THE MILIEU OF ENGLISH LEARNING IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED ZONES: AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON YEMENI UNDERGRADUATE LEARNERS

[1]**Dr. Iftikhar Yusuf Abdulmoghni Saeed Al-Ariqi,**
Postdoctoral Researcher, National Science Museum of Yemen, Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research, Yemen
Ph.D, Department of P.G Studies & Research in English, Kuvempu University, India
E-mail: dr.iftikhar2019@gmail.com

[2]**Prof. Rama Prasad B.V,**
Department of PG Studies & Research in English,
Kuvempu University, Shankaraghatta-577451,Shimoga Dist., Karnataka, INDIA, E-mail:
rama.prasad.u@gmail.com

[3]**Dr. Mir Mohsin,**
Ph.D in Management from the Institute of Management Studies and Research, Kuvempu University, India
E-mail: mirmohsin78@gmail.com

Abstract: This study attempts to analyze the context of English learning process in the conflict zone, Yemen, by investigating the challenges encountered by undergraduate English students. It tries to examine their safety needs at university throughout the whole four-year program. It also seeks to scrutinize their psychological barriers and technical problems they may face during their study at university. Finally, it explores the socio-economic obstacles they confront due to war. Based on judgmental sampling technique, 300 participants were selected to respond to a five-likert survey comprising 24 questions followed by a structured-interview with part of the sample selected randomly. Findings on the basis of descriptive statistics reveal that majority of the Yemeni undergraduate English learners fall under a high level of agreement as far as the challenges in the conflict zone are concerned. Results confirm many difficulties faced by the Yemeni EFL learners in their conflict regions such as; risky routes to university, damaged or occupied blocks by armed people, absence of most of the professors, demotivation, anxiety, dissatisfaction with education quality, ambiguity of future career, shortage of gas, food, pure water, electricity and internet connection. Findings also indicate other challenges like the slow-go and complication of regulations' processes, favoritism in recruiting people, controversial curriculum, outdated or inappropriate syllabi to labor market, community's vision about peace, clashes among students on political issues, unaffordability of books, fees and transportation fares. Recommendations suggest that genuine efforts should be made to reach out to young Yemeni learners by identifying their requirements for security and beginning an immediate negotiation and collaboration among all disputed parties and stakeholders to overcome their psychological, technical & socio-economic intricacies.

Key Words: Challenges, undergraduate learners, conflict-affected zone

1. INTRODUCTION:

Despite that the international community agrees on the importance of education as an important tool for the emotional, physical and social stability of its members, education falls victim to the humanitarian crises across the globe. Due to instability and political unrest in conflict areas, accessing education becomes a dream for local young people residing in such places. It is agreed that war prevents students from their simplest right of pursuing education. It foils governments from functioning, teachers and students often flee their homes, and continuity of learning is greatly disrupted (UNICEF, 2021). Conflicts cause damage of schools, absence of teachers and students, delays in or even cancellation of the opening of the academic year. In the case of Yemen, Arab country located at the southwest of Middle East, war has killed tens of thousands, forced 4 million to flee and pushed the country to the rim of famine (Xinhua, 2022). In worst cases, students have to drop out of school and migrate to escape ongoing conflicts. Some of the students in such areas have become internally displaced, refugees or even fighters. For these harsh conditions, the schools and universities remain tremendously far-fetched. Education in conflict-affected areas has always been given a very low priority in humanitarian aid by organizations. Yemen, as a conflict-ridden area since 2015, has sunken into an unmerciful war which creates not only different security problems for Yemeni learners to carry on their regular formal learning, but also a number of economic and socio-cultural barriers as a result of instability in the area. Yemen's status before war as a "failed State" has merged with war to create critical lasting challenges (Cordesman, 2017).Yemen has been facing widespread corruption, diminishing resources, very high unemployment, poverty, political partitions, and recurrent conflict even before war (Kendall, 2020). During war, Yemeni people have found themselves in a fragmented country with a distorted economy, its social unity torn apart and narrow paths forward – often to the theatre of war and distress (Al-Jeddawy, 2022). War has been currently taking a huge psychological and material trauma on Yemeni young students as their schools and universities are being deliberately under attack (Qasem, 2017). The country is in keen need to sustain peace and face Yemen's economic and progress challenges which is possible only through education, research, and effective mobilization of human and natural resources in the country (Zakham, Vapalahti, Lashuel, 2020).This study is an attempt to explore the context of English learning at universities. It tries to investigate the challenges faced by undergraduate students to carry on their education in conflict zones. It seeks to understand the effect of civil conflict on the progress of higher education to suggest an immediate remedy to the adequate design of policies geared towards those individuals who have been affected by violence and faced by many obstacles. The possible significance of this study is threefold. First, the study will endeavor to reveal the setting of higher education in the English departments in the conflict zone, Yemen. Second, the study will disclose the intricacies that are involved in augmenting performance of learners in conflict zones and suggest some points to be followed in order to upgrade the current higher education system. Third, the study will provide recommendations to government, disputed parties and even international community for rescuing the future of young people.

2. RELATED WORK:

The number of scientific studies performed on the topic of education in (post-)conflict is low. Many of the completed studies on education in (post-)conflict were done by order of international development organizations and networks. Since the Yemeni conflict has worsened and kept going on, very few studies are found to reflect on the issue. Most of the references focus on articles, news or organizations' reports on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Very less attention is paid to education status especially higher education in the meanwhile of war. Lashuel (2020) comments that top priority is given to life basics such as; water, food, health care, and very less efforts are exerted to rescue what is remained in education sector as it is the only way to rescue the country from division and repeated conflicts. He adds that war has not only ruined the emerging research infrastructure, but also the establishment of higher education and research in Yemen (Zakham et al, 2020). Due to war, what had been taken decades to establish was diminished in a few years. Hanna et al (2021) explore the post-conflict recovery and find that war has continued to demolish the country and the conflict's death toll has already grown 60% since 2019. Even organizations' funds have not helped enough to rescue Yemen from famine, diseases and illiteracy. Al-Ashwal (2020) investigates the probable reasons and finds five factors caused they delay in the implementation of funds project in Yemen. He argues that government, designer, contractor, donors and consultant, all have a direct relationship with the delay. Higher education was, and still is, the least backing project under all the governments that have ruled Yemen until today. Even international community might provide basic education and some humanitarian aid in the region on the purpose of providing temporary and suggestive relief rather than tackling the causes of lagging behind and education in the country. Learning at universities, educational institutions have been delivered intermittently. Lashuel (2020) states that abandon of institutions of higher learning has not only negatively impacted economic growth in Yemen, but also weakened and destabilized the entire educational system and the nation's willingness to meet future challenges. Since 2015 and on, the political, security and educational situation in Yemen has been deteriorating. For instance, some university buildings were bombed, and others were turned into military barracks. Payment to civil servants, including teachers and professors has been postponed for years and water and electricity supplies became irregular. Money transfers from international organizations into Yemen became increasingly complicated (El-jaleel, 2019). At the level of higher education, research life has been completely paralyzed in Yemen for different reasons; the complete termination of funding, the emigration or death of many researchers, damage to the facilities of more than 43 government scientific centers affiliated with Yemeni universities, according to Yemen's Ministry of Higher Education (Sarih, 2018). In addition to the difficulty of communicating with overseas research centers or collaborating with other researchers due to the obstruction imposed on the country and the complexity of communication and transfer of funds (Sarih, 2018). The conflict led to the breakage of the economy into two broad economic regions under territories controlled by the two governments and deprecation of local currency led to more poverty and more protesting (Global Conflict Tracker, 2022). Essential resources are usually diverted to military purposes rather than education and medicine. Qasem (2017) argues that all the previous reasons make Yemeni people especially young men to feel desperate that they have no other option rather than waiting for death either by famine, diseases or joining any fighting group. Comparing with similar conflict-affected areas, a recent case study in Libya, Essadi (2021) argues that conflict results in low rate of attendance, kidnapping, anxiety, immigration and violence, which all have negatively influenced the processes of education (Essadi, 2021). Muthanna et al (2022) explore the

experiences of school teachers and leaders regarding the war's impacts on education in Yemen and find out that war results in the destruction of learners' physical and mental health, use of children as fighters and exploitation of education for financial benefits. According to UNESCO, the first two years of Syria's civil war ended all the educational forward movement of the country since the beginning of the century. It is also noted that students in Syria might become a lost generation. In addition, UNESCO refers to violent conflict as one of the greatest development challenges facing the international community as it is a source of poverty, inequality and economic inactivity. Education systems and learners are often on the front line of violent conflict (2011).

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The main aim of this study is to explore the context of English learning and the challenges faced by undergraduate students in the conflict-affected country, Yemen. To assess this aim, four objectives are set.

1. To investigate the safety needs of undergraduate students in conflict zones.
2. To scrutinize the psychological barriers faced by undergraduate students in conflict zones.
3. To explore the technical problems confronted by undergraduate students in conflict zones.
4. To examine the socio-economic obstacles encountered by undergraduate students in conflict zones.

4. METHODOLOGY:

4.1 PARTICIPANTS:

The current study is a mixed-method one that utilized quantitative-qualitative approach. The population of this study is the students of the English departments in three different colleges (1800 students) at University of Sana'a, Sana'a City, Yemen. The sample consists of 300 Yemeni learners who are selected on the basis of judgmental sampling with criteria based on three parameters (relevant to the objectives of the current study; that include educational level (Undergraduates), age (19-23) and educational specialization (English Language). The first tool to collect data is a structured-questionnaire administered to the sample followed by an item analysis using 5-point likert scale continuum. The second tool is a structured- interview conducted to 10 respondents randomly selected from the sample so that in-depth information can be collected.

4.2 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS:

4.2.1 SURVEY DEVELOPMENT:

The study implements a quantitative-qualitative method. Data was collected using a Likert scale questionnaire and close-ended questions. A structured questionnaire composed of (24) questions was developed and administered to the respondents using google forms. The questionnaire is emailed to the students' group at one time. Subsequently, the data was collected, and then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and thematic analysis.

4.2.2 RELIABILITY & VALIDITY OF THE SURVEY :

To check reliability and validity of the items used in questionnaire analyzed on a five point scale continuum, a pilot study was carried out beforehand on 37 students selected from the same sample. A reliability test was conducted in order to ensure the reliability and internal consistency of the scale. The initial Cronbach alpha value was found to be 0.77 for 31 items. Three items were removed based on a formidable variation in standard deviation. Finally, 24 items were

considered for analysis for which the revised Cronbach alpha was computed as 0.82. Second, the tool was refined depending on the results of the item analysis done. Third, the statements were reviewed by some linguists and specialists to make sure they are all related to the area of the study and each one independently focuses on what it claims to measure. Since reliability is a necessary condition of validity and based on the result of piloting the tool, the reliability and measurement of the internal consistency of the test items showed that it was reliable as Cronbach alpha was computed as 0.82. Finally, the validators' comments were taken into account while finalizing the tool for administration.

4.2.3   STRUCTURED INTERVIEW:

To enhance validity and create a more in-depth picture and understanding of the paper problem, data triangulation method was used. A number of "ten" students from the sample were selected for interview. Every third name out of ten in the students' attendance list was ticked. A call was made to each student which lasted for around 20 minutes. The sample was given four questions related to the objectives of the study to be discussed in a way of conversation. It was basically an exchange between the one interviewer and one respondent. This method was selected to collect data by a part of the sample after responding to the questionnaire in order to collect information-rich data and to explore the underlying predispositions, needs, desires, feelings, and emotions of the respondents toward their experience with learning at university at a conflict area. Notes and recordings were taken after taking the participants' permission for further review for the sake of research. Ten participants were asked directly and indirectly questions in order to make them continually motivated to take an active role in discussions.

5 . ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION OF DATA:

In order to analyze the environment of English language learning at university level and assess the challenges encountered by the undergraduate learners in the conflict zone, Yemen, a survey consisting of 24 items is developed and divided into four categories. Under each category, there is a number of statements. Alongside each statement, five alternative responses namely, strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree and strongly agree are scored 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. Frequency distribution (F) and percentage (%) are the statistical tools to analyze the options (5-1) from SD to SA. The four subscales with the statements are set in the following tables:

1. **The First Objective:** to investigate the safety needs of undergraduate students in conflict zones.

No.	Statements		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	Table (1): The Level of Safety Needs of Undergraduate Students in Conflict Zones based on Frequency Distribution & Percentage						
1	In university, violence can happen anytime such as encounter/clash/airstrike/stone pelting.	F	79	19	45	97	60
		%	26	6	15	32	20
2	Our professors do not attend as they are chased, besieged or unpaid.	F	83	30	2	103	82
		%	28	10	1	34	27
3	University is not always safe as some of its	F	77	29	39	83	72

#	Item		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
	blocks have been used for military purposes.	%	26	10	13	28	24
4	The journey from my home to university is risky.	F	85	23	23	49	120
		%	28	8	8	16	40
5	I feel scared to watch army or armed people on my way to university.	F	86	43	22	80	69
		%	29	14	7	27	23
6	If I go outside home, I might get arrested due to my posts on social media against the government.	F	82	26	36	86	70
		%	27	9	12	29	23
Overall Agreement on Safety Needs		F	72	3	69	24	**132**
		%	24	1	23	8	**44**

Table (1) displays that 72 (24%), 3 (1%), 69 (23%), 24 (8%) & 132 (44%) of the Yemeni undergraduate students strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree respectively. The highest value 132 (44%) indicates that majority of the undergraduate students agree with most of the safety needs stated above. The lowest value 3 (1%) shows that there is few to no students disagree with the items. Interpreting the highest value aside each statement in the table, the statistical data shows that 157 (52%) who agree and strongly agree think that university is not a safe place as any aspect of violence can occur at any moment (item1); in addition to that, 185 (61%) agree that their professors might get imprisoned, unpaid or pursued (item 2). 155 (52%) have the same opinion that some of the university blocks are used for military purposes ((item3). When 169 (56%) agree on the risk route from their homes to university (item 4), 86 (29%) of them disagree with the statement that they feel fearful if it happens to see armed people on their way to university (item 5). 156 (52%) agree that there is a possibility to get arrested at any time because of their criticism against the government on social media (item 6).

In order to compute the overall level of safety needs of the undergraduate students, a three point scale continuum is developed based on quartile deviation; table (2) reveals **75 (25%), 105 (35%) & 120 (40)** of the students fall in first, second, third quartiles, that is **high, moderate, low respectively as shown in table (2).**

Table (2):The Level of Safety Needs of Undergraduate Students in Conflict Zones based on Quartile Deviation				
Overall Agreement of Safety Needs based on Quartile Deviation		**Low**	**Medium**	**High**
	F	75	105	120
	%	25	35	40

On the basis of descriptive statistics and the three point scale continuum, it can be concluded that the overall level of safety needs of the Yemeni undergraduate students is high, 120 (43%) as illustrated in figures(1 & 2).

Figure 1: Overall Agreement on Safety Needs of Undergraduate Students In Conflict Zones based on Frequency Distribution & Percentage

Figure21: Overall Agreement on Safety Needs of Undergraduate Students In Conflict Zones based on Quartile Deviation
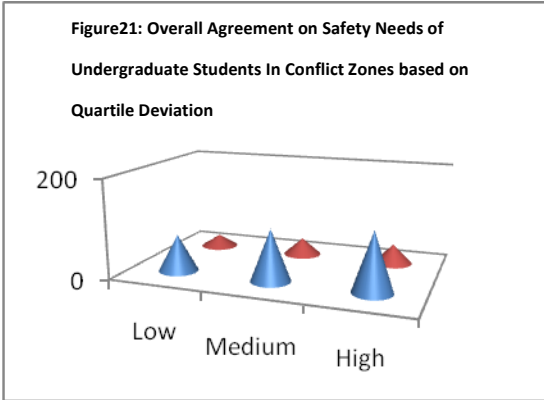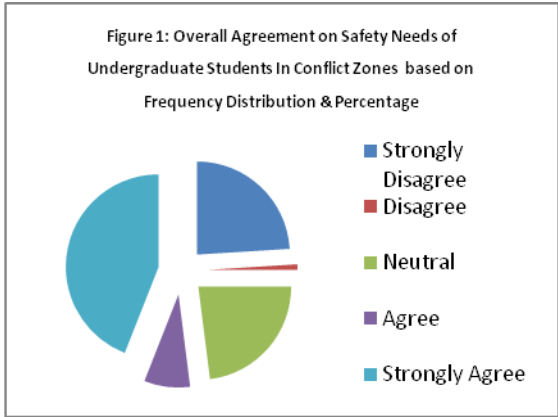
2. **The Second Objective:** to investigate the psychological barriers faced by the undergraduate students in conflict zones.

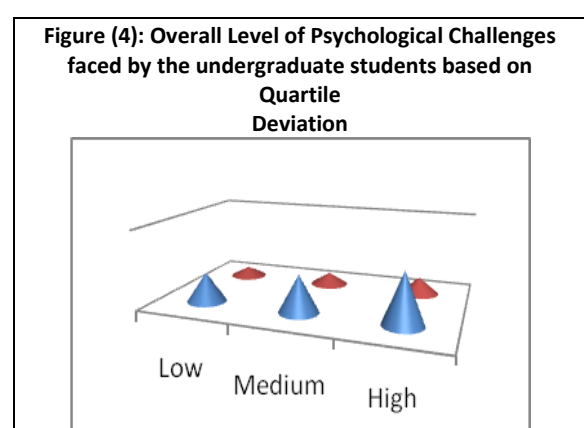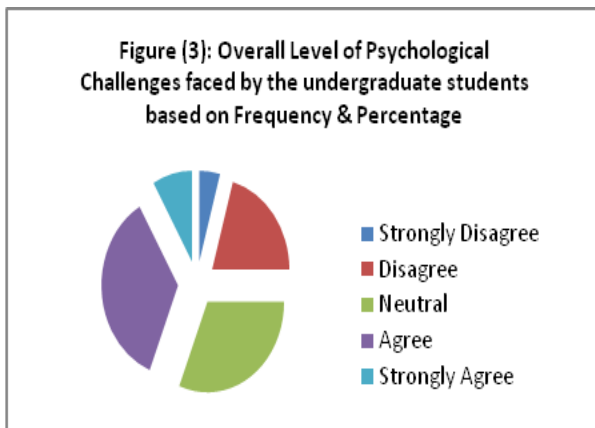| S.No	Statements		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Table (3): The Level of Psychological Barriers Faced by the Undergraduate Students in Conflict Zones							
7	Our professors do not attend to deliver classes so why I should go to university.	F	54	38	110	80	18
		%	18	13	37	27	6
8	I come to university not to attend classes but to discuss with my classmates the current condition of the country.	F	58	67	98	67	10
		%	19	22	33	22	3
9	I feel continuously frustrated and tense because of the instability in the area.	F	62	31	51	119	37
		%	21	10	17	40	12
10	I waste my time to come daily to University as I think quality of education is not up to the mark.	F	53	51	65	106	25
		%	18	17	22	35	8
11	I feel oppressed that nobody around the whole world listens to us or gives a hand.	F	23	43	66	121	47
		%	8	14	22	40	16
12	I don't know how to study at home because I've not learnt anything in college/university.	F	13	48	57	131	51
		%	4	16	19	44	17
	Overall Level of Psychological Barriers	F	13	62	93	**107**	25
		%	4	21	31	**36**	8

Table (3) shows that 13 (4%), 62 (21%), 93 (31%), 107 (36%), 25 (8%) of the undergraduate students strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree respectively. The highest value 107 (36%) of the students indicates that majority of the students in conflict

zones agree that there are psychological barriers they face while the lowest value 13 (4%) indicates that very few of them are not on the board with the psychological challenges aforementioned. Going through the highest value aside each statement in the table, the statistical data shows that 110 (37%) are not sure if the absence of the professors have any connection with their reason to attend university or not (statement 7); and 98 (33%) of them are undecided if their reason to go to university is for studying or meeting their classmates in order to discuss the issues related to the current condition (statement8). On the other hand, 156 (52%) of them confirm their anxiety and frustration due to the instability in the country (item 9). 106 (35%) feel that coming to university is only a waste of time as the quality of education is not so good. 168 (56%) of the students express their feeling of being oppressed due to the world's unsupportive attitude. In addition, 182 (61%) agree on their inability to study since they have not learnt anything at university.

In order to compute the overall level of psychological challenges faced by the undergraduate students, a three point scale continuum is developed based on quartile deviation (the absolute measure of dispersion) as shown in table (4) which shows that **75 (25%), 95 (32%) & 130 (43)** of the students fall in first, second, third quartiles, that is **high, moderate, low respectively.**

Table (4): The Overall level of psychological challenges faced by the undergraduate students based on quartile deviation		Low	Medium	High
Overall Level of Agreement on Psychological Challenges	F	75	95	**130**
	%	25	32	**43**

On the basis of descriptive statistics and the three point scale continuum, it can be concluded that the overall level of psychological difficulties among majority of undergraduate students is high, 130 (43%) as illustrated in figure (3&4).
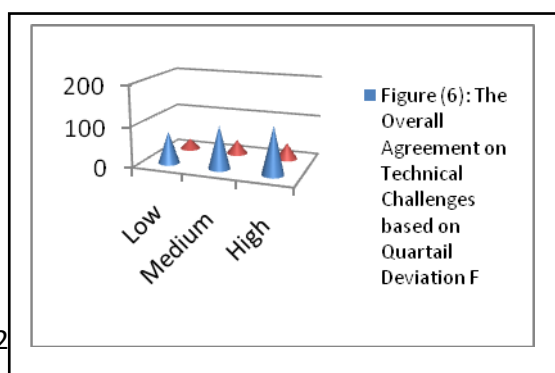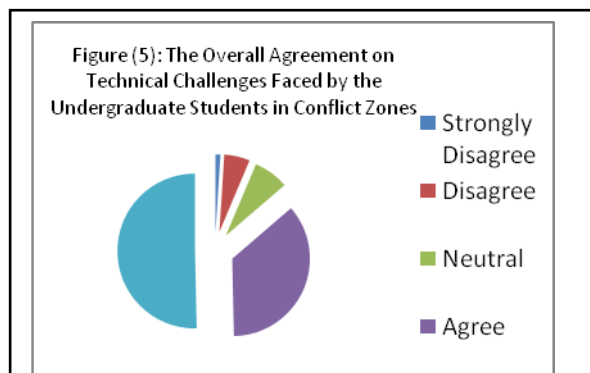

Figure (3): Overall Level of Psychological Challenges faced by the undergraduate students based on Frequency & Percentage

■ Strongly Disagree
■ Disagree
■ Neutral
■ Agree
■ Strongly Agree

Figure (4): Overall Level of Psychological Challenges faced by the undergraduate students based on Quartile Deviation

Low   Medium   High

5. **The Third Objective:** to explore the technical problems confronted by undergraduate students in conflict zones.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Statement		SD	D	N	A	SA
13. There is no power/internet access in English and computer labs.	F	3	16	36	36	209
	%	1	5	12	12	70
14. Most of the administrative jobs have been distributed to those who are loyal to the new government (favoritism)	F	3	16	38	41	202
	%	1	5	13	14	67
15. All types of processes go very slowly due to the jumbled situation.	F	3	17	43	99	138
	%	1	6	14	33	46
16. Rules have become more complicated under the new administration and new government.	F	62	43	83	66	46
	%	21	14	28	22	15
Overall Agreement on Technical Challenges	F	3	16	22	108	151
	%	1	5	7	36	50

Table (5) illustrates that 3 (1%), 16 (5%), 22 (7%), 108 (36%), 151 (50%) of the undergraduate students strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree respectively. The highest value 151 (50%) and 108 (36%) of the students indicates that majority of the students in conflict zones agree that they confront with technical problems during their learning while the lowest value 3 (1%) indicates that minority of them are not on agreement with the technical problems aforementioned. The highest value aside each statement in the table reveals that 245 (82%) agree on the inaccessibility of power or internet in university's computer labs(statement 13); and 243 (81%) of the students think that patronage and discrimination is the main scale for job recruitment (statement14). 237 (79%) agree on the slow-go of processes due to the current condition of the country (item 15). 112 (37%) think that regulations in university are complicated or interrupted whereas 62 (21%) do not think so (item 16). In order to compute the overall level of technical problems confronted by the undergraduate students, a three point scale continuum is developed based on quartile deviation as shown in table (6) which shows that **78 (26%), 105 (35%) & 117 (39)** of the students fall in first, second, third quartiles, that is **high, moderate, low respectively.**

Table (6): The Overall level of Technical Problems faced by the undergraduate students based on quartile deviation				
		Low	Medium	High
The Overall Agreement on Technical Problems faced by the undergraduate students based on quartile deviation	F	78	105	117
	%	26	35	39

Figure (5): The Overall Agreement on Technical Challenges Faced by the Undergraduate Students in Conflict Zones
- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree

Figure (6): The Overall Agreement on Technical Challenges based on Quartail Deviation F

3492

On the basis of descriptive statistics and the three point scale continuum, it can be concluded that the overall level technical problems confronted by Yemeni undergraduate students is high, 117 (39%) as illustrated in figures (5 & 6).

4. The Fourth Objective: To examine the socio-economic obstacles encountered by undergraduate students in conflict zones.
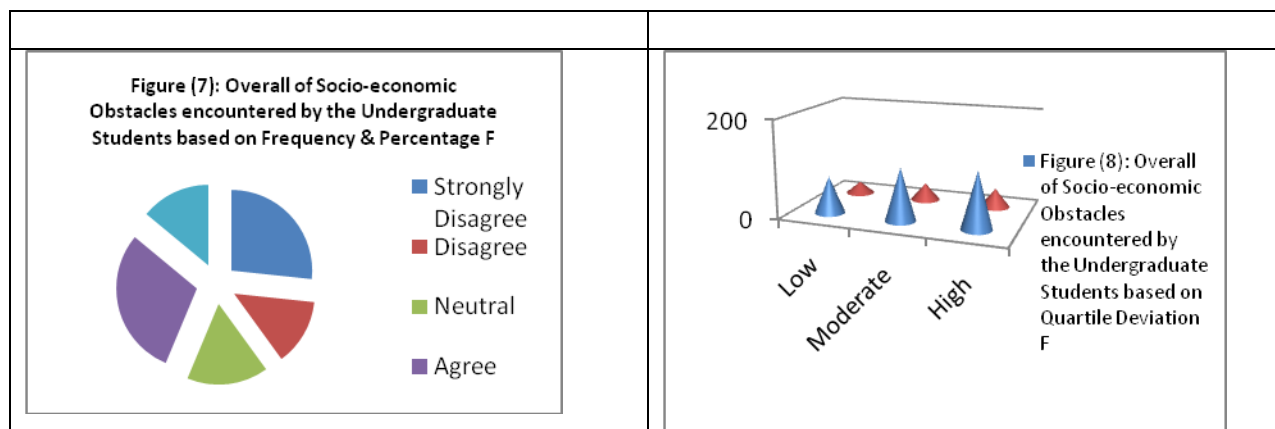
Table (7): The Overall of Socio-economic Obstacles encountered by the undergraduate students in conflict zones based on Frequency & Percentage						
Statements		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
17. I have fear with the new content of syllabi which includes controversial ideologies.	F	164	12	49	43	32
	%	55	4	16	14	11
18. Everyone says peace has become a far-fetching dream at least for the next 20 years.	F	120	21	57	82	20
	%	40	7	19	27	7
19. Political issues have separated me from my friends as we have contradictory opinions	F	76	35	39	108	42
	%	25	12	13	36	14
20. Education has been shaped according to the agenda of the controversial authorities.	F	75	37	61	95	32
	%	25	12	20	32	11
21. Due to war and quotation increase, my family won't be able to afford the costs of education fees/books/materials.	F	76	78	80	36	30
	%	25	26	27	12	10
22. I often cannot afford transportation fares.	F	76	82	66	57	19
	%	25	27	22	19	6
23. Living conditions are very harsh under the war even though we are not close to the conflict areas.	F	76	70	89	45	20
	%	25	23	30	15	7
24. The damage happened to the educational infrastructure in university occurs due to war.	F	76	56	47	39	82
	%	25	19	16	13	27
Overall of Socio-economic Challenges based on Frequency & Percentage	F	78	38	48	94	42
	%	26	13	16	**31**	14

Table (7) demonstrates that 78 (26%), 38 (13%), 48 (16%), 94 (31%), 42 (14%) of the undergraduate students strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, strongly agree respectively. The highest values (who agree and strongly agree) 136 (45%) have the same opinion about the socio-economic challenges they face to continue their education. Reading each statement in table, majority of the undergraduate students 164 (55%) are not worried about the contents of the syllabi (item 17). 120 (40%) of the students strongly disagree that there is no hope in having peaceful life again (item 18). Half of the students 150 (50%) agree that politics have split them up from their classmates (item 19). For (item 20), 127 (43%) agree that education has been formulated according to the agenda of the controversial authorities. A quite good number of the students 80 (27%) cannot decide whether their families won't afford the costs of education in future due to condition of war and inflation increase (item21). 76 (25%) strongly disagree with the point stated about their ability to afford for transportation fares (item22). Some of the students 89 (30%) are unsure if living circumstances are difficult at remote places from conflict while a good substantial number of them disagree with that (item 23). 82 (27%) of the students

strongly agree that war is the main reason behind the destruction of some of the educational infrastructure in their university due to war.

The three point scale continuum which is designed based on quartile deviation as shown in table (8) below indicates that **76 (25%), 108 (36%) & 116 (39)** of the students fall in first, second, third quartiles, that is **high, moderate, low respectively.**

	Low	Moderate	High
Table (8): The Overall of socio-economic obstacles based on Quartile Deviation	76	108	116
	25	36	39

Figure (7): Overall of Socio-economic Obstacles encountered by the Undergraduate Students based on Frequency & Percentage F

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree

Figure (8): Overall of Socio-economic Obstacles encountered by the Undergraduate Students based on Quartile Deviation F

On the basis of descriptive statistics and the three point scale continuum, it can be concluded that the overall level socio-economic obstacles encountered by Yemeni undergraduate students is high, 116 (39%) as illustrated in figures (7 & 8).

6. DISCUSSION:

The findings of this study demonstrate the context in which Yemeni EFL students learn English at university level by revealing the intricacies which they encounter to carry on their tertiary education in the conflict zone, Yemen. It is shown that the overall agreement of safety needs among the undergraduate Yemeni students based on frequency distribution is 132 (40%) and 120 (40%) based on quartile deviation which indicates that majority of the undergraduate students do feel insecure about their future and their safety due to the instability and political condition of the country since war begun. This is similar with various studies such as; (Lashuel (2020); Al-jaleel (2019); Global Conflict Tracker (2022); Al-Jeddawy (2020)). Some of the learners feel anxious at university as any type of violence/airstrike/bombing might occur anytime (item 1). Some of them keep recalling when an armed drone was crashed in a busy neighborhood after being shot down last May 2022. The qualitative data based on setting interview with part of the sample also confirm that majority of the students are aware that senior professors and other teaching staff decided to rescue his life or his freedom and flee out of the country (item 2). Some of them add that university is not always safe and sound. As for the results of the interview, one of the participants comments *"It is highly terrifying to move in between some of the blocks at university as they have become destructed or used as barracks for armed people"*, this matches with item (3). Another one explains that *'The journey from home to university can be hazardous* (item 4) *because of the gathering of armed groups, moving of their creepy vehicles (*item 5*) or even expecting an encounter or an unexpected plane crash (item 1)"*, while another comments

"Any encounter, clash or any type of bloodshed is possible at any moment" one declares. *"I don't feel insecure from being arrested when going to university as long as I don't create chaos"*, which confirming (item 6). *"A greater part of unpaid teachers are compelled to attend and give few classes for the sake of saving their tenures and not for the education itself"*, *"Due to earlier abrupt airstrikes over some areas around university, we used to feel highly horrified which negatively affected on our academic performance"*. Half of the interviewees argue that they expect to be arrested once they share their opinions against an armed authority on facebook or twitter pages (item 6), but another three disagree by saying *"We have no fear to be in detention as we do no wrong and we do not have any connection with any political party"*. One more clarifies *"Only businessmen or big malls' investors might feel insecure as they might face an increase in taxes as well as government employees whose salaries have been cut so far"*. Qasem (2021) confirms the access to more than 60 million weapons to the country, while corruption likely spreads. Qasem states that this might push the frustrated youth to begin to use aggression to change their reality. Majority of the interviewees clarify that the real insecurity they feel is about their lives and their future. *"I myself feel worried sometimes while moving to university as we experienced different airstrikes or bombards during our study journey"*; *"Different blocks at university got half- demolished like college of Education and college of Languages, however; no violence was shown against teaching staff or professors but some restrictions might be applied over them"*, *"Though we have decided to continue our education, future looks murky for us"*.

The results also display that the overall agreement of psychological challenges among the undergraduate Yemeni students based on frequency distribution is 107 (36%) and 130 (43%) based on quartile deviation which infer that majority of the students in conflict zones accept that they suffer from some mental barriers while the lowest value 13 (4%) indicates that very few of them are not on the board. Findings reveal that majority of the students are unsure if attending university is useful or not due to the absence of their experienced professors (item 7) and not certain if meeting their peers for talking over the current crisis is main purpose of attending university (item 8). This can be justified from different perspectives; first, students might be facing different challenges in different contexts from one family to another. Second, the intensity of conflict is varied from one place to another for which every student has made his own perception about it. Findings show that a good number of Yemeni students feel tense because of the rockiness in the country and unsatisfied regarding the quality of education (items 9 & 10). They also feel subjugated for being forgotten and out of focus by the whole world (item 11). Some of them argue that their attendance is pointless and they feel lost when trying to study (item 12). Similar results found by a number of studies on the impact of war on Yemeni young learners (Qasem (2021); Unicef (2018); Faisal (2017); Abdullah (2022); Sarih (2018); Muthanna et al (2022)) which state that future appears extremely obscure for young Yemenis; they base their decisions on surviving the present without putting in mind the outcomes of their actions. The qualitative data based on setting interview with the ten candidates, majority of them explain that the political conflict and economic crisis, all reflect negatively on their willingness to carry on studying. They add another point which is society's demotivation to them as people around keep asking them *"Why are you wasting your time and money on education when you know it very well you won't get any job in this country"*. Inferiority complex seems to be broaden among them as one of the participants comments that a student becomes frustrated when he finds his peers, whose parents or either of them have power and wealth, are studying while he is forced to study part-time in order to be able to work and provide his family's butter and bread or tuitions fees, *"It is unfair to study and work when others enjoy and pass easily"*. Another point is added

by another candidate *"I feel oppressed when I've no other place to go and compelled to pay for accommodations while they are unusable"*. Students constantly feel depressed due to society's impression towards their study *"People keep dampen our interest in studying as they think studying now has no good outcomes for a bright future"*. It seems that planning for post-graduation life is gloomy as one of the participants bitterly explains *"When I see our seniors working in other majors or as laborers rather than what they are supposed to and earning very less, I really feel discouraged"*. Most of them confirm that *"Coming to university has become pain in the neck where no practice and no scientific or fruitful tours are planned, plus the quality of education is not as expected when all papers are delivered by fresh guest lecturers only"*. One complains *"Visiting library to get some resources feels like a big task as no electronic archive is available or facilitated procedures for searching and borrowing"*. They all declare *"The frequent shut down or intermittent program of studying is a big obstacle"*.

Regarding the technical problems they come across, findings show that the overall agreement on among the undergraduate Yemeni students based on frequency distribution is 151 (50%), and 117 (39%) falling under the high category based on quartile deviation which means majority of the students acknowledge there are a variety of technical problems they encounter on daily basis at university. This matches with the results of some previous research (Al-Jeddawy (2022); Qasem (2022); Ashamahi (2011)).The unavailability of electricity and internet connection (item 13), favoritism in recruiting people (item 14), the slow-go and complication of regulations' processes (item 15+16), are some of the technical troubles which hinder the students learning. Al-Jeddawy (2022) explains that power is unreliable and outages occurred in south of Yemen, while no power at all provided by the government and people have managed to supply commercial electricity or solar power. This condition has started before 2011 and gone worse till moment. "*The essential electronic equipment, furniture, air conditioning and even fans are not provided even the necessary hygiene tools, which all negatively affect the quality of higher education*" one of the interviewees comments on the infrastructure of the university. This can be explained due to the shortage of university funding, which currently represents the equivalent of approximately 90 percent of the wages and salaries of faculty members in the absence of investment budget required for providing university furniture and equipment. This issue has been extended even in public schools where teachers often experience huge delays in salary payment due to underfunding – teachers have to challenge two matters; to regularly teach with no payment to save their positions and to find an alternative wages for living (Education Cluster, UNICEF, 2021). On the other hand, there are other technical troubles the students keep complaining from such as; the recurrent administrative processes, the quality of education which is a term that is not realistically applied; in addition to the teaching staff who prefer to teach and receive payment in private universities. Fresh students who apply for admission might have no other option rather than rolling in private universities where more intricacies they come across such as; most of the outputs of private universities are unreliable, the increase in tuition fees and other requirements, let alone the unreliability of certificates issued from some of these private universities. Results of interview with the 10 students highly match with what is discussed above. All of the interviewees complain that they have not been provided with the required facilities in the department of English throughout the four academic years. *"We have been suffering from the absence of visual-audio labs, inactivation of library, interruption or poor internet connection and before all the break or absence of electricity which are essential to run labs or internet network"*. One adds a point that *"The internet network if provided, then it is exclusive for university staff or administrative work and not for us",* while another two explain "*No projectors or sufficient computers and learning aids are provided during the whole journey*

of study". One mentions that *"Teachers' ongoing use of conventional methods of teaching is another technical problem as we were unable to practice what we have learnt all the time"*. In listening class, one candidate explains that *"For a listening task, the teacher used to run mp3 player and nothing else"* whereas one argues *"Due to war, we only hope to complete our education whatever quality it is"*. It is stated that the average of 25-year-old in Yemen in 2019 had already lived through 15 armed conflicts, and warfare had directly or indirectly affected over 80 percent of the population (UNDP, 2019). This raises a question of how those students will be able to carry on their study when such challenges as well as essential items for living are not provided for them such as; lack of gas, food, pure water, petrol or electricity. The lack of all basics mentioned will lead Yemen to face a state of economic collapse (Ashamahi, 2011). Qasem (2017) comments that the people due to continuous conflict have to choose one of two: either they should stay at home and wait for death due to famine, cholera or dengue fever; or carry a handgun and go meet death head on or in case someone might survive, he could make a living out of it.

Referring to socio-economic obstacles, the findings of this study indicate that the overall agreement on socio-economic obstacles among the undergraduate Yemeni students based on frequency distribution is 94 (31%) and 116 (39%) fall under the high level based on quartile deviation. This can be interpreted that majority of the students face a variety of social and economic issues from different perspectives. Controversial curriculum, outdated or inappropriate syllabi to labor market (item 17), community's vision about peace (item 18), clashes among students on political issues (item 19), education's reshaping (item 20), unaffordability of books, fees and transportation fares (item 21 & 22), living conditions (item 23), as well as risky routes to university, damaged or occupied blocks by armed people (item 24), all create highly complicated socio-economic conditions for students to continue their tertiary education. In the part of qualitative research, the students respond differently as they agree "*lack of financial support is the major hardship due to the little or no income"*. They repeat the point *"Getting bus fares seems like a tough task, how about other costs"*. Three of them acknowledge *"We get apart with some of our close friends because of dispute on politics"*. One assures that *"No fear from content of syllabus or ideology-presentation even if any lecturer tries to impress us with their thoughts, we just let it go"* whereas all of them state that *"living under war is killing for all even if we reside away from the conflicting spots"*. One of the respondents appends on his attempts to practice English that *"People criticize me when I try to practice English thinking that I am an extremist libral particularly in the time of conflict"*. At last, some of the interviewees justify the damage appeared on building of university to different reasons; some say *"It is due to the negligence of the government"* while others comment "*The fighting groups are responsible for every harm at university"*.

This goes with similar findings of other studies (Al-Jeddawy, 2022; Al-Rawahani, 2022; Robinson, 2022; Qasem, 2022; Muthanna, 2022). Families face a financial crisis to support their lives and providing the basic needs such as gas, food, water, medicine, in addition to that their children's education fees, transportation fares, books and other essential requirements for their learning. Furthermore, employees including teachers (a total of 1.2 million) in the public sector have not received their salaries for more than 7 years till today (Al-Rawahani, 2022). The conflict has displaced more than one million people and given increase to cholera outbreaks, medicine lack or high rates, and threats of famine (Robinson, 2022). Consequently, many young Yemeni students drop out of school or university because their parents cannot afford the costs. Due to the decline in the value of the Yemeni riyal against foreign currencies and the consequent rise in fuel prices, attending university has become quite frustrating for students, and

this has a negative impact on their academic achievement. The Yemeni riyal has been greatly devalued, and goods have become much more expensive and some young people head towards fighting with armed group "*Unemployment has increased during war as many have been recruited by armed groups, enticed by regular pay*"(Al-Jeddawy, 2022). Regarding social fabric, the conflict had spoiled personal relations, flamed up inimical attitudes and augmented in hate speech, crimes and discriminations among people from other parts of the country (Al-Jeddawy, 2022). Disputes and erodes trust between neighbors have appeared as families mistrust people in their community who they suppose are recruiting adolescents. War has been found to have direct impacts on education, and direct interaction of cultural, social, political, religious and ideological contexts within the country (Muthanna et al, 2022).

To sum up, it can be concluded that the context of education and English language learning in Yemen is not up to the mark. Conflict has contributed to a big scale on fading the process of education and dampened learners' spirits down.

7. Conclusion & Implications:

Assessing the challenges faced by the undergraduate students in conflict-affected zones to analyze the context of English language learning is the main purpose of the study. Based on findings of the current study, it is found out that learners encounter an arduous path to complete their education due to war which gets grim constantly. The context of English language learning at university in Yemen is not up to the required standard. Security needs, psychological, technical, socio-economic challenges which the students come across in conflict-affected zone need to be considered in order to find a thorough solution for the educational crisis in Yemen. In order for Yemeni English learners living in a war zone to balance every day survival for completing their education and restoring hope in their perspectives, peace building has to be built beforehand. There are a number of actions which can be taken by governments to build peace and upgrade higher education in Yemen. First, the disputing parties in the conflict should sit on negotiation table and cease all attacks against educational institutions and universities and quit their use for military purposes. Second, economic and social development projects have to be encouraged so that businessmen can invest easily. Third, there should be a demand over accountability by all parties receiving its development funding. Fourth, Yemeni educational authorities have to collaborate with other neighboring and international universities for enriching the country's economic and technological growth. Sustaining financial support and technical training as well as exchanging of academic and scientific programs would take the whole country to the next step. In addition, the issue of pending salaries has to be resolved by finding a fair working mechanism through the cooperation of educational institutions and international organizations. It is also essential for the damaged blocks in university to be renovated. Practical mechanisms should be provided to follow up on displaced students and ensure their inclusion in educational institutions. A national campaign can be organized to raise awareness of international rules for the protection of education. Genuine efforts should be made to reach out to young Yemeni learners and encourage them to participate in development projects. Furthermore, the international community should make first applicable short-term plans and solutions in order to have an obvious vision for more progressing plans that are effective and fruitful on the long run. All parties should exert development efforts which are investigational and alert. A responsive training is highly required putting in mind the whole situation from all perspectives; security, education, economy & health to find out positive and quick action. E-learning mode can play a big role as an alternative to formal education during conflict times. Finally, donors can support the educational process on regular check-up.

8. REFERENCES:

1. Abdullah, A. (2022, March28). Education in Yemen: A Bitter Reality & Bleak Future. https://www.aa.com.tr/ar/ 2516493/.
2. Al-Ashwal, N.H.N. (2020). Factors Causing the Delay of Funded Projects in Yemen: A Case of Selected Rural Access Program Funded by the World Bank.
3. Al-Jaleel, T. (2019). For A Yemeni Researcher, Emigration Is The Only Opportunity. Alfanarmedia.https://Www.Al-Fanarmedia.Org/2019/12/For-A-Yemeni-Researcher-Emigration-Is-The-Only-Opportunity/ Retrieved On 2nd Of June, 2022.
4. Al-Jeddawy, Y. (2022). The Impact of the Yemen War on the Priorities and Needs of Youth. Yemen Peace Forum. Retrieved from http://sanaacenter.org/ypf/the-impact-of-the-yemen-war-on-the-prioriteis-and-needs-of-yemen.
5. Al-Rawhani, A. (2022). Public Service Jobs in Yemen: A legacy of Conflict that Politicians Ignore. Almasdar Online. Retrieved from https://al-masdaronline.net/national/920 on 16/07/2022.
6. Alshamahi, A.; A.A; S.H; T,P; C,N. (2011) Where Next for Yemen? Perspectives on the Youth Movement. Chathamhouse.
7. Cordesman, A. H. (2017). The war in Yemen: Hard choices in a hard war. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS).
8. Education Cluster, UNECIF. (2021) Yemen Education Crisis: 2020 Secondary Data Review (SDR) Report. Retrieved from https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-education-crisis-2020-secondary-data-review-sdr-report on June, 29, 2021.
9. Essadi, H. (2021). Exploring the role of E-learning practices in protecting secondary school education after violent conflict: case study-secondary school education in Libya (Doctoral dissertation, University of Salford (United Kingdom)).
10. Faisal, D. (2017). Yemen: Chaos, War and Higher Education. Al-Fanar Media. https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2017/04/yemen-chaos-war-higher-education/.
11. Global Conflict Tracker (2022). War in Yemen. *By the* Center for Preventive. Council on Foreign Relations, May 04, 2022. Retrieved on 2nd of June 2022 from https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/war-yemen.

12. Hanna, T., Bohl, D., & Moyer, J. (2021). Assessing the Impact of War in Yemen: Pathways for Recovery. UNDP. Available at: www. undp. org/publications/assessing-impact-war-yemen-pathways-recovery.
13. Hauxia. (2022).Yemeni students struggle to get education in bombed schools. www. Xinhuanet.com; retrieved from http://www.news.cn/english/2021-09-22/c_1310202880.htm
14. Kendall, E. Making Sense of the Yemen War. Engelsberg Ideas, July 7, 2020, https://engelsbergideas.com/essays/making-sense-of-the-yemen-war/
15. Lashuel, H. (2020). Why Yemen Needs More Support for Higher Education. Al-Fanar Media. https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2020/01/why-yemen-needs-more-support-for-higher-education/
16. Muthanna, A.; Almahfali, M.; Haider, A. The Interaction of War Impacts on Education: Experiences of School Teachers and Leaders. Educ. Sci. 2022, 12, 719. https://doi.org/ 10.3390/educsci12100719
17. Qasem, A. (2017). Gasping for hope: Yemeni youth struggle for their future. POMEPS Studies 29,"Politics, Governance, and Reconstruction in Yemen." Retrieved from https://pomeps.org/gasping-for-hope-yemeni-youth-struggle-for-their-future

18. Robinson, K. (2022). Yemen's Tragedy: War, Stalemate, and Suffering. Council on Foreign Relations. https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/yemen-crisis.
19. Sarih, a. (2018). Yemen's Ongoing War Leaves Scientific Research Crippled. Alfanarmedia. https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2018/02/academic-research/ retrieved on 3rd of june, 2022.
20. UNDP. (2019). Assessing the Impact of War on Development in Yemen. https://yemen.un.org/sites/default/files/2019-09/Assessing%20the%20Impact%20of%20War%20on%20Development%20in%20Yemen.pdf.
21. Unicef (2018). In Yemen, Children's Education Devastated after Three Years of Escalating Conflict. https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/yemen-children-education-devastated-three-years-conflict
22. Unicef (2021). Education Disrupted: Impact of the conflict on children's education in Yemen. https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/education-disrupted-impact-conflict-children-s-education-yemen
23. Zakham, F. Vapalathi, O. Lashuel, H. (2020). Education and Research are Essential for Lasting Peace in Yemen. The Lancet. Volume 395, Issue10230, P1114, April 04,2020. Https://doi.org/10.1016/s0140-6736(20)30162-8.