

Participatory student learning in practical media classes during Covid-19 pandemic

A cross-cultural exploratory study between Egypt & Malaysia

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Introduction

Traditional teaching is where the teacher has the authority to control the learning environment. According to Novak, knowledge is not an entity transferred in to - to from teacher to learner, but rather that learning requires active engagement of the student's mind. (Bretz, 2001). and learning is related to the classroom and the process of mastering knowledge through practicing and being taught (Zlotskaya, 2016). Developments in the field of technology have also changed the way humans learn (Naismith et al., 2004). Besides, the learning process has now transcended the physical space of the classroom (Kukulska & Traxler, 2005), globalized, and lifelong (Sharples, 2000). Online teaching and online learning is faculty delivered tutoring through the Internet (Lu, 2020). Online Learning encompasses a range of technologies such as the world wide web, email, chat, new groups and texts, and audio and video conferencing delivered over computer networks to impart education.

It helps the learner to learn at their own pace, according to their own convenience. Online education requires a lot of resources and careful planning. In this, teachers act as facilitators rather than transmitters of content knowledge, and ICT is regarded as a resource that enhances the learning experience of students. Learners learn through e-learning tools that are available to all. E-Learning has brought back the joy of learning through its innovative and interactive content delivery and has proved to be more appealing among students. This study aims to explore the Malaysian and Egyptian students' studying perception of practical media courses during the lockdown of COVID-19, and the effectiveness of the learning process to raise the practical skills of media students while using distance learning. This study goes under the type of *cross-cultural* studies that use a sufficient sample so that statistical analysis can be made to show relationships or lack of relationships between the traits in question (Korotaev, 2004).

Theoretical Framework

-Technological Determinism Theory.

This study is based on the Technological Determinism theory. Technological Determinism theory was propounded in 1962 by Marshall McLuhan and it states that media technology shapes how we as individuals in a society think, feel, and act, and how the society operates as we move from one technological age to another. (John, 2020) This theory states that technology can transform any environment, and from a communication perspective, media technology can be both a channel and a message at the same time since technological innovations can absorb development through the diffusion of the message it carries. This theory applies to the study in the sense that, the dominant technology like the interactive distance learning detects how the instructors and students react to its interactive messages and how the society operates as we move from one technological age to another and as much as they (Instructors & Students) diffuse educational messages. Unequivocally, there is a simple cause-effect analysis between the introduction of new technology and the changes in society's way of thinking, feeling, acting, or believing.

-Online Teaching in Malaysia & Egypt.

Since April 2020, most countries worldwide have closed their schools and universities to reduce social interaction during the Covid-19 pandemic period. As a solution to this crisis, schools and universities have implemented online teaching and learning (Engzell, *et al.*, 2021). Online teaching and learning are crucial to enable students to continue their studies, graduate on time, and enter the working world. Online teaching and learning were non-existent on a large scale before the Covid-19 crisis; it was merely an option and a solution for those who cannot use physical education for logistics reasons (Omwenga, *et al.*, 2021). When the world lockdown happened, Malaysia was in a state of emergency that caused massive mortality and morbidity to prevent the virus from spreading during the pandemic. Everyone is required to practice social distancing by avoiding large crowded spaces, mass gatherings, and any near interaction with at-risk individuals (Khoo, *et al.*, 2020). In March 2020, the Government of Malaysia has decided to implement a nationwide Restriction of Movement Order. Citizens were not allowed to travel away from a 10 km radius from their homes. To cope with this issue, The Ministry of Education (MOE) and The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) announced the implementation of online learning which takes place over the Internet (Zainol, *et al.*, 2021). This type of teaching method offers students a virtual learning environment that allows them to participate in audiovisual interaction that is very much dissimilar from the traditional classroom. Instructors or teachers have had to conduct online classes from home typically using free communication platforms with which they are often unfamiliar and many have faced a huge learning curve. However, most universities in Malaysia only provide blended teaching and learning methods that insist on education (Rahman, N. 2015). Due to the pioneered technology, Malaysia's approach became a framework for blended teaching and learning, which combines the advantages of online and physical teaching and learning together (Yeop, *et al.*, 2019). With the implementation of e-learning worldwide, the courses at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) also made an emergency shift to remote learning just like any other post-secondary institution in Malaysia. To ensure quality education, the institution decided to continue the course with synchronous technology which brings more benefits and effectiveness to students compared with asynchronous learning.

However, numerous educators faced a new set of challenges as it is the first time for them to teach remotely. One of the challenges of this learning method, and the focus of this study, is the difficulty in teaching and learning technical courses and the inability to see students' faces during online classes. Instructors struggled to prepare new teaching materials and re-design the teaching delivery that they had prepared months ago to suit the online learning environment. As for students, they were also impacted, from balancing school and home responsibilities to the difficulties of finding a suitable space to participate in the online class as well as completing their assignments and exercises and led to homeschooling and the postponement of tests. The social distancing measurement has precipitated many students confronted with some challenges that consist of campus closures and rapidly shifting to online learning, leading to feelings of uncertainty about their educational future. (Sahu, 2020)

Meanwhile in Egypt, the total lockdown started on the 15th of March 2020, when the pandemic spread out among Egyptians and the hospitals started to face a shortage of oxygen and ICU units. So the Egyptian government decided to stop all normal life activities and started a full lockdown for four months (Ismail, *et al.*, 2021), and accidentally that was at a critical time in the second semester of the Egyptian education system. Online learning in Egypt is not implemented or even a secondary plan in universities, only Cairo University has an electronic master's degree program for those who are not able to attend a former master's classes, and that type is not the premium academic master's but just a professional one. It was a must to look to others' experiences in the lockdown, and the government ordered all universities to find a solution and work online with students without giving a guide on how to teach students. The four months were not well organized in teaching online because of the sudden situations and Egypt was not prepared to shift to online education easily. For media faculties, they were getting grades on projects and small research only, and they didn't get a good education during that period. The government stopped the full lockdown to partial working hours, and the Egyptian Universities decided to apply hybrid education learning (Mohamed Kamal ElDean Amean, *et al.*, 2020) taking all their possible precautions, by reducing the number of students in the auditoriums, teaching halls, and training laboratories, and applying social distancing. When applied to Media students it was much better than the full lock-

down because the hybrid learning was applied to students by attending the theoretical part online and meeting with colleagues on campus the next day to get the practical part of the same course. The students, therefore, had better impressions on an online system, as there is a partial interaction with the professor and also the teaching assistants in class.

-Problems that Malaysia & Egypt face with Online Teaching and Learning (OTL).

When education suddenly changes to a fully online teaching and learning method, some students may lack motivation and are less interested in following through with their lessons when having class in their home due to a lack of self-management skills (Niemi, *et al.*, 2020). Online teaching and learning are more to self-management, in which students can be absent or do other things when having online classes. When the instructor asks a question in the online classes, students can use the poor internet problem as an excuse (Nambiar, 2020).

Simultaneously, internet coverage is a big problem for online teaching and learning, especially for students living in rural areas (Mukuna, *et al.*, 2020). Some students have limited internet access or inadequate internet coverage in their hometowns, as it is difficult for them to reach out for online assessment and lecture classes. Having no internet connectivity is one problem, having no gadgets is another issue altogether. Some lecturers extend assignment submission dates for students due to the internet access issue. Students and instructors experience problems asking questions during the online classes (Seaton, *et al.*, 2014), especially those who have difficulties speaking out in an internet lagging environment. Students have social interaction problems with the lecturers (Aboagye, *et al.*, 2021). The situation of lagging internet speed obstructs the learning process, as it would cause students to miss out on some parts of classes when having live video sessions. This issue requires additional effort from the affected students to search for supplementary material or ask their friends who finished the class. This is also something that affects practical courses.

-Teaching practical courses

Practical courses have significant importance in linking theory with practice and this linking consolidates students' academic and practical

skills. Through practical and lab classes, students can get hands-on experience related to the field more than they did in the classroom and they can develop skills. Teaching practical courses in many programs such as medical, engineering, health, languages, and gastronomy online without application or practical work created greater challenges for universities and institutions (Elhaty, *et al.*, 2020). Practical courses are essential for the students who are studying these majors for many reasons. Firstly; these courses contribute to building the knowledge of the students and their practices in the field study, secondly; the students can't graduate and join the labor market without getting the key skills for their future career (Gribble, *et al.*, 2017); thirdly, most of these courses are prerequisites for other courses students need to register, so they are necessary for students' profiles. Due to the widespread COVID-19 pandemic, many universities all around the world decided to shift their educational programs to online platforms for two reasons - to ensure a continuous learning and teaching process and to adapt to the global strategy to curb the spreading of the pandemic. This transformation from face-to-face classes to home-setting scenarios during lockdown and technological challenges could affect both the students and the academic staff negatively (Svitlychna, *et al.*, 2021). For example, many of the academic staff working in applied and practical colleges didn't experience online teaching before (Elhaty, *et al.*, 2020). Hence, this increased their worries and fears about the new virtual environment and maintaining a reasonable degree of student engagement. At UTAR, instructors have been given e-learning training at the university before the pandemic occurred. For the past 10 years, the staff of the university has had to attend workshops and incorporate at least 10% of the e-learning component into their teaching practices as part of their Key Performance Index (KPI).

Research Questions

Q1. To what extent did the students evaluate their satisfaction with studying practical media courses online during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Q2: To what extent did the students obtain knowledge of practical skills and comprehend their learning outcomes?

Q3: What are the interactive tools used in learning and teaching during the pandemic?

Q4: What are the interactivity behaviors of students in their practical

media courses online?

Q5: What are the advantages and disadvantages of online learning in practical media courses?

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative method in achieving its objectives, as it was conducted on Broadcasting students at UTAR, Malaysia, and International Academy for Engineering & Media Science (IAEMS), Egypt both institutions are from the private education sector and both started working from 20 years, The main difference is that UTAR is using online learning in their curriculum 10 years ago, while IAEMS started using the online learning just after the pandemic and the lockdown. The total sample of students from Malaysia is (n=50) and from Egypt is (n=50). The student numbers are limited as the course is niched to the Broadcast industry and the student intake in both universities is much specified. The current study requested that students report their perceptions of their learning in their Broadcasting courses. The samples were asked to reflect upon the benefits of the courses, their activities and assignments, and the level of learning they achieved during the semester. The data were collected through questionnaires about students' perception and evaluation of online learning, the multimedia tools used in learning, and the advantages and disadvantages of online learning with practical media courses. The questionnaire was distributed via google forms as students in both universities had not returned to the university under the Covid-19 regulation of the universities. The data analysis used was descriptive and was analyzed with a rigorous explanation of the situation in terms of culture and substantiated with theory.

Results

Table 1. Description of the possible sample of the two groups

Country Demographics	Malaysia	Egypt
Age	25-19	24 – 20
Gender		
Female	81.4%	69.1%
Male	18.6%	30.9%
Year of Study		
First Year	11.6%	3.6%
Second / third Year	34.9%	43.6%
Final Year	53.5%	50.9%
IT skills		
Low	18.6%	18.2%
Moderate	74.4%	61.8%
High	18.6%	20%
E-learning experience		
Yes	27.9%	% 31.2
No	72.1%	% 68.8

Table 1 shows the similarity of age between 19-25. The majority in both UTAR and IAEMS are females; these comprise the total respondents to the questionnaire. In terms of year of study, most students were final year students. Students' Skills in information technology (IT) are quite similar between the two universities, which reflects the average ability to broadcast to students using computers and other digital communication tools, also most of the students did not have E-learning experience before.

Table 2. Evaluation of the satisfaction with studying practical media courses online

Evaluation	Malaysia	Egypt
Practical		
Excellent - Good	39.5%	70.9%
Fair – Moderate	44.2%	21.8%
Poor - Very Poor	11.6%	7.3%
Learning achievements		
100%-75	14%	29.1%
75%-50	58.1%	50.9%
50%-25	23.3%	10.9%
25%-0	18.7%	7.3%
Online vs face-to-face		
Excellent	0%	25.5%
Good	30.2%	45.5%
Fair	39.5%	10.9%
Poor	18.6%	14.5%
Very Poor	4.7%	3.6%
Interaction with peers		
Very Easy	7%	9.3%
Easy	30.2%	37%
Neutral	44.2%	37%
Hard	14%	14.8%
Very Hard	4.7%	1.9%

Table 2 illustrates the overall experience of the Egyptian broadcasting students (70.9%) was satisfying more than their Malaysian peers (39.5%) with studying online practical media courses, Egyptian students also had positive tendency towards their learning achievements, (29.1%) gained about (75% - 100%) of the content compared to the Malaysian students who had negative tendency towards their learning achievements (14%), also (25.5%) of the Egyptian students preferred the online learning compared to face to face, while the Malaysian students didn't record any excellent experience. But for the interaction with peers both Egyptian and Malaysian students had a similar moderate interaction attitude with their student groups. From the Egyptian perspective, these

results indicate that students are satisfied with being out of classes and some of them prefer to study from home and attend the lecture from any device.

Table 3. Level of the enhanced practical skills from the online courses

Outcome	Malaysia	Egypt
Enhancing Practical skills		
100%-75	9.3%	22.2%
75%-50	32.6%	57.4%
50%-25	27.9%	14.8%
25%-0	30.3%	3.7%

Table 3 illustrates that the majority of the Egyptian students assured they enhanced their practical skills through attending their practical on-line courses, ($22.2\% + 57.4\% = 79.6\%$) mentioned that the online courses succeeded to enhance their practical skills with a high degree (more than 50%), on the other hand, ($9.3\% + 32.6\% = 40.9\%$) of the Malaysian students argued that they enhanced their practical skills,

Table 4. Interactive tools used in learning and teaching during the pandemic

Tools	Malaysia	Egypt
Multimedia tools used in learning		
Microsoft Teams	97.7%	27.3%
Zoom	76.7%	92.7%
Google Meet	41.9%	9.1%
You tube	30.2%	34.5%
Facebook	25.6%	30.9%
Skype	4.7%	0%
We Chat	2.3%	0%

Usage of Interactive teaching tools		
Screen sharing	97.7%	72.7%
Hand raising / Emoji	86%	12.7%
Break-out group / Channel	69.8%	5.5%
Microphone	90.7%	54.5%
Camera / Webcam	86%	21.8%
Writing in chat box	83.7%	14.5%
Polls/Forms	53.5%	10.9%
White Board	37.2%	25.5%
Online Quizzes	55.8%	29.1%

Table 4 illustrates that Malaysian online learning depended mainly on Microsoft Teams (MT) as a channel of communication between students and their professors. This is because Microsoft Teams is the official platform of teaching and communication in UTAR apart from WBLE which is the Universities in house learning management system. Nevertheless, staff and students do use Zoom and Google Meet, as an alternative to MT and in an informal capacity. YouTube videos are used as an aid in teaching and helping students understand the content of instruction. Meanwhile, Facebook live is used as a means to give notifications or have an informal chat with students and the subjects groups. The table also shows that Malaysian students and instructors use diverse types of interactive teaching tools distributed from the most used to the least used: screen sharing, Microphones, Webcam and hand raising, writing in the chat box, breakout groups, online quizzes, polls & forms, and whiteboard. This differs from the Egyptian students and instructors as online learning depended mainly on Zoom for online lecture streaming and recording as the official channel of communication at IAEMS because online learning was introduced suddenly and Zoom was the suitable platform to use without unified email accounts or unified system that's why it was the best choice at that period, followed by YouTube as a source of illustration videos, and Facebook for subject's groups for main announcements. The main interactive tools used were screen sharing, microphones, online quizzes, whiteboards, webcam, writing in the chat box, hand raising, polls, forms, and breakout groups.

Also from the distribution of high percentages of using different interactive teaching tools, it's clear that Malaysian instructors can use dif-

ferent sources of interactive multimedia tools and ideas to enhance the students' online learning experience, which reflects the high-level experience of the instructors to use different teaching tools (Al-Kumaim, *et al.*, 2021), compared to Egyptian instructors who didn't try different tools to make the students online learning easier and the most used multimedia tools were the screen sharing and microphone which is a basic way of communication with students due to their sudden trial of online learning in their courses, and the quick convert of the materials to be prepared for distance learning.

Table 5. Interactivity level in online learning

Interactivity	Malaysia	Egypt
Online activity		
Group Discussion	93.2%	74.5%
Student Presentation	93.2%	40%
Interactive Q&A	68.2%	30.9%
Role Play	11.4%	7.3%
Interaction during e-learning		
Extremely Interactive	0%	16.1%
Interactive	18.2%	25%
Neutral	63.6%	51.8%
Less Interactive	15.9%	5.4%
Not interactive at all	2.3%	1.8%

The interactivity level of students in online learning is the main target for both Malaysian and Egyptian educators. So student interactivity has been defined as "students' willingness, need, desire, and compulsion to participate in, and be successful in, the learning process" (Bomia, *et.al*, 1997). Course delivery in these online classes requires pedagogical strategies that will create as many learning and engagement opportunities as possible. Looking beyond cognitive skills learned or mastered, engagement focuses on individuals' dispositions or attitudes about classroom experiences and life-long learning (Mandernach, *et al.*, 2011). Student engagement has also been described as the level of interest demonstrated by students, how they interact with others in the course, and their

motivation to learn about the topics (Briggs, 2018). Here it is clear to see that students were interactive in terms of the types of activities they prefer.

Table 5 illustrates that Malaysian & Egyptian students had the same preference to the interactive ways of teaching, but it seems that Malaysian students were exposed to diverse types of interactivity, although they did not record extreme interactivity with their instructors. Unlike the Egyptian students who had online activity through group discussion mainly in most of their subjects, they recorded extreme interactivity (16%), and this indicates the less experience of the Egyptian side from instructors and students to online learning as they thought that this was the best for them at that moment, while Malaysians have a critical view to the way they learn because they are used to online learning tools even before the pandemic.

Table 6. The behaviors of students in using their web cameras during online lectures

Webcam usage	Malaysia	Egypt
Behavior		
Very comfortable	2.3%	10.9%
Comfortable	18.6%	20%
Neutral	53.5%	25.5%
Not Comfortable	23.3%	27.3%
Never	2.3%	16.4%
Reasons		
Feeling Shy	71.4%	35.2%
I don't look good	71.4%	44.4%
I don't like others to see my home	28.6%	18.5%
I am conservative and I don't like others to see my family members	28.6	18.5%
I want to be dressed informally	52.5%	16.7%
I feel afraid of harassment	19%	

In online learning environments, there are many tools available for instructors to gather informal data about student participation in the course. Instructors can review log-in data, several minutes online, views of learning modules or course content, and self-reported information from students by using surveys, reflections, discussions, and other for-

mative tools (Gray & DiLoreto, 2015), in addition to requesting opening the webcams of the students to ensure their presence, but sometimes it is a rule in the university and sometimes it is not. So from (Table 6) the Students in Malaysia, revealed that they had a neutral reaction towards the rule of switching on their cameras (53.5%), but some of them had a concerned from opening the camera that they are feeling shy (71.4%), they feel like they don't look good (71.4%) or they want to be dressed informally and therefore do not want to be seen dressed down (52.5%). A vast majority of the students agreed to the variable of technical issues which affect the respondents to switch on video cameras during synchronous class meetings. Most of the respondents mentioned that their internet connection was weak; hence, they rather not switch on the webcam for the sake of improving the streaming smoothness and stated that the issue of internet connection matters more compared to the issue of the webcam. This assumption becomes more credible when the students indicate that they desire to improve the streaming smoothness thus, they keep their webcam off in online classes. Respondents also brought up that he or she does not encounter difficulties with internet connection and do not aim to improve streaming smoothness of synchronous class meetings, but they do not wish to switch on webcam. In this case, it is being said that this group of the respondents might be influenced by other factors which hinder them to turn on video cameras, in preference to the weak internet connection in their housing area.

Respondents reacted neutrally to the issues regarding housing environments which hinder them to switch on video cameras during synchronous class meetings. Most of the students stated that they were "concerned about my physical location being seen behind me", and "I was concerned about how my classmates would judge my social class based on my housing environment", "I have to talk to my family members", "I do not have a private room or space while attending online classes", "I have to bear family responsibilities", "my family members are not supportive and do not understand me when I need to stay in the room for classes, but asking me to stay in the living room instead". By noticing the statement 'I don't like others to see my home' and 'I am conservative and I don't like others to see my family members' most of the respondents (57.2%) indicated that they agree with the statement. With these being said, some of the students were experiencing certain worries and stresses on account

of online learning that results from their issues with their family members and the environment of their house leads them to feel there is a need to be hidden (Day & Verbiest, 2021). It is obvious to be said that there are students who can switch on their webcam without a second thought and at any time; however, there is also the existence of those who do not have a supportive environment. By observing the aspect of self-issues, it is acceptable to say that a vast majority of the respondents are neutral with the statement mentioned under this category which includes not 'feeling shy', 'I don't look good', 'I want to be dressed informally', this is stated because youngsters nowadays are afraid of being watched as well as judged by peers, scared of being isolated, fear of being alone that causes anxiety.

From the Egyptians' perspective, 10.9% of students felt very comfortable with opening the webcam during a lecture while 16.4% never opened their webcam, which means that it was not always required as a rule from the university and was left to the person's choice, that's why a higher percentage of students didn't experience opening their webcams at all, also most of the fears of opening the webcam were about not looking good at home 44.4% , then they feel shy 35.2%. The remarkable result is the similar percentage among students in the reason (they don't like others to see their home), and the reason (they are conservative and don't like others to see their home members), this might reflect the cultural similarity between Malaysians & Egyptians towards their home privacy.

Table 7. Advantages and Disadvantages of online learning

Online Learning Advantage	Malaysia	Egypt
Ability to stay at home	86%	50%
Access to online materials	76.7%	40.7%
Ability to record a meeting	74.4%	38.9%
Learning on your own pace	67.4%	29.6%
Comfortable surrounding	62.8%	22.2%
Interactive classes	20.9%	25.9%
Isolation	2.3%	---
Online Learning Disadvantage		
Technical Problems	81.4%	43.4%

Lack of Self - Discipline	72.1%	11.3%
Reduced interaction with Teacher/Instructor	55.8%	39.6%
Poor Learning conditions at home	41.9%	24.5%
Social Isolation	41.8%	9.4%
Family members annoyed	2.3%	---

Table 7 demonstrates that all students had the same ranking of the advantages and disadvantages of online learning. Students ranked the ability to stay at home as most advantageous and technical problems such as the weakness in internet connection or total shortage of computers and mobiles hardware or software crashing. But the significant difference is the lack of self-discipline (72.1%) which the Malaysian students claimed in relation to online learning in comparison to 11.3% of the Egyptian students who deny the lack of their self-discipline as the main disadvantage of online learning. Students from the two countries had a common opinion that all creative and thinking writing subjects can be converted to be online all the time and do not need face-to-face interaction.

Conclusion

From the findings, there are major differences between the learning behavior and attitude of media students of both universities, and this reflects the different learning cultures of both countries.

1- Satisfaction: The Egyptian students showed high level of satisfaction to studying practical courses online while Malaysian students showed moderate to low level of satisfaction to studying practical courses online, although Malaysian students are more familiar to e-learning system than Egyptian students but the Malaysian culture is collective and do not prefer learning in isolation, the students seem to prefer the online teaching method as it allows them to learn from the comforts of their own home. Nevertheless, the students still need to engage with their peers and their instructors and seem to be more willing to seek help from instructors and their tendency to learn in small groups helped them consolidate concepts and promote their performance, as is typical of team-based learning compensating for any missing advantages of the holistic approach.

2- Interactivity: Egyptian students were exposed to limited interactive

methods which are Group discussions and some students Presentations. While Malaysian students tends to be exposed equally to different interactive ways which are the group discussion, students presentations, interactive Q&A and role play, these findings are resulted from the establishment of e-learning system over ten years in UTAR which prepared its instructors and students for the concept of a virtual classroom and converting learning and teaching materials for a hybrid landscape, so they are prepared with educational materials suitable for e-learning interactive education.

3- Interactive multimedia tools: Egyptian educators and students tended to use poor interactivity multimedia tools limited to (screen sharing and using microphones and few usage of webcam) and zoom application was widely used in the synchronous e-learning, While Malaysian educators and students used rich interactivity tools (screen sharing/ hand raising/ Emojis/ Breakout groups/ Channels/ Microphones/ Camera/ webcam/ writing in chat box/ Polls/ Forms/ White Board/ Online Quizzes) and used Microsoft Teams as the main synchronous e-learning platform. Students in UTAR stated that classes incorporating interactive teaching tools had a greater impact on their learning compared to students at IAEMS (table 4). Nevertheless, students at IAEMS were more comfortable and confident in their technical skills although they are not using diverse types of interactivity tools, this may be because they had a little experience with online learning as they started to use it from the beginning of the lockdown only, so the students and the instructors think that they did the best of their interactivity with limited tools and they feel satisfied with them, although from another perspective they are not enough for learning.

4- Obtaining Knowledge: Egyptian Students have positive acceptance to the knowledge obtained from the online learning experience, while Malaysian students are tending to the moderate to negative and criticizing more about the quality of online learning compared to the Egyptians because of their previous experience with studying a percentage of their courses in hybrid form.

5- Advantages of online learning: Most of Egyptian & Malaysian students are satisfied with their ability to stay at home and their ability to access online materials, which is important to recall the materials and the recorded lessons to revise them before evaluations.

6- Disadvantages of online learning: Most of Egyptian & Malaysian students groups have the same opinion that the technical issues (hardware – software – internet issues) are the most disadvantage of online learning, and then Egyptian students stated that the lack of interaction with educators is the second disadvantage while Malaysian students see that the lack of self-discipline is the second worst disadvantage.

7- Subjects that can depend on online learning after the pandemic: Egyptian and Malaysian students suggested turning the creative and writing media subjects to online learning system after returning to face to face lectures.

The findings of this study have helped the students and instructors of media practical courses in UTAR and IAEMS to better understand the hidden reasons for the students learning engagement and interactivity in a virtual learning environment and has provided a meaningful insight to Malaysian and Egyptian educators in gaining more information and knowledge about the students with effective and efficient methods that can enhance student interaction. As a university that had established e-learning over ten years, UTAR had prepared its instructors and students for the concept of a virtual classroom and converting learning and teaching materials for a hybrid landscape. This is a method that can be recommended for Egyptian education of higher education to apply even after the pandemic is over and students return to full physical classrooms. If e-learning can be incorporated into a fully physical curriculum to enable the coexistence of synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning, this will be beneficial to both instructors and students and prepare for any educational crisis.

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