groups of ESL teachers who opted to use or avoid technology in their instructions. This study investigates whether there were any differences in the opinions of novice and experienced native English-speaking ESL teachers employed in the United States regarding the use of technology in language instruction. This research's effects impacted how teacher education is developed for using technology in language instruction.

Alghamdi (2022), investigated the implementation of MALL for EFL Teachers' Perceptions in Saudi Arabia. This study suggests that considering Saudi EFL teachers' professional development in MALL at higher emphasis could promote improved competency and the ability to overcome challenges. Additionally, the findings of this study revealed that teachers had positive opinions of MALL, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Garg (2020) investigated "Online Education: A Learner's Perspective During COVID-19". This study reveals 2,895 learners' perspectives on the efficiency of using online learning to replace conventional learning techniques. The results show that online learning is only acceptable as a supplement to traditional learning and not as a replacement based on numerous factors of effective learning, such as content, pedagogy, evaluation, and rigor.

Ozfidan *et al.* (2021) conducted an exploratory study on student perceptions regarding their online learning experience during Covid-19. The findings showed that one main aspect of their online learning was that it offered them a comfortable learning environment. It also showed that the main differences between online education and in-person classes were convenience and flexibility. The study clarifies a condition that has an impact on learners practically everywhere in the world. That can also be a drawback for this study since it is difficult to reproduce this scenario.

Raheem *et al.* (2022) aim to find ESL learners' perceptions of the challenges of using online learning amidst Covid-19. The study examined the importance of MALL applications during the Covid-19 outbreak. It showed that smartphone applications helped enhance vocabulary expansion, translation, and language ability. In addition, during the Covid-19 pandemic, smartphone applications were widely shared. M-Learning plays a big part in online learning and teaching. It served as an on-call, personal instructor. M-Learning apps helped English language learners to develop both their productive and receptive skills. Applications like dictionaries, especially those that focused on vocabulary, played a big part in the translation process as well as in building and refining vocabulary. Online teaching is one of the virally utilized smartphone applications that have been deployed during the Covid-19 for various purposes.

Devan (2020) conducted a study to investigate school children's perspectives on the value of online learning and the challenges they encounter in changing who they are to fit the needs of the pedagogy. The findings indicated that a unique teaching-learning strategy could emerge in education due to this pandemic condition. The digital divide may result in increased educational inequality as a result.

In sum, most of the studies discussed above were conducted to describe students' perspectives and EFL teacher's perspectives on integrating MALL. As a result, teacher's attitude, perception and challenges among male and female teachers while using MALL was less explored, making it more challenging to comprehend. Moreover, understanding teachers' perspectives will enable teachers to use new and advanced teaching methods in any environment. Expectations for online learning's success and failure started to surface in a variety of media venues, and some people regarded this situation as an opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of learning remotely via technology (Zimmerman, 2020). Some have argued that the term "online teaching" was inappropriate to use during the crisis, arguing instead for phrases like "emergency remote teaching" Hodges *et al.* (2020), which highlighted the challenges of trying to conduct successful

online instruction without the necessary time or resources. One of the results of the Covid-19 outbreak was that it supported (Slater, 2017) asserted that managing unanticipated emergencies in education depends on structural leadership and human resource management frameworks, both of which were stressed by the pandemic. Thus, considering the gap mentioned above in the literature, It appears that more and more college students are using mobile devices, and they will undoubtedly advocate for MALL in ESL classes as well. One of the most beneficial areas of technology-supported learning is rapidly becoming mobile language learning. (Saran et al., 2009; Uzunboylu and Ozdamli, 2011b).

5. Research Method

This study employed a quantitative approach for collecting data, analyzing, and interpreting results to fully address the objectives and gather relevant data about teachers' perceptions of MALL use.

5.1. Research Design

The present study is expected to explore the teachers' behavioral changes while using MALL. This includes attitude, perceptions, and challenges in implementing it. Therefore, a descriptive quantitative survey approach is employed, and it is thought that this is an appropriate methodology. Quantitative research is a technique for explaining phenomena that involves gathering numerical data and then analyzing it in a way that is mathematically grounded (Creswell, 2017).

5.2. Participants

The random method of sampling was used to select the study subjects. 150 teachers received links to an online survey; 119 of them responded. Descriptive data revealed that 56 of the 119 survey respondents were women, and 63 were men. The majority of study participants (39.8%) had 11 to 20 years of teaching experience, followed by those with 0 to 10 years of teaching experience (35.6%), those with 21 to 30 years of teaching experience (24.4%), and those with 0 to 10 years of teaching experience (35.6%). Of the 123 responses, 47 teachers said they had undergone MALL professional development training, while 76 said they hadn't (Table 1)

5.3. Data Collection and Analysis

Data analysis was done to address the objective stated for the current study. The data gathered from the sample was loaded into the computer using MS Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics, a complete computer application used to do statistical analysis rapidly and reliably. To analyze the data obtained from the sample, descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage were generated. The quantitative data were analyzed for descriptive statistics using IBM SPSS software. Post-hoc and *t*-test were applied to analyze the differences between the perception, attitude, and changes. The questionnaire was shared with teachers via various social media sites and posted to Google Forms. The data was collected in 2022 and entered into SPSS 27.0 for evaluation. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were also produced for the first, second, and third items to examine teachers' attitudes, perceptions of their skill level, and challenges using MALL.

5.4. Research Instruments

The current study used a survey instrument that had three dimensions to collect quantitative data. In the first section, there were some questions about the participants' age and gender and the level of teaching experiences. The second section of the survey consisted 16 questions that asked respondents about teachers' perceptions on the challenges of using MALL. In third section, there were 8 questions which asked about ESL teachers' attitude towards using MALL. It was identified a variety of hurdles to m-learning, with items on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (big barrier) to 4. (no barrier). For these items, Cronbach's alpha was 0.79. Two different Cronbach Alpha tests were used to ensure the survey's dependability and internal consistency (Huck et al., 2008). Reliability and internal consistency were calculated using the data collected, and the results (0.783 and 0.781) are satisfactory. Cronbach Alpha was used because the survey employed three separate Likert Scales.

6. Results

This section outlines the methodical analysis of survey data that was appropriately taken from the study by Alghamdi (2022) with minor contextual alterations as needed to determine the difficulties and challenges experienced by ESL teachers when applying MALL in classrooms. Organized tables show the percentage, mean score, and standard deviation results. Descriptive analysis and interpretation have been used to respond to the study's hypothesis.

6.1. Demographic Results

Age, gender, qualifications, and teaching experiences are the intended demographic factors in the current study.

The pie-chart depicts that 47% of female and 53% of male participated in the survey (Figure 1).

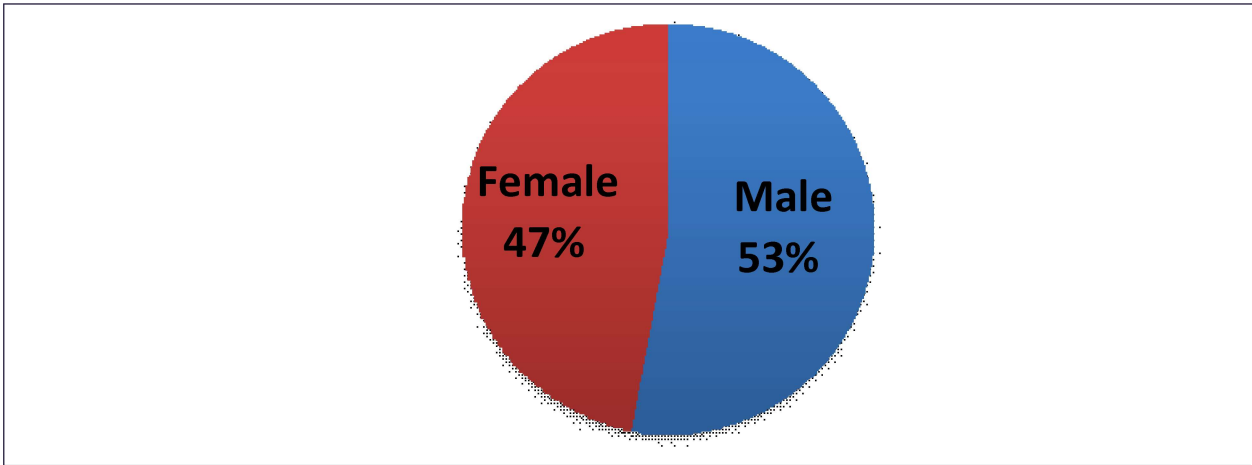


Figure 1: Male-Female Participation

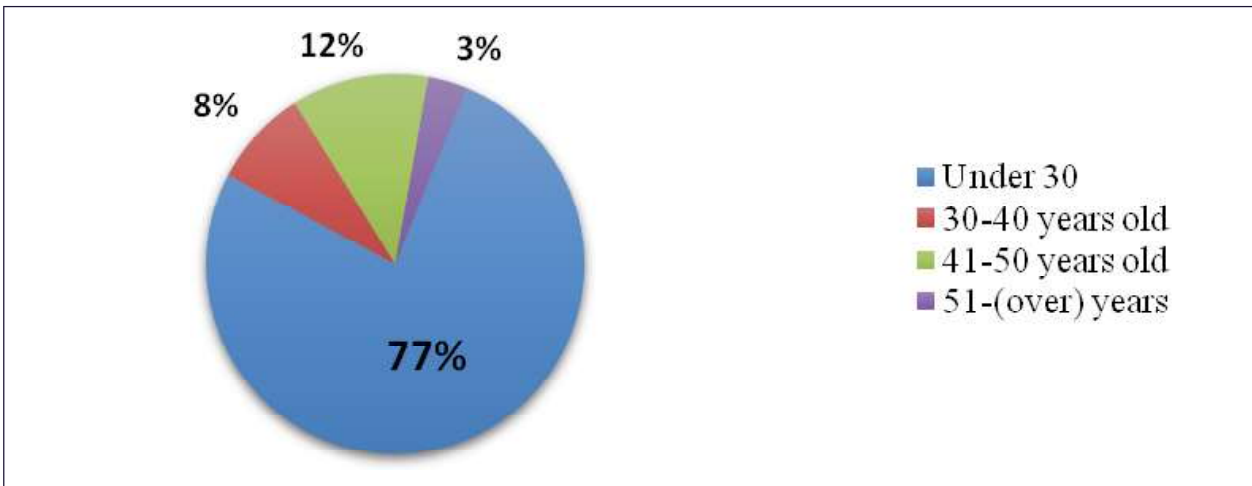


Figure 2: Age Composition

A significant majority of teachers as shown in the pie chart above, where under 30 years of age which is about 77% whereas over 51 years of age were only 3%. Participants who were under 30-40 years of age were 8% and 41-50 years of age were 12% (Figure 2).

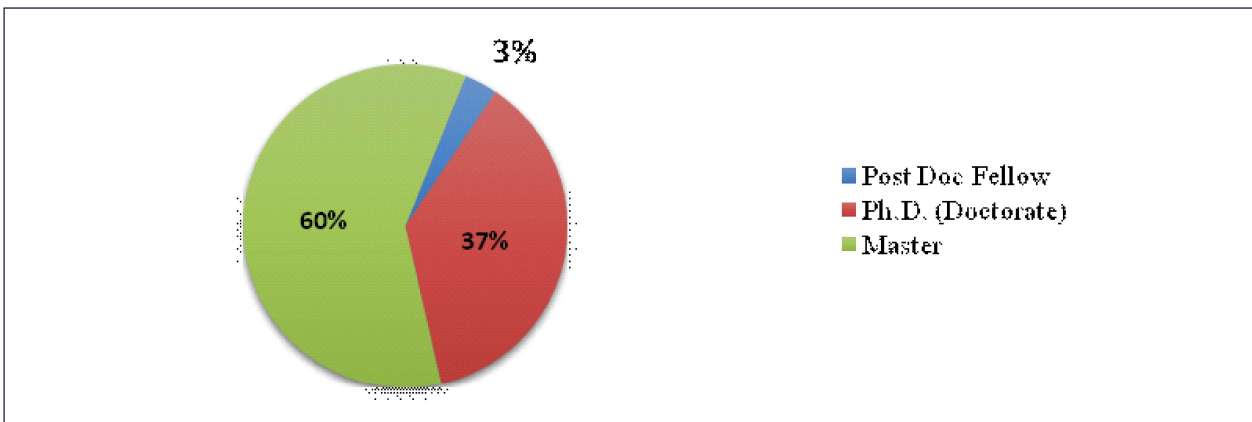


Figure 3: Educational Qualifications

The pie-chart depicts that approximately 60% of the participants were holding master's degree and 37% of the participants were Ph.D. holders. The left over 3% of the participants were post-doc (Figure 3). The pie-chart depicts that 66% of the participants in the survey had about 1-3 years of teaching experience whereas 25% of the participant had teaching experience of 3-5 years. The 9% of the participants had the teaching experience of about 5-10 years (Figure 4).

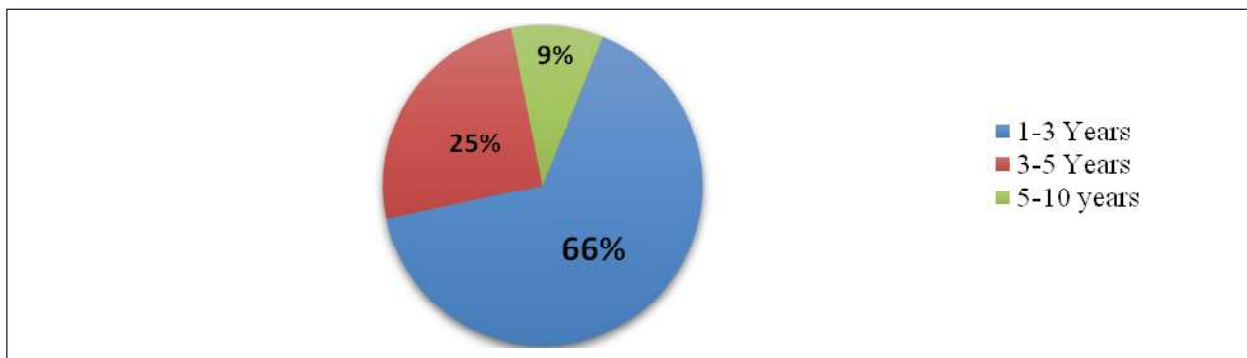


Figure 4: Teaching Experience

6.2. Descriptive Results

To analyze if there is a significant difference between the male and female in regards to attitude, perception and challenge, *t*-test was applied.

Mean and SD of Males (N=63) on Attitude was found to be 19.54 ± 4.33 and for Females (N=56), Mean and SD are 18.20 ± 3.90 , $t(df=117) = 1.770$, where $p > 0.05$. Mean and SD of Males (N=63) on perception was found to be 23.89 ± 2.610 and for Females (N=56), Mean and SD are 26.23 ± 2.848 , $t(df=117) = 4.684$, where $p < 0.05$. Mean and SD of Males (N=63) on challenges was found to be 18.92 ± 4.880 and for Females (N=56), Mean and SD are 24.14 ± 2.958 , $t(df=117) = 1.770$, where $p < 0.05$.

6.3. t-Test

Group Statistics	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	<i>t</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Attitude	Male	63	19.54	4.329	1.770	0.079
	Female	56	18.20	3.901		
Perception	Male	63	23.89	2.610	-4.684	0.000
	Female	56	26.23	2.848		
Challenge	Male	63	18.92	4.880	-6.955	0.000
	Female	56	24.14	2.951		

6.4. One Way ANOVA

ANOVA					
		df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig.
Attitude	Between Groups	2	62.173	3.741	0.027
	Within Groups	116	16.618		
	Total	118			
Perception	Between Groups	2	130.371	19.634	0.000
	Within Groups	116	6.640		
	Total	118			
Challenge	Between Groups	2	362.065	20.589	0.000
	Within Groups	116	17.585		
	Total	118			

6.5. Post Hoc Tests

A one-way ANOVA was used to examine whether a significant difference existed in teacher’s attitudes, perceptions and challenges towards MALL. Teachers’ level of experience was based on three groups (1-3 years of teaching, 3-5 years of teaching, 5-10 years of teaching). A statistically significant difference was found in variation across three levels of experience on attitude ($F(2, 116) = [3.741], p < 0.027$). Also, there was a statistically significant variation across three levels of experience on perception ($F(2, 116) = [19.634], p < 0.01$).

At last, there was statistically significant differences across three levels of experience on challenges ($F(2, 116) = [20.589], p < 0.01$).

It was found that the teacher’s Attitude across the teaching experience of 1-3 years had a Mean difference = -2.333 from that of 3-5 Years, and was found to be significantly different ($p = 0.024$). However, there was no statistically significant difference between teacher’s experience 1-3 years and 5-10 years ($p = 0.993$).

The Turkey’s HSD Test for multiple comparisons found that the teacher’s perception across the teaching experience of 1-3 years had a Mean difference = -3.244 in comparison to 3-5 Years and this difference was found to be statistically

Table 3: Pairwise Comparisons of Teaching Experiences						
Multiple Comparisons						
Tukey HSD						
Dependent Variable	(I) Teach_EXP	(J) Teach_EXP	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval Lower Bound
Attitude	1-3 Years	3-5 Years	-2.333*	0.876	0.024	-4.41
		5-10 Years	0.152	1.313	0.993	-2.97
	3-5 Years	1-3 Years	2.333*	0.876	0.024	0.25
		5-10 Years	2.485	1.437	0.199	-0.93
	5-10 ears	1-3 Years	-0.152	1.313	0.993	-3.27
		3-5 Years	-2.485	1.437	0.199	-5.90
Perception	1-3 Years	3-5 Years	-3.244*	0.554	0.000	-4.56
		5-10 years	-2.713*	0.830	0.004	-4.68
	3-5 Years	1-3 Years	3.244*	0.554	0.000	1.93
		5-10 years	0.530	0.908	0.829	-1.63
	5-10 years	1-3 Years	2.713*	0.830	0.004	0.74
		3-5 Years	-0.530	0.908	0.829	-2.69
Challenge	1-3 Years	3-5 Years	-5.210*	0.901	0.000	-7.35
		5-10 years	-5.138*	1.351	0.001	-8.34
	3-5 Years	1-3 Years	5.210*	0.901	0.000	3.07
		5-10 years	0.073	1.478	0.999	-3.44
	5-10 years	1-3 Years	5.138*	1.351	0.001	1.93
		3-5 Years	-0.073	1.478	0.999	-3.58

Note: Based on estimated marginal means * The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

significant ($p=.000$). On the similar grounds 1-3 years had a Mean difference = -2.713, in comparison to 5-10 Years and this difference was found to be significantly different ($p=.004$).

Lastly, Turkey's HSD Test for multiple comparisons found that the teacher's Challenges across the teaching experience of 1-3 years had a Mean difference= -5.210 in comparison to 3-5 Years and this difference was found to be statistically significant ($p=.000$). Similarly, 1-3 years had a Mean difference = -5.138, in comparison to 5-10 Years and this difference was found to be significantly different ($p= .001$).

From the results it can be concluded that higher the teaching experience higher will be the changes in Attitude, Perception and the Challenges respectively.

7. Discussion

The present study explored the challenging attitudes of teachers toward MALL and assessments of MALL difficulties at AMU. The study also examined whether the perceptions of teachers toward the use of MALL were influenced by these demographic factors (gender, and teaching experience). Teachers in colleges at AMU generally had a good attitude regarding using MALL. The teachers agreed on the benefits of adopting mobile devices for teaching and integration, noting that these benefits include "portability, learning possibilities, multimedia functions, accessibility, scaffolding, availability, and connectivity of data." Teachers expressed an overall positive attitude toward MALL use among college students and that they perceive it as good for learning activities after it was initially used to teach lessons during the Covid-19 pandemic.

These findings are consistent with studies on teachers' attitudes towards the MALL use, Nariyati *et al.* (2020); Nuraeni (2021), supports teachers' positive attitudes toward MALL use to support educational activities, particularly those involving learning the English language amid Covid-19 pandemic. According to the findings, the majority of Indian teachers lacked the knowledge or expertise necessary to design MALL activities for ESL instruction, which is consistent with other studies (Dashtestani, 2013; Khan *et al.*, 2018). According to Dashtestani (2013), educational institutions should give teachers the ICT training necessary for the effective implementation and usage of MALL. According to Bandura's view, teachers who are highly effective use innovative teaching techniques that encourage pupils to learn (Bray-Clark and Bates, 2003).

According to Kent and Giles (2017), teachers with low levels of self-efficacy and proficiency with new teaching strategies, such as ICT, will find it difficult to incorporate these strategies into their lesson plans. Therefore, developing MALL based activities and techniques helps in the use proficiency in teaching. It also provides Indian instructors in primary schools with MALL and professional development training. Teachers unavoidably ran into some difficulties with MALL usage, given that they felt their level of skill in using MALL in teaching was inadequate. According to (Bandura, 1977), those who have high levels of self-efficacy are capable of overcoming obstacles. The teachers described some challenges they faced, including students who did not use mobile phones for academic purposes, students who lacked the necessary skills to use mobile phones for academic purposes, problems with Internet connectivity, and a lack of MALL activities and software tools. These results are in line with earlier research (Bozorgian, 2018; Bakhsh, 2015; Khan *et al.*, 2018) which suggested that teachers ran into some of these issues when using MALL. Therefore, putting more emphasis on and working toward providing MALL training for teachers may help them develop their self-efficacy in using MALL as well as their innate capacity to overcome obstacles.

8. Conclusion

The findings showed that there were no discernible gender-based variations amongst the participants' views toward MALL and perceptions of their MALL proficiency. MALL use in teaching and learning was seen favorably by both male and female teachers. However, a component of this study contradicted these conclusions and revealed that instructors' attitudes toward and perceptions of MALL were influenced by their gender (Oz, 2015; Nuraeni, 2021). Female teachers reported more positive attitudes toward mobile learning because they thought they might use technology to achieve increasingly satisfying results. Based on their professional development and teaching experience, participants' attitudes and perspectives concerning the use of MALL varied, according to the findings of the current study. The study recommends combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies and incorporating both teachers and students. The possibility of conducting comparative research to determine MALL's effectiveness can be considered. When it comes to the difficulties in using MALL during the implementation phase, ELTs' responses vary.

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