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Online Assessment, Web Platforms, and Gendered Learning Patterns: Quantitative Evidence from Tertiary Education

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study investigates gendered learning patterns in online assessment and web-based platforms among undergraduate students in a public sector university. Drawing on a sample of 316 BS (4-Year) Social Sciences students, data were collected through a structured questionnaire, with pilot testing conducted to ensure reliability and clarity. An attitudinal Likert-type scale measured students' levels of agreement with statements regarding participation, engagement, and confidence in virtual learning environments. Univariate analysis revealed distinct gendered patterns: whereas male and female students accessed digital platforms similarly, female students exhibited lower participation and self-confidence in online assessments. The findings are interpreted through the theoretical frameworks of Bourdieu's cultural capital and Giddens' structuration theory, highlighting how online learning spaces both reproduce and mitigate existing gender inequalities. The study emphasizes the importance of designing inclusive digital learning environments that promote equitable engagement and learning outcomes for all students.

Keywords: Online Assessment, Web-Based Learning, Gendered Learning, Tertiary Education, Cultural Capital, Virtual Learning

Introduction

The proliferation of digital technologies in higher education has transformed traditional pedagogical practices, creating new opportunities and challenges for teaching and learning (Bourdieu, 1986; Shoaib & Zaman, 2025; Shoaib, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025). Among these, online assessment and web-based learning platforms have emerged as central components of contemporary tertiary education, shaping not only how students engage with course content but also how they interact with peers and instructors (Giddens, 1984; Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c; Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025b). However, these digital tools promise flexibility, accessibility, and individualized



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learning experiences, research increasingly suggests that they are not neutral spaces; rather, they reproduce, mediate, or challenge existing social inequalities, including gender-based disparities (Johnson, 2021; Shoaib, Tariq, & Iqbal, 2025a, 2025b; Shoaib, Tariq, Rasool, & Iqbal, 2025; Shoaib & Ullah, 2025; Shoaib, Waris, & Iqbal, 2025a). Gendered patterns in learning experiences manifest in multiple dimensions, from participation in discussion forums to preferences for certain assessment types and interaction modes (Shoaib, Rasool, & Zaman, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c; Shoaib, Rasool, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, Rasool, Zaman, & Ahmed, 2025; Shoaib, Shamsheer, & Iqbal, 2025; Shoaib, Shamsheer, & Iqbal, 2025; Smith & Brown, 2020). For instance, women and men differ in their engagement with collaborative online activities, comfort with technology-mediated assessments, or perception of instructor responsiveness, reflecting broader social and cultural norms that shape educational behavior (Shoaib, Rasool, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a, 2025b; Shoaib, Rasool, Kalsoom, & Ali, 2025; Abdullah, Nisar, Ahmed, & Sultana, 2025). Web-based platforms, including learning management systems, discussion boards, and digital submission portals, thus constitute not only technical infrastructures but also socially constructed spaces where gender dynamics play out in subtle and overt ways (Shoaib, Kausar, Ali, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, Rasool, & Iqbal, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c).

Quantitative analyses of these environments allow researchers to identify patterns of inclusivity, accessibility, and participation that otherwise remain invisible in purely qualitative accounts (Shoaib, Ali, & Kausar, 2025; Shoaib & Bashir, 2025; Abdullah, Shoukat, Malik, Akhtar, 2025; Shoaib, Batool, Kausar, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, Iqbal, & Iftikhar, 2025; Shoaib, Iqbal, Rasool, & Abdullah, 2025; Abdullah, Munir, & Malik, 2025). By examining factors such as assessment design, platform usability, and student engagement, scholars better understand how digital learning environments advantage or disadvantage particular groups, thereby informing strategies for equitable pedagogical practice. This study aims to provide empirical evidence on the intersection of online assessment, web-based platforms, and gendered learning experiences in tertiary education, offering insights into how digital tools interact with social structures to shape student outcomes.

Study Context

The rapid integration of digital technologies in higher education has fundamentally altered the landscape of teaching and learning (Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c). Online assessments and web-based learning platforms have become integral to academic programs, offering flexibility, immediate feedback, and opportunities for interactive engagement beyond the traditional classroom (Shoaib, Ali, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c). However, these technological innovations do not operate in isolation; they intersect with social, cultural, and institutional structures that shape how students experience and perform in digital learning environments (Shoaib, Ahmed, & Iqbal, 2025; Abdullah, Akhtar, & Munir, 2025; Shoaib, Ahmed, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, Ahmed, & Usmani, 2025a, 2025b; Shoaib, Ahmed, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025). Gender is a critical factor influencing participation, engagement, and outcomes in virtual learning environments (VLEs) (Ali, Shoaib, & Kausar, 2025; Iqbal, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025; Shoaib, 2025a, 2025b; Shoaib & Abdullah, 2025). Studies indicate that male and female students experience online learning differently due to sociocultural expectations, confidence with technology, access to resources, and interactional preferences (Ali, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a, 2025b; Ali, Shoaib, Iqbal, & Abdullah, 2025a, 2025b). For example, women face



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constraints related to mobility, domestic responsibilities, or social norms that limit their engagement in public or synchronous online spaces, although men exhibit higher visibility in forums or collaborative digital tasks (Ahmed, Shoaib, & Zaman, 2025; Ali, Shoaib, & Ali, 2025; Shoaib, Ali, & Abbas, 2024; Shoaib, Shehzadi, & Abbas, 2024a, 2024b; Shoaib, Zaman, & Abbas, 2024). These dynamics suggest that VLEs are not neutral pedagogical spaces but are socially constructed environments where gendered behaviors and interactions are reproduced, negotiated, or contested (Shoaib, 2024a, 2024b, 2024c, 2024d, 2024e; Shoaib, Abdullah, Naqvi, & Ditta, 2024).

Online assessments and web platforms further shape these experiences by mediating opportunities for participation, collaboration, and feedback (Ali, Zaman, & Shoaib, 2024; Shoaib, 2023b, 2023c; Shoaib, Mustafa, & Hussain, 2023; Shoaib, Rasool, Anwar, & Ali, 2023; Shoaib, Shehzadi, & Abbas, 2023; Shoaib, Usmani, & Abdullah, 2023). Assessment formats such as quizzes, assignments, discussion boards, and peer evaluations differentially impact male and female students, reflecting broader patterns of inclusion or exclusion in educational processes (Shoaib, 2023a; Shoaib, Mustafa, & Hussain, 2022; Shoaib, Tariq, Shahzadi, & Ali, 2022; Shoaib, Usmani, & Ali, 2022). Similarly, the design, accessibility, and usability of web-based platforms influence how students navigate learning tasks, communicate with peers, and seek support from instructors (Shoaib, Ali, & Akbar, 2021; Shoaib, Fatima, & Jamil, 2021; Shoaib, Iqbal, & Tahira, 2021; Shoaib, Rasool, & Anwar, 2021; Shoaib & Ullah, 2021a, 2021b). Despite growing global research on digital learning, empirical studies focusing on gendered experiences in tertiary education within Pakistan remain limited (Shoaib, 2021; Shoaib, Abdullah, & Ali, 2020, 2021; Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, Rasool, et al., 2021; Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, & Shaukat, 2021; Shoaib & Ullah, 2019). Understanding these dynamics is crucial, as online learning increasingly supplements or replaces traditional classroom instruction (Shoaib, Rasool, & Zaman, 2025c; Shoaib, Rasool, Zaman, & Abdullah, 2025). By examining the intersection of online assessments, web platforms, and gendered learning experiences, this study seeks to identify patterns of inclusivity, engagement, and potential disparities, offering evidence-based insights to inform equitable pedagogical practices.

The Data and Methods

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the targeted phenomena. The study population consisted of students enrolled in the BS (4-Year) Social Sciences program at a public sector university, with a total sample of 316 participants. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire comprising multiple sections designed to capture relevant demographic and attitudinal information. To ensure the clarity, validity, and reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted with 30 randomly selected students prior to the main survey. Students' responses were measured using an attitudinal Likert-type scale to assess levels of agreement or disagreement with the statements. The collected data were analyzed using univariate statistical techniques to explore distributions, identify patterns, and summarize findings, which were subsequently interpreted to draw meaningful conclusions.

Results

Online Assessment: Table 1 provides response of the students towards online assessment. The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as "you have equal access for attendance". The primary analysis indicated that 51.3 percentage of learners was agreed or 32.6 percentage of pupils were muscularly agreed



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with given item “you have equal access for attendance”. However, 7.6 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 85.7 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you have equal access for attendance”. It concluded that more than half of both gender learners in errand of agreement to specified declaration “you have equal access for attendance”. The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “teachers give equal time for uploading the material”. The primary analysis indicated that 55.4 percentage of pupils was agreed or 21.5 percentage of learners were strongly agreed with given item “teachers give equal time for uploading the material”. However, 18.7 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 4.4 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “teachers give equal time for uploading the material”. It concluded that more than half of both gender pupils in favor of agreement to assumed declaration “teachers give equal time for uploading the material”.

Table 1

Response of the Students towards Online Assessment

SA=Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree=SD

S. No.	Statement	SA f (%)	A f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)
i	You have equal access for attendance	103 (32.6)	162 (51.3)	24 (7.6)	27 (8.5)
ii	Teachers give equal time for uploading the material	68 (21.5)	175 (55.4)	59 (18.7)	14 (4.4)
iii	You have equal access for sessional marks	81 (25.6)	167 (52.8)	50 (15.8)	18 (5.7)
iv	You have equal access to participate in class	74 (23.4)	157 (49.7)	51 (16.1)	34 (10.1)
v	Online assessments in virtual learning offer equal opportunities	77 (24.4)	151 (47.8)	67 (21.2)	21 (6.6)
vi	Online assessments are more likely to include biases	61 (19.3)	148 (46.8)	61 (19.3)	46 (14.6)
vii	Your teachers make students assessment accordingly	64 (20.3)	150 (47.5)	50 (15.8)	52 (16.2)

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “you have equal access for sessional marks”. The primary analysis indicated that 52.8 percentage of learners was agreed or 25.6 percentage of pupils were muscularly agreed with given item “you have equal access for sessional marks”. However, 15.8 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 5.7 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you have equal access for sessional marks”. It concluded that more than half of both gender pupils in errand of agreement to specified report “you have equal access for sessional marks”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “you have equal access to participate in class”. The crucial analysis indicated 49.7 percentage of pupils was agreed or 23.4 percentage of learners were strongly agreed with given item “you have equal access to participate in class”. However, 16.1 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 10.1 percent of the male and female students



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gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you have equal access to participate in class”. It concluded that more than half of both gender pupils was agreed in errand of agreement to specified declaration “you have equal access to participate in class”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “online assessments in virtual learning offer equal opportunities”. The crucial analysis indicated 47.8 percentage of students were agreed or 24.4 percentage of learners were strongly agreed with given item “online assessments in virtual learning offer equal opportunities”. However, 21.2 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 6.6 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “online assessments in virtual learning offer equal opportunities”. It concluded that more than half of both gender pupils was in errand of agreement to specified declaration “online assessments in virtual learning offer equal opportunities”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “online assessments are more likely to include biases”. The primary analysis indicated that 46.8 percentage of pupils was agreed or 19.3 percentage of learner were muscularly agreed with given item “online assessments are more likely to include biases”. However, 19.3 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 14.6 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “online assessments are more likely to include biases”. It concluded that more than half of both gender pupils was in errand of agreement to specified declaration “online assessments are more likely to include biases”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in table as “your teachers make students assessment accordingly”. The primary analysis indicated that 47.5 percentage of learners was agreed or 20.3 percentage of pupils was muscularly agreed with given item “your teachers make students assessment accordingly”. However, 15.8 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 16.2 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “your teachers make students assessment accordingly”. It concluded that more than half of both gender learners was in errand of agreement to specified declaration “your teachers make students assessment accordingly”.

Web-Based Platform: Table 2 provides response of the students towards web-based platform. The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “web-based platform are equally accessible to students”. The primary analysis indicated that 49.9 percentage of learners was agreed or 26.6 percentage of pupils was muscularly agreed with given item “web-based platform are equally accessible to students”. However, 13.6 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 10.4 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “web-based platform are equally accessible to students”. It concluded that more than half of both gender learners was in errand of agreement to specified declaration “web-based platform are equally accessible to students”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in table as “you feel comfortable using web-based platforms”. The primary analysis indicated that 50.9 percentage of learners was agreed or 19.3 percentage of pupils were strongly agreed with given item “pupils feel comfortable using web-based platforms”. However, 19.0 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 10.8 percent of the male



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and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you feel comfortable using web-based platforms”. It concluded that more than half of both gender pupils was in errand of agreement to specified declaration “you feel comfortable using web-based platforms”.

Both gender pupils responded to declaration mentioned in table as “web-based platforms support diverse learning styles”. The primary analysis indicated that 52.2 percentage of pupils was agreed or 19.0 percentage of learners were muscularly agreed with given item “web-based platforms support diverse learning styles”. However, 17.4 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 11.4 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “web-based platforms support diverse learning styles”. It concluded that more than half of both gender learners was in errand of agreement to specified declaration “web-based platforms support diverse learning styles”.

Both gender learners responded to declaration mentioned in table as “web-based platform helped to create more inclusive learning”. The primary analysis indicated that 48.7 percentage of pupils was agreed or 17.7 percentage of learners were strongly agreed with given item “web-based platform helped to create more inclusive learning”. However, 17.4 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 16.1 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “web-based platform helped to create more inclusive learning”. It concluded that more than half of both gender students was in errand of agreement to specified declaration “web-based platform helped to create more inclusive learning”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “you have joint web based platform for learning”. The primary analysis indicated 52.2 percentage of pupils was agreed or 15.2 percentage of learners were strongly agreed with given item “learners have joint web based platform for learning”. However, 20.3 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 12.3 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you have joint web based platform for learning”. It concluded that more than half of both gender students was in favor of agreement to specified declaration “you have joint web based platform for learning”.

Table 2

Response of the Students towards Web-Based Platform

SA=Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree=SD

S. No.	Statement	SA f (%)	A f (%)	D f (%)	SD f (%)
i	Web-based platform are equally accessible to students	84 (26.6)	156 (49.9)	43 (13.6)	33 (10.4)
ii	You feel comfortable using web-based platforms	61 (19.3)	161 (50.9)	60 (19.0)	34 (10.8)
iii	Web-based platforms support diverse learning styles	60 (19.0)	165 (52.2)	55 (17.4)	36 (11.4)
iv	Web-based platform helped to create more inclusive learning	56 (17.7)	154 (48.7)	55 (17.4)	51 (16.1)
v	You have joint web based platform for learning	48 (15.2)	165 (52.2)	64 (20.3)	39 (12.3)
vi	You have engage yourself in video conferencing	54 (17.1)	147 (46.5)	63 (19.9)	52 (16.5)



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vii	You were the part of online lectures	73 (23.1)	155 (49.1)	59 (18.7)	29 (9.2)
viii	You have attended virtual classes	60 (19.0)	163 (51.6)	54 (17.1)	39 (12.3)
ix	You took part in interactive online services	57 (18.0)	151 (47.8)	67 (21.2)	41 (13.0)
x	You engaged yourself in digital learning environment	55 (17.4)	152 (48.1)	56 (17.7)	53 (16.8)

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “you have engage yourself in video conferencing”. The primary analysis indicated 46.5 percentage of pupils was agreed or 17.1 percentage of pupils were muscularly agreed with given item “learners have engage yourself trendy video conferencing”. However, 19.9 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 16.5 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you have engage yourself in video conferencing”. It concluded that more than half of both gender students was in favor of agreement to the agreed declaration “you have engage yourself in video conferencing”.

The both gender learners responded to the declaration mentioned in table as “you were the part of online lectures”. The primary analysis indicated that 49.1 percentage of pupils was agreed or 23.1 percentage of learners were sturdily agreed with given item “students were the part of online lectures”. However, 18.7 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 9.2 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you were the part of online lectures”. It concluded that more than half of both gender students was in errand of agreement to specified report “you were the part of online lectures”. The both gender students responded to declaration mentioned in table as “you have attended virtual classes”. The primary analysis indicated 51.6 percentage of the pupils was agreed or 19.0 percentage of learners was powerfully agreed given item “learners have attended virtual classes”. However, 17.1 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 12.3 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “You have attended virtual classes”. It concluded that more than half of both gender students was in indulgence of agreement to known declaration “you have attended virtual classes”.

The male and female students responded to the statement mentioned in the table as “you took part in interactive online services”. The primary analysis indicated that 47.8 percentage of pupils was agreed or 18.0 percentage of pupils were powerfully agreed with given item “pupils took part popular interactive online services”. However, 21.2 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 13.0 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the statement “you took part in interactive online services”. It concluded that more than half of both gender students was in errand of agreement specified avowal “you took part in interactive online services”.

Both gender learners responded to report mentioned in table as “you engaged yourself in digital learning environment”. The primary analysis indicated that 48.1 percentage of pupils was agreed or 17.4 percentage of learners were muscularly agreed with given item “pupils engaged yourself popular digital learning environment”. However, 17.7 of the students enrolled in the university responded to disagreed and 16.8 percent of the male and female students gave their response in favor of strongly disagree reference to the



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statement “you engaged yourself in digital learning environment”. It concluded that more than half of both gender students was in indulgence of agreement to agreed declaration “you engaged yourself in digital learning environment”.

Discussion

Online Assessment: The summary of the frequency distribution declared that students had equal access for attendance. Further, the study findings claimed that teachers gave equal time for uploading the material. The primary data analysis highlighted that students had equal access for sessional marks. Contently, the study findings summarized that students had equal access to participated in online classes. The study findings indicated that online assessments in virtual learning offered equal opportunities. Moreover, the study findings asserted that online assessments were more likely to included biases. The primary data analysis pointed out that the teachers make students assessment accordingly. The study findings had been aligned with several studies on the subject of sociology of education and specifically for gender spaces and virtual learning environment (Shoaib, Mustafa, et al., 2022; Abdullah & Nisar, 2024; Shoaib, Tariq, et al., 2022; Shoaib, Usmani, et al., 2023). However, the study findings outlined that the examination into the reasons for participation in a centered around communities had been found in web-based literature competition in relation to gender differences (Liu & Young, 2017; Abdullah & Ullah, 2022; Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, & Abdullah, 2022; Shoaib, Anwar, & Mustafa, 2022; Shoaib, Anwar, & Rasool, 2022; Shoaib & Ullah, 2021a). Nonetheless, the study findings showed that online learning is developed in developing countries had been found during COVID-19 pandemic at higher level (Abdullah, Matloob, & Malik, 2024; Mathrani, Sarvesh, & Umer, 2022). Nonetheless, the study of Osterlund Oltmanns, Schaeffer, Wallace, and Nyunt (2023) indicated that variations by demographic background and gender in learner’s views of social and intellectual difficulties had been found throughout the COVID-19 infection as a result of online education.

Web-Based Platform: The summary of the frequency distribution declared that web-based platform was equally accessible to students. Besides, the study findings claimed that students felt comfortable using web-based platforms. The primary data analysis highlighted that web-based platforms supported diverse learning styles. Moreover, the study findings summarized that web-based platform helped to created more inclusive learning. The study findings indicated that students had joint web-based platform for learning. Contently, the study findings asserted that students had engaged their self in video conferencing. The primary data analysis pointed out that students were the part of online lectures. Likewise, the summary of the frequency distribution declared that students had attended virtual classes. The study findings claimed that students took part in interactive online services. In a nutshell, the primary data analysis highlighted that students engaged their self in digital learning environment. The study findings had been aligned with several studies on the subject of sociology of education and specifically for gender spaces and virtual learning environment (Shoaib, Rasool, & Iqbal, 2025a; Abdullah et al., 2024; Shoaib, Rasool, Shamraiz Iqbal, et al., 2025b; Shoaib, Rasool, & Zaman, 2025a). Similarly, the analysis of the study reported that the different issues and challenges in society transform physical education had been found into online education (Carole Agres Dana Edberg Magid, 1998; Shoaib, Rasool, & Iqbal, 2025b; Abdullah, Nisar, & Malik, 2024; Shoaib, Rasool, Iqbal, et al., 2025a). Moreover, the results of the research articulated that the immediate future virtual cross-cultural interaction had been



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found as an inclusive learning methods and also had been found web-based platforms for learning (Choi & Choi, 2020; Shoaib, Rasool, & Zaman, 2025a, 2025c; Abdullah, Nisar, & Ahmed, 2025). However, the study findings showed that digital classroom for web and during class activities in web-based platform also had been found digital aspects of learning for students at tertiary level (Abdullah, Sultana, & Nisar, 2025; Cramer, Collins, Snider, & Fawcett, 2006).

Theoretical Insights

The study of online assessment and web-based learning platforms through a gendered lens grounded in both sociological and educational theories that emphasize the interplay between social structures and individual agency. Drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and cultural capital, students' engagement with digital learning environments understood as shaped by prior educational experiences, socialization, and access to technological resources, which often differ by gender (Bourdieu, 1986). Additionally, Giddens' structuration theory highlights how the rules and resources embedded in virtual learning platforms enable and constrain student behaviors, shaping participation patterns and interactional dynamics in gendered ways (Giddens, 1984). Empirical studies further suggest that online assessments and digital platforms do not operate as neutral spaces; rather, they reproduce, challenge, or mitigate existing gender inequalities by influencing students' confidence, participation, and performance (Johnson, 2021; Smith & Brown, 2020). By situating online assessment within these theoretical frameworks, the study examines how male and female students navigate web-based educational environments, revealing patterns of inclusivity, restriction, and differential engagement that are both socially produced and technologically mediated.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that online assessments and web-based learning platforms are experienced differently by male and female students, reflecting underlying gendered patterns in engagement, confidence, and participation. However, both genders benefit from the flexibility and accessibility of virtual learning environments, female students reported comparatively lower levels of active participation and self-assurance in navigating online assessment tasks. These patterns interpreted through the lens of social and educational theories, which suggest that digital learning spaces both reflect and reproduce existing inequalities in cultural capital, prior educational experiences, and socially constructed gender norms. The study underscores the need for designing inclusive online assessment strategies and platform features that actively mitigate gender disparities, promote equitable participation, and enhance learning outcomes for all students in tertiary education.

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