

Research Article

Language Teacher's Experience and Preference toward Online Learning Platforms during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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The COVID-19 pandemic compelled the educational sector to act quickly, resulting in the adoption of replacement online learning platforms (OLPs) to keep the educational system running throughout the crisis. This study explored how language teachers in Ethiopia are prepared in terms of their experience and preference toward OLPs. To achieve this goal, data were collected from 203 participants (aged 22–46, including 81 males and 122 females) using a self-perceived questionnaire. The data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, and inferential statistics, including ANOVA tests, to determine the teachers' experiences and preferences toward OLPs. The mean score of the teachers' experience findings revealed a score of 3.406 out of a five-point Likert scale, and the preference subdimensions mean scores ranged from 3.164 to 3.476. The ANOVA findings revealed that, in the mean scores of language teachers' experience toward OLPs ($p > 0.05$) and preferences toward OLPs, there were statistically significant differences for video streaming platforms ($p > 0.05$), digital reading materials platforms ($p > 0.05$), and mixed OLPs ($p > 0.05$). Regarding the statistically significant correlation between language teachers' experiences and preferences (LTEP) toward OLPs (except between video streaming platforms and digital reading materials platforms ($r = -0.011$, $p = 0.878$)), there was a statistically significant impact. Post hoc results showed, however, that there was no statistically significant correlation between language teachers' preference dimensions. To summarize, Ethiopian language teachers preferred video streaming platforms and mixed OLPs over digital reading materials platforms. Moreover, further research into the LTEP toward OLPs in various ecological aspects is required.

1. Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many changes have been made to the educational sector, including the shift from face-to-face instruction to online learning instruction. Before this, online learning modalities were less common and primarily designed for distance and online education [1]. In higher education, only 20% of these formats were properly implemented [2]. These changes were made in an effort to promote innovation in a variety of online learning platforms (OLPs). Moreover, the world's educational system has been severely damaged by the COVID-19 pandemic [3], leading universities to make the decision to temporarily move face-to-face classes online instead of delaying them [4]. As a result of this abrupt switch, students, teachers, and administrators have faced numerous difficulties [5–7]. According to Gambo

and Musonda [8], when navigating OLPs, teaching staff, students, and managers have encountered a number of challenges [9–13].

In Ethiopia, all educational institutions were temporarily closed due to the early COVID-19 outbreak, and the former Ministry of Education mandated that all classes be taught online. Literature has well-documented that teachers may find OLPs difficult to experience and prefer; one of the reasons being that they may not fully understand its importance and how to use it [14, 15]. Studies on the teacher's experience and preferences toward OLPs have yielded some interesting results [13, 15]. For instance, Basheti et al. [9] assessed teachers' preferences and needs for successfully implementing OLPs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, studies on using Twitter to improve college students' teaching process were conducted [12, 15–17]. The results showed that many

of the sample students used Twitter for nonacademic purposes [12], and the researchers conducted a qualitative analysis using focus groups and found that language teachers' preferences toward OLPs varied depending on their backgrounds and personal preferences [16, 18], while others preferred face-to-face modes [19].

In light of these findings, the researchers proposed that teachers' needs should be better addressed to ensure they have access to appropriate professional development materials as well as meaningful online interactions. Similarly, Capacio et al. [20] stated that using social media learning environments for classroom instruction needs to be guided by the level of preference, and Maatuk et al. [21] added that students' and instructors' perspectives on using and implementing OLPs in higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic had its own challenges and advantages. However, understanding the nature of online learning, findings from other studies may not be replicable or generalizable to language teachers' experiences and preferences (LTEP), particularly in the Ethiopian context. As a result, the primary focus of this study inquiry is to explore what language teachers already experience and prefer that leads to promoting their understanding and implementation of OLPs in the Ethiopian context.

As the pandemic spread, educational sectors began to reevaluate their educational approaches, forcing professors to make significant changes in how they delivered course material, often with little notice and rapidly altering curricula, resources to support online learning [6, 22]. The majority of teaching staff responded by delivering face-to-face course and seminar content online in order to maintain educational continuity and lessen the distress felt [23]. The preferred language teaching and learning formats for students during the COVID-19 pandemic were examined by Vassileva [24]. The outcomes showed that the development of OLPs is influenced by the learners' preferred teaching methodology. Teaching-learning progress has become more efficient as a result of the use of digital forms of OLPs. Online learning entailed carrying out pedagogical instructions via online chatting and communicating devices that students had access to, such as smartphones, laptops, and computers [11, 23–31]. OLPs incorporate both active online learning topics of daily routines and passive online learning issues [10, 18, 28, 32–34]. According to Barrot et al. [32] and Benmansour [33], many educational institutions adopted online learning practices to respond to the challenges faced during COVID-19. Previous studies have focused more on learner's experience and preference for OLPs, but less attention has been paid to the teachers, particularly language teachers and their OLPs experience and preference during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Ethiopian educational system.

The current teacher's pedagogical expertise and online teaching experience in the context of Ethiopia were critical to its success [19, 25, 35]. Al Shammari [36] asserts that technology has greatly influenced language teaching, ushering it into a new phase of transforming communication into a digital form, empowering language teachers to communicate without having to travel. The researcher noted that classrooms have been replaced with the virtual and limitless

world of technology, which can be adapted to respond to the language teacher's needs and satisfactions. This potential of reaching out to distant geographical spaces has transformed remote teaching into a highly welcome opportunity in times of crisis. Moreover, in terms of language teachers, digital platforms have been found to be easily accessible and suitably tailored to their needs [16, 36, 37].

Conversely, according to Em [11], language teachers often lacked prior OLPs teaching experience. To accommodate both traditional face-to-face learning and new digital learning experiences, teachers have been forced to adapt their own teaching strategies, methods, materials, and techniques, putting more emphasis on readings, videos, exercises, and so forth [8, 34, 38–40]. The COVID-19 pandemic also influenced teachers' preferences of online learning [39]. Due to the numerous challenging skills required, educators often experience frustration when using OLPs [41]. This frustration, while strengthening the OLPs and its preference for effective use, can fuel a sense of despondency and failure to advance in rank [39, 42–44]. According to Mishra et al. [35], the effects of workload, a lack of digital competency, and a lack of knowledge of digital pedagogy on staff stress are all being studied. Although there has not been much research on online education in emergency situations, as most studies have focused on distance learning [36, 37, 45–53], the current pandemic has demonstrated that educational settings must take a proactive approach to ensure that their students receive the best education possible.

Although the experience and preferences of students and teachers toward OLPs have received increased attention in recent years, its ecological context continues to be critiqued. Previous studies [e.g., 1, 22, 36, 37, 45–51] have explored students' and teachers' uses of OLPs from around the world, both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic [52–56]. For instance, Al Shammari [36, 37] studied the experiences of devices and preferences of OLPs of English major college students in Saudi Arabia and found that laptops were their most used device and Zoom was the most preferred platform. Regarding the teachers' experience of OLPs, Sari and Keser [56] investigated language teacher's online teaching experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of technological content knowledge and concluded that teachers did not use OLPs primarily for pedagogical purposes. Similarly, Liu et al. [48] explored teacher competence in online teaching experience and revealed that teachers' perceived experience of online teaching was positive.

However, due to the lack of ecological validity in previous studies, the findings may not be applicable to the context of this study. Online learning is now at the forefront of the educational landscape due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which calls upon everyone in the educational field to use innovative OLPs to promote continuous learning [51, 53]. Hence, as the context of this study is in developing countries with language teachers who are not well familiar with innovative technologies, this study seeks to increase language teacher engagement in OLPs by exploring how well language teachers perceive their experience and preferences toward OLPs in an ecological context. Furthermore, similar studies

TABLE 1: Sample areas and study population.

Departments	Total language teachers			Sample language teachers		
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>T</i>
Ethiopian languages and literature (Amharic)	191	296	487	51	82	136
English language and literature (English)	86	137	223	30	37	67
Total	287	433	720	81	122	203

to those of Al Roomy [55] and Al Shammari [36, 37] could be replicated in the future with a larger number of teachers from various backgrounds to observe the experience and preferences toward OLPs in order to produce more insightful study results. Additionally, research on the experiences of Ethiopian language teachers with OLPs is limited. This study's ecological focus does not emphasize any of the previous studies' ecological contexts. Nevertheless, research suggests that OLPs are essential for academic success [54], and are also effective for teachers in general [31, 57–60]. Consequently, this study supports an important assertion: teachers must be able to integrate web-based tools into classroom teaching to prepare students for technological innovation and implementation.

In addition, according to Gambo and Musonda [8], Raviandani [52], Barnes et al. [61], Papademetriou [62], Hermanto and Srimulyani [63], and Adnan and Anwar [64], more research is needed to examine the ecological validity and reliability of LTEP of OLPs, which may facilitate language teachers in using OLPs. This was the focus of this study, which also concluded that further research is needed to investigate LTEP, as well as the rate of uptake of the results. Therefore, investigating LTEP toward OLPs helps educational researchers and teachers recognize OLPs challenges and opportunities [64–66]. To this end, the current study explored LTEP during the COVID-19 pandemic by posing the following research questions.

- (Q1) How do language teachers regarding their experience and preferences toward OLPs during the COVID-19 pandemic?
- (Q2) What is the correlation between LTEP toward OLPs during the COVID-19 pandemic?

2. Methods

2.1. Design. In line with previous literature, this study employed a quantitative research design to answer the research questions raised in the introduction section. Numerical data regarding the use of language teachers in the Ethiopian context was used to explore LTEP toward OLPs.

2.2. Participants: Sampling Procedures. Due to the unmanageable number of language teachers, the sample size was first determined by applying Yamane [65] sampling size formula ($n = N/1 + N(e2)$), where n is the sample size, $e2$ is the level of precision (0.05%) indicating the maximum validity, and 1 is the probability of the event occurring. This formula is preferred for application with a 5% error margin and a 95%

confidence level as there was no previous research to serve as a benchmark for the study [59]. Additionally, this formula is superior as it assumes a normal distribution and is suitable for determining an appropriate sample size (50%) with the highest possible rate of response in light of the absence of previous study data concerning both the compositional and locational focuses of the study.

After receiving an official letter (Ref. no. 19/14) of approval from Arba Minch University's College of Social Science and Humanities (CSSH) Research and Development Committee to carry out the study procedures and data collection process, the participants of the study were selected using random sampling technique from the total number of 720 summer program trainee language teachers, as indicated in Table 1.

Table 1 displayed that 203 (28.19%) language teachers from among the 720 population of Arba Minch University summer undergraduate students were willing to participate. The criteria for participating in this study were language teachers who had experienced E-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic or were currently experiencing it in the university education system. Furthermore, all the participants were enrolled in the summer of 2022 in different undergraduate programs across the fields of Ethiopian languages and literature (Amharic) and English language and literature. From the sample respondents' reports, the teachers' sex, teaching experience, and educational status were aligned with the study's variables. Accordingly, respondents were divided into three categories, as indicated in their demographic profiles in Table 2.

2.3. Data Instrument Tools. To achieve the objective of the study, the data collection instrument of this study was a self-reported questionnaire that aimed to explore LTEP regarding OLPs during the COVID-19 pandemic. It consisted of two parts. The first part addressed the demographic data, specifically age, birth sex (see Table 2), and teaching experience, of participants. The second part of the survey was on participants' self-reported experience and preferences toward OLPs. This section of the questionnaire also included two OLEP dimensions. The first dimension was about language teachers' experiences with OLPs, while the second was about measuring their preferences.

The questionnaire was adapted from Burcă-Voicu et al. [54], Capacio et al. [20], and Sarı and Keser [56], with major modifications, to elicit information about LTEP toward OLPs. Unfortunately, the instrument, adapted from different articles and literature and significantly modified, did not seem to be specific to language teachers, but addressed aspects that were

TABLE 2: Language teacher's demographic profile regarding their age, birth sex, teaching experience, and educational status.

Demographic profiles	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Age				
Below 25 years	30	14.8	14.8	14.8
25–30 years	96	47.3	47.3	62.1
31–35 years	53	26.1	26.1	88.2
36–40 years	17	8.4	8.4	96.6
Above 40 years	7	3.4	3.4	100.0
Total	203	100.0	100.0	
Birth sex				
Male	81	39.9	39.9	39.9
Female	122	60.1	60.1	100.0
Total	203	100.0	100.0	
Teaching experience				
Below 5 years	30	14.8	14.8	14.8
6–10 years	28	13.8	13.8	28.6
11–15 years	99	48.8	48.8	77.3
Above 15 years	46	22.7	22.7	100.0
Total	203	100.0	100.0	

relevant for teachers in general. To better suit the aim of this study, the author checked the effectiveness of the instrument and made improvements, which was then translated from English to Amharic by two applied linguistics experts. A pilot study was conducted with 28 teachers enrolled in a summer program training, but not participating in the main data collection process. Two language teachers were also selected and invited to comment on the clarity and appropriateness of the questionnaire for the study.

All the statements in the survey questionnaire were designed in close-ended forms (see the appendix) and included 32 items to measure various aspects of LTEP (with three dimensions; video streaming platforms, digital reading platforms, and mixed OLPs). Of the 32 items, 19 referred to the language teacher's experience (e.g., "I am able to plan and organize the online learning platforms"; "I have experienced adapting to the new context of online learning platforms") and the remaining 13 were the language teacher's preferences (e.g., "I am competent for the online learning platforms, such as Microsoft Teams, Moodle, YouTube, Twitter, Zoom, Telegram, Facebook, etc."; "I enjoy online learning platforms and find them valuable to me") toward OLPs. All items were designed in a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" (5) to "strongly disagree" (1). As a result, the positively phrased items were scored with values of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, similar to the LTEP toward OLPs scales, in response to the statements "strongly disagree," "disagree," "undecided," "agree," and "strongly agree," respectively. Conversely, the negatively worded items were scored in reverse order to obtain the scale's mean value.

The internal consistency reliability of the modified questionnaire was administered to the selected participants of the study and was found to have a Cronbach's α value of 0.788 for a total of 32 full-scale items. Thus, the instrument was deemed reliable and appropriate for measuring the construct it was designed to measure. Additionally, the Cronbach's α of

each dimension and subscales was calculated as follows: (1) language teacher's experience toward OLPs scale 0.634; (2) language teacher's preference toward OLPs scales for video streaming platforms scale 0.587; for digital reading materials platforms scale 0.659; and for mixed platforms scale 0.558. The Amharic version of the LTEP toward OLPs questionnaire achieved its objective, in contrast to Burcă-Voicu et al. [54] internal consistency reliability which was 0.961 in its Cronbach's α value. Consequently, the instrument was able to consistently measure what it was intended to measure.

2.4. Data Analysis Techniques. The data collected via the questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Before using these statistical tools, the collected data was checked against some basic assumptions of the instruments used. The distribution of quantitative data scores at the item and scale levels was normal, with skewness and kurtosis values between +1.5 and -1.5. Furthermore, there were no significant outliers that could have influenced the mean scores. The Levene statistic test of homogeneity variance for the subscales of OLPs experience also revealed no significant differences ($df(2, 201) = 0.043, p > 0.05$). Additionally, the normality probability plots (normal Q-Q plots) showed straight lines, indicating normal distributions for the two variables of experience with and preference for OLPs. Thus, descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the data analysis.

The data from the questionnaires was analyzed using mean values, standard deviation, Pearson product-moment correlation, and post hoc methods. To address language teacher's experience of OLPs, standard deviation and mean scores at the item level, as well as item aggregate mean values, were used. The language teacher's preference toward OLPs was determined using means and standard deviation scores at subscale levels among teacher trainees. The post hoc test was used to compare the mean scores and determine whether

TABLE 3: LTEP toward OLPs by descriptive statistics.

	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error mean
Language teacher's experience	203	3.4063	0.52894	0.03712
Language teacher's preference				
Video streaming platforms	202	3.6580	0.81736	0.05751
Digital reading materials platforms	203	3.1642	0.94215	0.06613
Mixed OLPs	203	3.4764	0.63178	0.04434

TABLE 4: LTEP toward OLPs by ANOVA summary.

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significant
Teacher's experience					
Between groups	0.056	2	0.028	0.100	0.905
Within groups	56.459	200	0.282		
Total	56.516	202			
Video streaming platforms					
Between groups	0.119	2	0.059	0.088	0.916
Within groups	134.165	199	0.674		
Total	134.283	201			
Digital reading materials platforms					
Between groups	0.231	2	0.116	0.129	0.879
Within groups	179.073	200	0.895		
Total	179.304	202			
Mixed OLPs					
Between groups	0.158	2	0.079	0.197	0.822
Within groups	80.468	200	0.402		
Total	80.627	202			

there were statistically significant differences between them. Additionally, Pearson product-moment correlation was used to examine how LTEP toward OLPs related to one another. Finally, a 5% ($p=0.05$) statistically significant level was applied throughout the entire study.

3. Results

The objective of the current study was to investigate LTEP toward OLPs. To achieve its objectives, a descriptive survey design was used to obtain quantitative data. As participants of the current study were language teachers in the context of Ethiopia, the results of the data collected from language teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic to gauge their experiences and preferences toward OLPs were analyzed as follows.

3.1. LTEP toward OLPs. The data collected from language teachers through a self-report questionnaire were used to answer the first research question: how do language teachers regarding their experience and preferences toward OLPs during the COVID-19 pandemic? The participants' experiences and preferences toward OLPs were analyzed and determined using mean values and standard deviations as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics generated by LTEP toward OLPs across different dimensions. The mean score for language teacher's experience ($M=3.4063$, $SD=0.52894$, $SE=0.03712$) and their preferences toward OLPs (video

streaming platforms, $M=3.6580$, $SD=0.81736$, $SE=0.05751$; digital reading platforms, $M=3.1642$, $SD=0.94215$, $SE=0.06613$; and mixed OLPs, $M=3.4764$, $SD=0.63178$, $SE=0.04434$) can be seen. However, the mean value alone cannot determine whether there are statistically significant differences between the mean values of the two variables of teacher trainees' experience and preferences toward OLPs. To that end, the ANOVA test was performed to determine whether there were significant differences in the teacher trainees' experience ratings of the two dimensions of OLPs, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 shows that an ANOVA between-groups analysis was used to see if there were any statistically significant differences in the mean scores of teacher trainees' experience toward OLPs ($F(2,202)=0.028$, $p=0.905$). Furthermore, the ANOVA between-groups analysis results of language teacher's preferences toward OLPs were shown for video streaming platforms ($F(2,201)=0.059$, $p=0.916$); digital reading materials platforms ($F(2,202)=0.116$, $p=0.879$), and the mixed OLPs ($F(2,202)=0.079$, $p=0.822$). The findings indicate that there was no difference in the teachers' experience and preferences toward the OLPs dimensions.

3.2. Associations of LTEP toward OLPs. The second research question, which was whether there is a correlation between LTEP toward OLPs during the COVID-19 pandemic, was addressed using the information from the questionnaire. To evaluate and determine the participants' experiences and

TABLE 5: LTEP toward OLPs by correlation.

	1	2	3	4
Language teacher's experience				
Pearson correlation	1	0.443**	0.431**	0.404**
Significant (two-tailed)		0.001	0.001	0.001
Sum of squares and crossproducts	56.516	38.619	43.372	27.261
Covariance	0.280	0.192	0.215	0.135
<i>N</i>	203	202	203	203
Video streaming platforms				
Pearson correlation	0.443**	1	-0.011	0.389**
Significant (two-tailed)	0.001		0.878	0.001
Sum of squares and crossproducts	38.619	134.283	-1.673	40.392
Covariance	0.192	0.668	-0.008	0.201
<i>N</i>	202	202	202	202
Digital reading materials platforms				
Pearson correlation	0.431**	-0.011	1	0.256**
Significant (two-tailed)	0.001	0.878		0.001
Sum of squares and crossproducts	43.372	-1.673	179.304	30.755
Covariance	0.215	-0.008	0.888	0.152
<i>N</i>	203	202	203	203
Mixed OLPs				
Pearson correlation	0.404**	0.389**	0.256**	1
Significant (two-tailed)	0.001	0.001	0.001	
Sum of squares and crossproducts	27.261	40.392	30.755	80.627
Covariance	0.135	0.201	0.152	0.399
<i>N</i>	203	202	203	203

Note: 1 = language teacher's experience; 2 = video streaming platforms; 3 = digital reading materials platforms; 4 = mixed OLPs. **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

preferences toward OLPs, the correlation coefficient was used. Table 5 analyzes the correlation based on the survey data of this study.

Table 5 shows the results of LTEP toward OLPs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results revealed a statistically significant relationship between the teacher's experience of OLPs and their preferences dimensions; teacher's experience, and video streaming platforms ($r=0.443$; $p=0.001$); digital reading material platforms ($r=0.431$, $p=0.001$) and mixed OLPs ($r=0.404$, $p=0.001$). Furthermore, the correlation between video streaming platforms and digital reading materials ($r=-0.011$, $p=0.878$) showed a negative and no statistically significant correlation. However, the correlation between video streaming platforms and mixed OLPs ($r=0.389$, $p=0.001$) was positive and statistically significant. Finally, the correlation between digital reading material and mixed OLPs was also statistically significant ($r=0.256$, $p=0.001$). Thus, the correlation between LTEP toward OLPs (except between video streaming platforms and digital reading materials platforms ($r=-0.011$, $p=0.878$)) had a statistically significant impact.

Table 6 shows that the test of between-subjects analysis was used to identify the post hoc results between teacher's preferences toward OLPs. Based on this, the ANOVA between-subjects analysis results of language teacher's preferences toward OLPs showed no statistically significant correlation

between the dimensions; video streaming platforms and digital reading materials platforms ($F(12,181)=0.728$, $p=0.710$), video streaming platforms and mixed OLPs ($F(17,181)=0.814$, $p=0.663$), and the digital reading material platforms and mixed OLPs ($F(9,181)=0.721$, $p=0.685$). The findings indicate that there is no difference in any of the teacher trainees' preferences toward OLPs dimensions.

The study develops a connection between LTEP toward OLPs. Recent findings have shown that LTEP are often significantly correlated with one another. However, although there is a statistically significant correlation between teacher's experience and their preferences toward OLPs (except video streaming platforms and digital reading materials platforms), the post hoc results show that none of the language teacher's preference dimensions revealed a statistically significant correlation.

4. Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic is still causing stress in the world until its spread and recovery causes are not only controlled [19, 31, 66, 67], but also sustained [36, 38, 60]. In the context of Ethiopia's education system, the level of teacher engagement toward OLPs could be used to influence policy and counter the traditional face-to-face approach to teaching

TABLE 6: Tests of between-subjects effects.

Source	Type III sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	<i>F</i>	Significant
Corrected model	53.734 ^a	181	0.297	2.141	0.024
Intercept	986.614	1	986.614	7,115.737	0.001
Video streaming	4.879	14	0.349	2.514	0.029
Digital streaming	4.995	13	0.384	2.771	0.020
Mixed platforms	5.598	18	0.311	2.243	0.042
Video streaming × digital streaming	1.211	12	0.101	0.728	0.710
Video streaming × mixed platforms	1.918	17	0.113	0.814	0.663
Digital streaming × mixed platforms	0.899	9	0.100	0.721	0.685
Video streaming × digital streaming × mixed platforms	0.001	0			
Error	2.773	20	0.139		
Total	2,400.882	202			
Corrected total	56.507	201			

Note: ^a $R^2 = 0.951$ (adjusted $R^2 = 0.507$).

and learning. Furthermore, while the findings may not be generalizable, they do include features that teachers in other contexts may find useful. Regarding these results, the discussion will continue as follows.

The first question sought to ascertain the level of teacher engagement toward OLPs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings of the descriptive analysis, including mean and standard deviation scores, revealed that teachers encountered more difficulties with digital reading materials platforms than with video streaming platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Moodle, YouTube, Twitter, Zoom, Telegram, and Facebook, and mixed OLPs, while using OLPs. Not only this, a statistically significant correlation was shown between teacher engagement (even with each dimension), but there were no significant differences between the preferences indicated during the OLPs implementation in the Ethiopian context. This demonstrates that Ethiopian language teachers' preferences improved following the outbreak of COVID-19 in the 2020 academic calendar [55, 68]. The study's findings are consistent with previous research, which focused on teachers' preferences for OLPs before and after the COVID-19 pandemic [26, 35, 51, 61, 69]. According to Basheti et al. [9], even though they experienced a moderate level of difficulty (2.60–3.39), there may have been some difficulties experienced with the OLPs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first question's answer was consistent with previous research [1, 8, 33, 37, 48] that revealed language teachers' preferences toward OLPs by extending the theoretical online learning environments during the COVID-19 pandemic and creating the opportunity for them to become accountable for their learning experiences [54].

By contrast, the findings contradict previous research. According to Al Shammari [36, 37] and Barrot et al. [32], the teachers' experiences with OLPs were not positive. Furthermore, Paul and Jefferson [66] described teachers' experiences with OLPs as a challenging issue that requires technical solutions to enable reliability. Eldeeb [10] study also

concluded that teachers lacked experience during the E-learning process, which extends the social learning theory. In relation to previous studies, one possible interpretation of this study's findings is that the level of teacher engagement toward OLPs is a contentious issue among E-learning academics.

The study also confirmed the use of OLPs in the education sector to address challenges posed by COVID-19. According to Capacio et al. [20], the majority of teachers had a strong preference for technology-focused platforms. However, these findings contrasted with those of Basheti et al. [9] and Alsuhaibani [26], who found that teachers prefer face-to-face education. The study's findings suggest that, now that COVID-19 is considered a normal occurrence, the experience of language teachers gained during the pandemic period is beneficial for the development of OLPs in the Ethiopian educational sector. Furthermore, this study discovered that these experiences can help OLPs throughout the Ethiopian educational system.

The study results revealed a positive link between LTEP (except video streaming platforms and digital reading materials platforms) and OLPs during the contained COVID-19 pandemic among Ethiopian teachers. Furthermore, each of the OLPs (except video streaming platforms and digital reading materials platforms) were statistically significantly correlated with each other. This positive, significant correlation demonstrates that the OLPs dimensions have an impact on one another. According to Souheyla [39] and Sobaih et al. [34], teachers have a generally positive attitude toward OLPs, despite some limitations. Em [11] study also indicates that high school teachers and administrators faced challenges in navigating online learning due to a lack of technology materials (such as smartphones and computers) and money to recharge phone credits.

While OLPs are the most acceptable during the COVID-19 pandemic era, language teachers should master them as they will be used in their future careers and the literature must

continue to practice and experience them [56, 57]. Additionally, Basheti et al. [9] concluded that, while students preferred face-to-face learning over online learning, teachers believed that OLPs could be a less stressful approach for language-based instruction. Moreover, this study found that language teachers' preferences toward OLPs are not affected by one another. This suggests that many language teachers are uncertain of their experience and preferences toward OLPs, as described in previous studies.

In light of the limitations of this study, some directions for further research are proposed. Primarily, the study was limited to LTEP toward OLPs, and thus likely does not capture the entirety of teachers' instruction opportunities through OLPs, nor the students' outcomes linked with the teachers' experiences and preferences. Additional limitations should be acknowledged and taken into consideration, such as the representativeness of the sample and the generalizability of the results. Since the data were collected via questionnaire, self-selection sampling bias is present. Moreover, the sample may be imbalanced with reference to the ecological site of the study, as the participants were language teachers, likely resulting in a predominant professional and experienced bias among them. Hence, further studies should address this gap by including homogenous participants from both language teachers and students to provide clearer insight into the potential role OLPs can play in academic interaction. Additionally, the study should also explore the potential effects of OLPs on language teachers' long-term outcomes, such as their performance in language classes, their attitudes toward language learning, and their intercultural understanding.

5. Conclusion

As the study investigated Ethiopian LTEP toward OLPs during the COVID-19 pandemic, two research questions were developed and data were collected via a self-report questionnaire from language teachers who had enrolled in summer professional development courses. The results revealed a significant correlation between teachers' experience and their preferences but no statistically significant correlation between language teacher's preferences dimensions. This suggests that there is a need to use blended technology for successful online teaching and learning in the context of Ethiopian language teachers. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers incorporate OLPs into the curriculum and take advantage of their experience with the preferable online learning and teaching when it has a positive effect.

Further investigations into LTEP toward OLPs would be beneficial to future researchers. The findings of this study may also be useful to other developing countries experiencing issues with the use of OLPs in terms of LTEP. The study also suggests that language teachers be trained in the use of OLPs for the positive development of teacher's self-efficacy, optimism, and professional resiliency. Additionally, the study's findings encourage language teachers to seek opportunities to broaden their experience and preferences in order to incorporate additional activities that improve teacher's literacy of OLPs.

Appendix

Questionnaire on language teacher's experience and preference toward online learning platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic

Introduction

Greetings! We would like to invite you to participate in our survey on language teacher's experience and preference for online learning platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please answer the following survey questions truthfully based on your online learning platforms experience and preference.

The information we collect from this survey will be used for research purpose only, and any personality identifiable information will be removed from all publications and presentations. Your participation in the survey is voluntary.

Thank you for your participation!

Part one: Basic information

Instruction: Place use an "X" in the given alternative boxes provided to answer the following questions:

1	Your age	Below 5 year	11–15 years
2	Your teaching experience	5–10 years	Above 15 years
3	Current education rank	Diploma	Other
8	Your birth sex	Male	Female

Part two: Language teacher's online learning platforms experience and preference

Instruction: Please tick or place "X" mark on the representative number of your name level that you have chosen from 5 to 1. The levels of agreement represented by 5–1 indicated as follows:

5 = Strongly agree (Above 75%)	2 = Disagree (11%–25%)
4 = Agree (51%–75%)	1 = Strongly disagree (0%–10%)
3 = Undecided to agree (26%–50%)	

For example, in the following table, the levels of agreement are the responses of "disagreed" and "agree."

	5	4	3	2	1
Educational content and outcome measurement requirements					
1 During the COVID-19 pandemic, I use online learning platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Moodle, and so forth)					X
2 During the COVID-19 pandemic, I predetermine the dates of the week or month when I will take the exam			X		

Note. In the experience and preference, we ask you to put an “X” mark on the scale that you agree any of the alternatives is the correct answer.

Language teacher's online learning platforms experience Scale					
As a language teacher, during the COVID-19 pandemic,					
1	I try to schedule the time to study my teaching through online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
2	I share my online learning problems with my classmates to solve them	5	4	3	2 1
3	I performed well during the online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
4	Online learning platforms are new and no preparations to plan use properly	5	4	3	2 1
5	I solve myself to the problems faced during the online learning process	5	4	3	2 1
6	I able to arouse attention and to maintain interest if it is necessary in online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
7	I able to plan and organize the online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
8	I access to information available in the online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
9	During online learning platforms, it is hard to control the session and prevent with the face-to-face learning platform	5	4	3	2 1
10	Online learning platforms are quite different from face-to-face learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
11	My skill to use technology devices and online learning platforms is poor	5	4	3	2 1
12	I deliver the online learning platforms to help my friends	5	4	3	2 1
13	I develop my skills to use the online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
14	I able to respond my feedback during and after the online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
15	I solve and clarify the inconsistency during the online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
16	I develop poor self-efficacy on thought through online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
17	Using technology is pretty hard to separate usefulness of online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
18	I experienced well to adapt the new context of online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
19	I able to support my classmates faced during the online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
Language teacher's online learning platforms preference scale					
As a language teacher, during the COVID-19 pandemic,					
20	Online learning is very preferable to communicate with my colleagues	5	4	3	2 1
21	Online learning motivated to discuss with my friends and students	5	4	3	2 1
22	I felt motivated to explore my feelings with online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
23	I am satisfied with my performance at online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
24	I prefer online learning platforms to face-to-face learning mode	5	4	3	2 1
25	I think online learning platforms are very interesting during the COVID-19 pandemic	5	4	3	2 1
26	I am competent for the online learning platforms (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Moodle, YouTube, Twitter, Zoom, Telegram, Facebook, and so forth)	5	4	3	2 1
27	I enjoyed by the online learning platforms could be of some values to me	5	4	3	2 1
28	I felt very anxious when using online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1
29	During my online classrooms, I have high motivation to use online learning platforms, such as Microsoft Teams, Moodle, Zoom, YouTube, and so forth	5	4	3	2 1
30	I have high motivation to use online learning platforms, such as digital reading materials, such as PDF and Word versions	5	4	3	2 1
31	I prefer the one-to-one online learning platforms during my teaching and learning process	5	4	3	2 1
32	I prefer the collaborative learning strategy during online learning platforms	5	4	3	2 1

Thank you again for filling out the questionnaire carefully!

Data Availability

All data are available upon request from the editors and/or reviewers.

Ethical Approval

This article is unique, and the data reflect the actual information of language teachers who took part. It has not been published in any form or language, in part or in its entirety, anywhere else. The outcomes are presented clearly, truthfully, and without fabrication, falsification, or improper

data manipulation. There is no representation of information, text, or concepts by others as though they were the author's original work, with appropriate acknowledgment of others' works taken into account.

Consent

Before implementing the data collection process, the author declares that all participants were informed that they could voluntarily participate in the study and that the results would be used for educational research purposes.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflicts of interest.

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