# Research Plan:
# Note-Sharing Platform for University Students

## Study 1: Semi-Structured Interview

### Background

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Digital learning has become an essential part of modern education. Many university students rely on peer-shared notes to supplement their learning. However, existing methods (e.g., social media groups, personal sharing) lack organization, accessibility, and reliability.

Our goal is to create a note-sharing platform specifically for Computer Engineering students to access soft-copy notes (PDFs, Word Docs, PPTs, and scanned notes) for courses uploaded by their peers. This platform will help students efficiently find, download, and organize study materials while ensuring high-quality content.

### Research Goal

Our team wants to learn about how students currently create, share, and access student-generated notes, including their pain points and needs. We want to determine what opportunities exist for a new notes-sharing platform, so that we can use these findings to shape the direction of our product.Design a simple, intuitive and functional desktop interface.

### Research Questions

- **Needs**:
  - What are students' current pain points when accessing or sharing student-generated notes?
  - What features would make a notes-sharing platform useful for students?
- **Behaviors**:
  - How do students currently create, share, and access student-generated notes?
  - How often do students contribute their own notes or annotations?

- **Opportunities**:
  - What unmet needs do students have in accessing and sharing student-generated notes?
  - What would make a notes-sharing platform more intuitive and enjoyable for students?

# Method

- **30-minute in-person or video semi-structured interview** to gather in-depth qualitative data.
- The researcher will use the interview script as a guide and ask follow-up questions based on participants' answers.

# Recruiting

- **5 participants**.
- **Target users**: University students who:
    - Create or use student-generated notes for their courses.
- **Recruitment method**: Send emails to university student groups or post on social media platforms frequented by students.

# Screening Questions

1. Do you create handwritten or typed notes during lectures?
   a. Yes
   b. No (screened out)

2. How often do you share or use peer-shared notes?
   a. Frequently
   b. Occasionally
   c. Rarely (screened out)

3. Have you ever accessed notes shared by other students?
   a. Yes
   b. No (screened out)

# Script

Notes: *[italicized brackets]* are used to document what we wish to learn from each question.

**Introduction**:
- Hi, my name is Haneen Alhajali. Thank you for participating in this study. I'm currently working on a project to create a platform for students to share and collaborate on lecture notes. This interview will take about 30 minutes. You can take a break or leave the session at any time—just let me know. Do you have any questions before we start?
- Do you mind if I record this session for note-taking purposes? The recording won't be shared with anyone outside of our team.

**Warm-up Questions** *[Build rapport. Start with easy questions to get to know the participant]*:
1. **Could you tell me a bit about yourself?**
    - Follow-up: What year are you in, and what's your major?

- o Follow-up: What courses are you currently taking?

2. **When was the last time you took notes during a lecture? Could you walk me through how you did it?** *[Understand current note-taking methods and tools.]*
   - o Follow-up: Did you use any tools or apps to help you take notes?
   - o Follow-up: Were the notes handwritten, typed, or annotated slides?

3. **When was the last time you shared your notes with peers? Could you walk me through how you shared them?** *[Explore motivations and methods behind note-sharing.]*
   - o Follow-up: What platform or method did you use (e.g., WhatsApp, Google Drive, in person)?
   - o Follow-up: What motivated you to share your notes at that time?

4. **Can you recall the last time you accessed notes shared by others? Could you walk me through how you found and used them?** *[Understand the participant's most recent experience with accessing shared notes, providing insights into their needs and challenges.]*
   - o Follow-up: What platform or method did you use (e.g., WhatsApp, Google Drive, in person)?
   - o Follow-up: What made you decide to use those notes?

**Probe into Needs and Behaviors**:
5. **Could you describe any difficulties you've had when trying to access student-generated notes?** *[Identify pain points in accessing notes, addressing the research question about current challenges.]*
   - o Follow-up: Were the notes easy to find, or were they scattered across different platforms?
   - o Follow-up: Have you ever struggled to find high-quality notes for a specific course?

6. **Have you ever experienced challenges when sharing your notes? If so, what were they?** *[Explore barriers to sharing notes, which is critical for designing a platform that encourages participation.]*
   - o Follow-up: Do you worry about the quality of your notes being judged by others?
   - o Follow-up: Is it time-consuming to organize and share your notes?

7. **If a new note-sharing platform existed, what features would be most valuable for you?** *[Identify potential features for the platform based on the participant's needs, avoiding hypotheticals.]*
   - o Follow-up: How would you prefer to search for notes—by course, professor, or keyword?
   - o Follow-up: Would you trust ratings or reviews to assess note quality?

8. **When deciding whether to share or download notes, what factors matter most to you?** *[Explore decision-making criteria, which can inform the design of features like search filters and quality indicators.]*
   - o Follow-up: Do you prefer notes that are detailed or summarized?
   - o Follow-up: Do you prefer notes from specific peers or professors?

9. **Would you feel comfortable sharing your notes with students you don't personally know? Why or why not?** *[Address trust and privacy concerns, which are critical for designing a platform that encourages sharing.]*
   - o Follow-up: Would you prefer to share notes only with classmates or publicly?
   - o Follow-up: What would help you feel more comfortable sharing your notes?

10. **What motivates you to share your notes with others?** *[Explore intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for sharing, which can inform gamification or reward systems.]*
    - o Follow-up: Is it to help others, receive feedback, or build a reputation?
    - o Follow-up: Would recognition or rewards make you more likely to share?

11. **What would make you trust the notes shared by others on a platform?** *[Identify trust-building mechanisms, which are essential for ensuring the platform's credibility.]*
    - o Follow-up: Would ratings, reviews, or verified uploaders help build trust?
    - o Follow-up: Have you ever encountered unreliable or low-quality notes?

12. **What tools or platforms do you currently use to access student-generated notes?** *[Provide insights into existing tools and their limitations, helping identify opportunities for improvement.]*
    - o Follow-up: Have you used other tools or platforms in the past?
    - o Follow-up: What was the first tool or platform you used to access notes? Why did you switch?
    - o Follow-up: (If using multiple tools) What do you use each tool for? (e.g., WhatsApp for quick sharing, Google Drive for organized storage)

**Wrap-up**:
- Thank you so much for sharing your experience and insights. Your answers will help our team build a better product. Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience with note-sharing? You can reach me at [haneenalhajali2003@gmail.com](mailto:haneenalhajali2003@gmail.com). Have a great day!

# Study 2: Survey

## Background

Based on findings from the semi-structured interviews, we aim to validate two key insights:
1. Students struggle to find high-quality notes due to scattered platforms and lack of organization.
2. Students desire features like search filters, ratings, and verified uploaders to improve trust and usability.

## Research Goal

Validate the prevalence of these challenges and preferences among a larger population of university students.

## Research Questions

- **Needs:** What difficulties do students face when searching for or sharing lecture notes?
- **Behaviors:** How do students currently find and share lecture notes?
- **Opportunities:** What features would make a note-sharing platform more effective and widely used?

## Method & Recruiting

- Use **Google Forms** to distribute surveys via **email, social media groups, and university forums**.
- Collect responses from at least **50 university students**.
- Target students who:
    o Actively use shared lecture notes.
    o Have previously shared notes with peers.
    o Are enrolled in university courses that require heavy note-taking.

## Survey Questions

**1. Current Note-Sharing Behaviors**

1. How do you usually take notes during lectures? *(Select all that apply.) [Identify note-taking habits]*
    o Handwritten notes
    o Typed notes (Word, Google Docs, etc.)
    o Annotating slides/PDFs
    o I don't take notes

2. Have you ever used lecture notes shared by other students? *[Measure demand]*

o Yes
o No (Survey ends)

3. How do you usually find shared lecture notes? *(Select all that apply.) [Access methods]*
  o University-specific platforms (e.g., Masaaq.net)
  o Social media groups (e.g., Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram)
  o Messaging bots (e.g., Messenger bots)
  o Directly from friends
  o Cloud storage (e.g., Google Drive, OneDrive)
  o Other (Specify___)

4. What challenges, if any, have you faced when trying to find shared lecture notes? (Select all that apply.) *[Spot pain points]*
  o Notes are scattered across different platforms
  o Hard to verify the quality or accuracy of notes
  o Limited availability of notes for some subjects
  o Unable to find notes from multiple students/professors
  o No clear ownership of notes
  o Other (Specify___)

## 2. Contribution & Sharing Patterns

5. Have you ever shared your lecture notes with others? *[Contribution behavior]*
  o Yes
  o No (Skip to Q8)

6. How do you typically share your notes? *(Select all that apply.) [Common sharing methods]*
  o Upload to university platforms (e.g., Masaaq.net)
  o Share via social media (WhatsApp, Facebook groups, Telegram)
  o Directly send to friends/classmates
  o Upload to cloud storage (Google Drive, OneDrive, etc.)
  o Other (Specify___)

7. What prevents you from sharing your notes more frequently? *(Select all that apply.) [Barriers to sharing]*
  o Lack of a structured platform
  o Privacy concerns
  o Time-consuming to organize and share notes
  o Fear of criticism over note quality
  o Other (Specify___)

## 4. Features & Platform Preferences

8. Which of the following features would you find most useful in a note-sharing platform? *(Select all that apply.) [Prioritize features]*
  o Search by course/professor name

- o Ratings and reviews for notes
- o Multiple contributions per professor
- o Verified uploaders (clear note ownership)
- o Ability to request missing notes
- o Other (Specify___)

9. What factors would make you trust the quality of notes shared on a platform? *(Select all that apply.) [Ensure credibility]*
   - o Verified contributors (e.g., top students, tutors)
   - o Ratings and reviews from other students
   - o Notes linked to specific professors/courses
   - o Clear information about the uploader
   - o Other (Specify___)

10. Would you be more likely to contribute notes if there were incentives (e.g., recognition, ranking system, small rewards)? *[Assess motivation]*
    - o Yes
    - o No
    - o Maybe

## 5. Demographic Questions

11. What is your university? *[Identify reach]*
    - o An-Najah National University
    - o Arab American University
    - o Birzeit University
    - o Palestine Polytechnic University
    - o AIZaytona University of Science
    - o Other (Specify___)

12. What is your major? *[Focus content]*
    - o Computer Engineering
    - o Computer Science
    - o Electrical Engineering
    - o Business Administration
    - o Medicine
    - o Other (Specify___)

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**Conclusion**

The results of this survey will help us identify the key challenges students face when sharing and accessing notes. By analyzing user behavior and needs, we aim to design a **structured, reliable, and user-friendly** note-sharing platform tailored for university students. Thank you for participating! 🎯☺