

Evaluating Egypt's National E-Learning Initiatives: Lessons for Context-Sensitive Integration

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ABSTRACT

As technology becomes increasingly integrated into education globally, evaluating country-specific E-learning initiatives is important for understanding best practices and limitations in diverse contexts. This study evaluated Egypt's tablet-based digital education reforms and transition to online learning during COVID-19 using Johnson et al.'s (2008) framework emphasizing community readiness as a theoretical basis. 70 Egyptian students—of which 48 had undergone the 2019 reform program integrating tablets—completed a survey regarding their experience, demographics, and a shortened translated version of Chung et al. (2020)'s online readiness scale. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with four educational representatives, including a teacher. Findings indicated that although students reported advantages such as easier lesson delivery and strong technical and communication skills, implementation challenges significantly limited effectiveness. Students frequently cited weak infrastructure, low teacher digital literacy, and unstable testing interfaces as major concerns. While educational system type did not significantly affect online readiness, students from metropolitan Cairo demonstrated significantly higher readiness than students from rural Kafr el Sheikh, suggesting regional disparities in infrastructure and resources may shape digital preparedness. Moreover, students with higher online readiness reported deriving greater value from the supplementary online learning platform 'the Egyptian Knowledge Bank'. The findings highlight the importance of pilot testing educational technologies before large-scale implementation, improving teacher training, and addressing regional inequalities in preparedness. Future studies with larger samples should further investigate how contextual inequalities shape students' online readiness and experiences with educational technology initiatives. Overall, the study emphasizes that successful technology-enhanced education initiatives require context-sensitive, community-centered implementation strategies.

Keywords: digital inequality; distance learning; edtech policy; online readiness; national education reform