How did Students Experienced Online Education during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Aesthetic Department of a College in Cyprus

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Abstract

This research aims to explore students view regarding online education during Covid-19 and understand the benefits, difficulties and future opportunities off this learning system, targeting students of Aesthetics Department where knowledge is not acquired only from theoretical courses but also from practical application. To fulfil the purpose of this research, questionnaires were given to 100 female students of Aesthetics Department in Cyprus College Nicosia and Cyprus College Limassol. Online education was the best alternative to cover the education needs during the crisis of Covid-19 and had positive outcomes especially in theoretical courses than practical courses, were practice of skills was impossible. Issues like connection and cheating during exams were a concern but on the other hand reasons like saving money and personal space overrule. Overall participants believe Blended Teaching Methods will be more ideal for Aesthetic studies were practice is necessary.

Keywords: *Covid-19, Aesthetic studies, Practical courses, Online Education, Online Exams, Blended Teaching Mode*

1. Introduction

Various issues have arisen through the immediate transition from offline to online education in Aesthetics studies, due to Covid-19 pandemic. Aesthetics studies are not only theory, there is a lot of practical courses and online education makes it hard for students to practice their skills. For that reason, lockdown and the sudden shift to online education was a challenge for both students and teachers.This research will investigate students issues and opinions regarding online education.

2. Literature Review

Covid-19 outbreak begin in December 2019, in Wuhan and after a few months it spread all over the world. It was declared as a global pandemic by the WHO on March 11, 2020, that change the way we live, work and interact with each other. In order to control the spread multiple lockdowns mandatory people to stay at home, shops, malls, business were closed and education was online (Tarkar, 2020, Oyomno, 2022).

According to Phanse (2021), education is the backbone of a country's development. It was not possible to stop education so a rapid transition to online teaching was the only available option (Khan et al, 2020). This was possible due to the increased rate of internet connections and smart phones among the common masses. Virtual platforms like Zoom, Blackboard, Cisco Webex, Google Meet and more were used for online education, seminars and conference (Horo et al, 2020). Online mode was the best alternative in order for everyone to follow safety protocols (Sharma et al, 2022).

Teachers had to adjust with the new situation, as many of them were not familiarized with the online tools and didn't have much time to learn or given any training (Sharma, 2022).Also, as teachers and students' online barriers increased, interest decreased so teachers had to struggle to keep it alive (Kim and Kim, 2021). On the other hand, students were also not so familiar with online education and examination causing them anxiety and stress (Ghosh).Those feelings have a negative impact on students' self-efficacy and learning outcomes (Arora et al 2020, Ja, 2022). Many studies showed that students were in stress about their studies during lockdown and did not feel comfortable with online classes (Fatima and Raj, 2020).

Furthermore, there are issues related to online exams, such as poor internet connection and increased possibility of cheating. Provide help to students facing internet issues during exams or detecting cheating could be difficult or even impossible (Madugula et al, 2022). With the growth of technology and gadgets students are discovering innovative ways of cheating during exams. It is rather impossible to know if another person is seating behind the screen helping the student while attempting an assignment or exam (Raman and Gupte, 2022). Also, cheating is easier when students have internet access to online resources and communication with classmates for help without the instructor's knowledge (Leo et al, 2021).

To minimized cheating online proctored examination and authentication is used, with features such as locking of the screen and blacklisting of applications. In addition, objective and subjective questions are used for creative

thinking, randomizing the questions and speaking test are a few ways to help avoid cheating (Pettit et al, 2021, Wahid and Farooq, 2020).

Regarding education in the beauty filed, there is a satisfaction difference between practical and theoretical classes (Kim, 2021). Studies showed that the use of online classes were more appropriately for theoretical subjects and offline classes were more appropriately for practical subjects for students to gain more skilled skills. Also, the interaction between instructor and students was significantly greater in offline classes in both practice and theory (An, 2021, Lee and Kwon, 2022).

On the other hand, the shift to online teaching has its benefits such as convenience, cost saving and accessibility. Students could take online course any time anywhere, in their own home or while working on something else and had savings related to accommodation and travel (Kumar, 2010, Pettit et al, 2021).

Online teaching had its benefits and cons for students as well as instructors, it was a change to familiarize with technology and a new way of learning. Although the covid-19 is under control and the traditional offline mode of learning return, some lectures, seminars or meetings still take place online. According to Sawant (2022), Blended Teaching Learning System maybe the new normal in the future.

3. Methodology

For the purpose of this study a quantitative research has been employed and data collection was complete via a questionnaire in electronic form using Google Drive.
The research targets students of Cyprus College Nicosia and Cyprus College Limassol Aesthetics Department, with age range between 18 and 21+.The questionnaire is consisted by sixteen closed type questions that are easier to answer.

A total of 100 female students participated in this survey and the sampling was analyzed by processing the data in Excel and SPSS program.

4. Results

FIGURE I
FIGURE I - Age

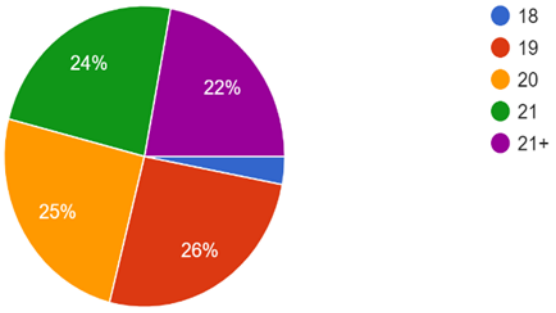


FIGURE II Reasons you liked online courses

In this research, the sample was 100 female participants with age range from 18 to over 21 years old. The largest percentage was 26% representing age 19. It is followed by the percentage of 25% which is age 20 and 24% corresponds to age 21. The percentage of 22% are ages over 21 and the smallest percentage of just 3% is age 18.

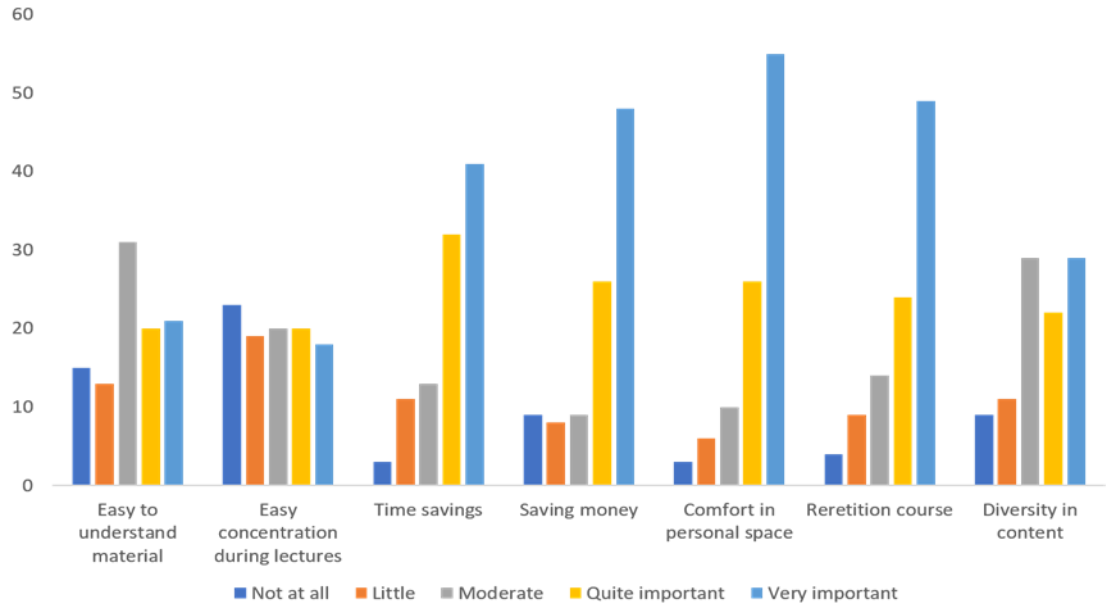
TABLE I

TABLE I - Year of admission – Grades in lockdown compared to other years

		Year of admission																	
		2018		2019		2020		2021		2018		2019		2020		2021		Total	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Grades in lockdown compared to other years	Not at all	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%
	2	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	16.7%	4	14.3%	5	16.1%	3	10.3%	14	14.0%
	3	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	16.7%	5	17.9%	7	22.6%	6	20.7%	20	20.0%
	4	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	41.7%	8	28.6%	8	25.8%	11	37.9%	32	32.0%
	Much better	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	25.0%	10	35.7%	11	35.5%	9	31.0%	33	33.0%
	Total	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	100.0%	28	100.0%	31	100.0%	29	100.0%	100	100.0%

Our statistical analysis shows that students who were admission in 2018, 2019 and 2020 had significantly better grades during lockdown, while students with admission year 2021 had better grades. Overall grades were better regardless the year of admission.

FIGURE II



As for the reasons why online courses were liked, participants choose with an emphasis over 50% comfort in personal space. Also, with percentages over 40% saving time, money and the opportunity to repeat the course.

TABLE II

TABLE II - Online participation in relation to the conventional courses – Reasons you liked online courses (Easy to understand material)

Online participation in relation to the conventional course

		Not at all		2		3		4		Very much		Total	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Reasons you liked online courses - Easy to understand material	Not at all	8	36.4%	2	15.4%	4	12.9%	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	15	15.0%
	Little	6	27.3%	4	30.8%	2	6.5%	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	13	13.0%
	Moderate	4	18.2%	5	38.5%	13	41.9%	4	28.6%	5	25.0%	31	31.0%
	Quite important	4	18.2%	1	7.7%	5	16.1%	5	35.7%	5	25.0%	20	20.0%
	Very important	0	0.0%	1	7.7%	7	22.6%	3	21.4%	10	50.0%	21	21.0%
	Total	22	100.0%	13	100.0%	31	100.0%	14	100.0%	20	100.0%	100	100.0%

The participation in online courses in correlation with the understanding of the content shows that 31 students whose participation was moderate and 13 students whose participation was less, both show that the understanding of the content in the online courses was moderate with a respectively percentage of 41.9% and 38.5%.In addition, 22 students did not participate in online course at all with a percentage of 36,4%, because they did not have an easy understanding of the material.

On the other hand, 20 students participated more in online courses because they considered the participation quite important and they had an easy understanding of the material, with a percentage of 50%. Last, 14 students participated more in online courses because they considered participation very important and had easy understanding with a percentage of 35.7%. Based on the correlation we can see that the more they participated in online courses, the easier it was to understand the material.

TABLE III

TABLE III - Satisfied with the evaluation of online exams – Possibility of cheating in exams

Satisfied with the evaluation of online exams

		Not at all		2		3		4		Very much		Total	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Possibility of cheating in the exams	Not at all	1	20.0%	1	14.3%	2	8.3%	2	7.4%	9	24.3%	15	15.0%
	2	0	0.0%	1	14.3%	4	16.7%	5	18.5%	8	21.6%	18	18.0%
	3	1	20.0%	2	28.6%	5	20.8%	7	25.9%	9	24.3%	24	24.0%
	4	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	16.7%	12	44.4%	6	16.2%	22	22.0%
	Very much	3	60.0%	3	42.9%	9	37.5%	1	3.7%	5	13.5%	21	21.0%
	Total	5	100.0%	7	100.0%	24	100.0%	27	100.0%	37	100.0%	100	100.0%

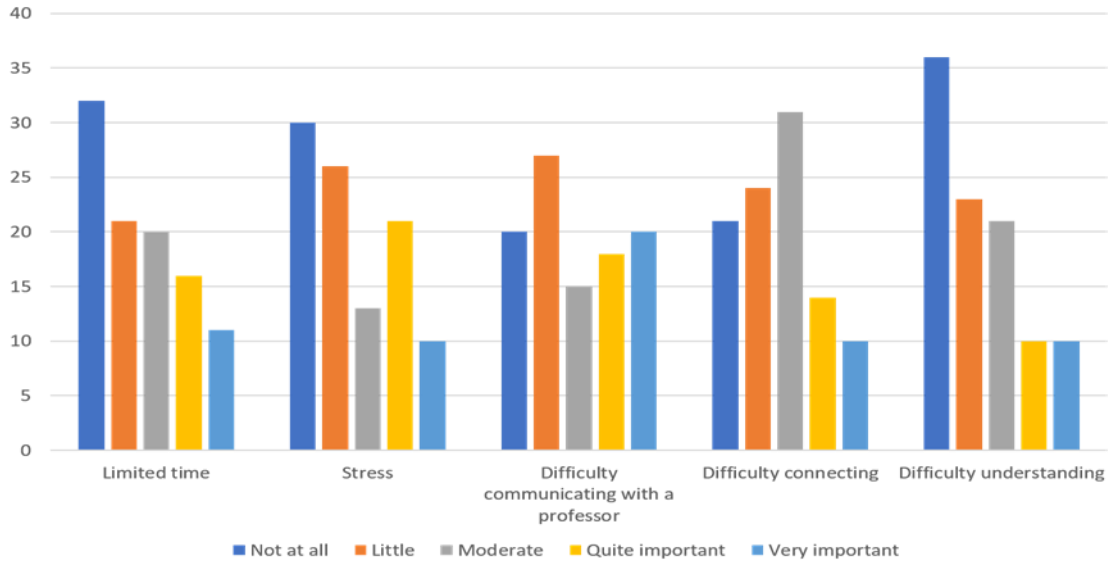
The statistical correlation between the satisfaction ratings of online exams evaluation and the possibility of cheating shows that 37 participants (Very much satisfied with evaluation of online exams) and 7 participants (Little satisfied with evaluation of online exams) in total 44 participants, reported that the possibility of cheating is moderate to none with a rate of 24.3% and 28.6% respectively.

While 27 participants report they were very satisfied with online exams evaluation but believe there was a high possibility of cheating, with a rate of 44.4%.

Moreover, 24 participants (Moderate satisfied with evaluation of online exams) and 5participants (Not at all satisfied with evaluation of online exams) in total 29 participants, reported that there was a high possibility of cheating with a percentage of 37% and 60% respectively.

FIGURE III

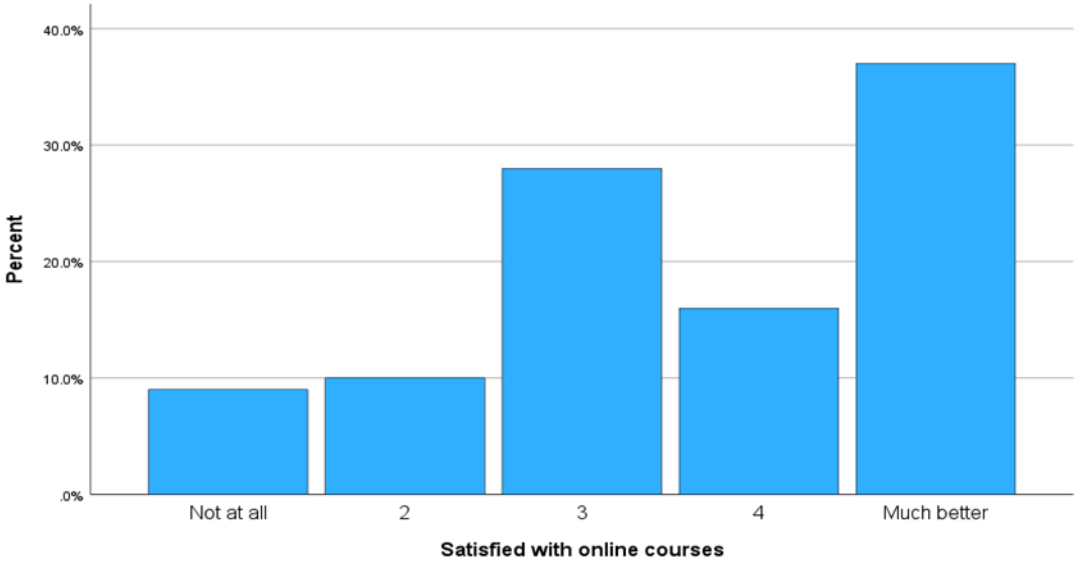
FIGURE III - Reasons you did not like online exam



As far as the reasons students did not liked online exams, participants report during online exams had little difficulty communicating with a professor with rate over 25% and moderate difficulty connecting to the platform with rate over 30%. Participants had no issues during online exams regarding limited time, stress and difficulty understanding, with a percentage of 30% and over.

FIGURE IV

FIGURE IV - Satisfied with online courses



The distribution according to online course satisfaction shows that 37% of participants are very satisfied, 28% report moderate satisfaction, 16% participants are very satisfied, 10% are little satisfied and 9% not satisfied at all.

TABLE IV

TABLE IV - Preference for the course to be: Online – Offline – Blended mode of learning – Online mode performs in practical courses

		Preference for the courses to be:							
		Online		Offline		Blended mode of learning		Total	
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Online mode performs in practical courses	Not at all	5	31.3%	21	61.8%	24	48.0%	50	50.0%
	2	1	6.3%	7	20.6%	10	20.0%	18	18.0%
	3	4	25.0%	5	14.7%	12	24.0%	21	21.0%
	4	3	18.8%	1	2.9%	3	6.0%	7	7.0%
	Very much	3	18.8%	0	0.0%	1	2.0%	4	4.0%
	Total	16	100.0%	34	100.0%	50	100.0%	100	100.0%

Regarding the teaching mode, 50 participants prefer Blended Teaching Mode and believe that practical courses do not work thru online mode, with a rate of 48%. Also, 34 participants prefer offline mode with a percentage of 61.8%. On the other hand, 16 participants prefer online mode and consider that practical courses have an average performance with a rate of 25%. As seen in the statistical correlation, it appears that they prefer the Blended method because of practical courses.

5. Conclusion

Through the results of our research, we found that students of Cyprus College Nicosia and Cyprus College Limassol, Aesthetics Department declared quite satisfied with online education during Covid-19.They were mainly satisfied with the theoretical courses, while for the practical courses they prefer offline teaching mode, in order to exercise their practical skills.

It was observed that there was more participation in online courses than offline, due to personal space comfort, saving money and time. Also, there seems to be quite a bit of satisfaction with online exams, although there was a concern about the possibility of cheating which is also confirmed through the literature review. In addition, during online examination issues like connection and communication with a professor were a concern.

Thus, this research reveals that online education was the best alternative way of teaching during Covid-19 with positive results mostly in theoretical courses. On the contrary, courses that additionally include practical lessons, online education revealed to luck effectiveness. Thus, our research supports that Blending Teaching Mode may be more ideal in studies that include practical education and it could be revealed to be a great tool with very positive outcomes for institutions in times of needs.

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