Satisfaction and Challenges of Thai College Students on Online Learning during Covid – 19

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to contribute to the field of research on Thai college students' perceptions of online learning during the period of covid-19. Due to the insufficiency of research conducted on Thai universities, the purpose of this study was to fill this gap. Using a questionnaire, the study explored the preferences and difficulties of online and onsite learning among the participants. This investigation centered on Thailand's undergraduate students. Due to the COVID-19 epidemic that began in 2019, students have been forced to deal with the problem of the virus's propagation. This is a problem that the entire world faces daily. Thus, the majority of the population adapted to this viral disease. Including students in the education system had a significant impact on students, preventing them from living a normal life and requiring them to adopt a new learning style by studying online. To comply with social distancing, students were required to conform to government and university-mandated measures. As a result, online learning was implemented as a solution for social isolation in the education sector, despite the fact that this had an effect on the method of learning. The survey results revealed that the majority of respondents prefer hybrid courses that combine online and in-person instruction. This demonstrated that COVID-19 had little effect on learning satisfaction and difficulty. Instead, secondary factors, such as Internet issues and environmental conditions, had a greater impact. The majority of students' survey responses were virtually identical, indicating that they were able to acclimate well to the covid-19 current situation. On the other hand, the survey results revealed that online learning had a negative impact on students' learning experiences when it came to communication and taking exams, which can be problematic for online students.

Keywords: *covid-19, satisfaction, motivation, college students, Thai students, experience, online learning*

1. Introduction

The coronavirus, a newly discovered disease in 2019 that has been infecting individuals on a national scale and was a virus that can transmit in the air, has had an impact on education in every country, with many students contracting the ailment. Governments and educational institutions in each nation decided to close universities and schools until the government can guarantee the process of preventing the further spread of Covid-19 due to the safety of students and their family. However, the education must continue. Since the Covid-19 epidemic has been expected to last longer, several colleges and schools abroad were preparing for students to study online throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

From 2020 to 2021, as both the number of individuals who contracted Covid-19 and the number of people who died from it kept rising, the pandemic had a significant negative influence on Thailand's educational system. Fearing the spread of Covid-19, the Thai government and educational institutions have allowed working from home and studying via online until the Covid-19 pandemic situation is getting better. Thai college students have faced the unexpected changes from classroom education to education via online (Chayomchai et al., 2020).

Reviewing case study from students who participated in online learning during COVID-19 revealed a poor outcome since they were not happy with the online teaching. According to the article "Learners' Satisfaction and Commitment Towards Online Learning During COVID-19" (2021), this case study was done by analyzing and reviewing about "40 empirical studies" to show that there were 7 factors impacting learners' satisfaction and commitment. The 7 factors were "academic issues, accessibility issues, technological skills, mental well-being, lecturers' commitment, learners' satisfaction, and learners' commitment" (Ranadewa et al., 2021).

The research questions included 1) How were the college students satisfied from online learning during Covid-19, 2) What were the major challenges of Thai college students regarding online learning during Covid-19, and 3) Did students from different programs/schools/disciplines/nationality have similar level of satisfaction regarding online learning during Covid-19. This research paper, which focused on Thailand, and aimed to study how students in Thailand perceive online learning. This study looked into the benefits and drawbacks of online learning, as well as the satisfaction and motivation levels of college students who had to study via online during Covid-19 situation. The objective of this study was to assist educational institutions and universities in

understanding how students behave and feel about taking online courses, which will aid in the planning and development of the university's future online courses.

2. Literature Review

The case studies of online learning that were conducted during Covid-19, as well as how students reacted to and performed in online classrooms, are broken down into two distinct categories: case studies from other countries, and case studies from Thailand.

Case Studies from Abroad

Mississippi State University at the United States

Yang and Cornelious (2004) found that Students' online learning experiences fall into two categories: positive experiences and negative experiences. Positive experiences were flexibility, cost-effectiveness, electronic-research, availability, and internet connectivity. Negative experiences were students indicated that the professor's feedback was delayed, lack of technical support from the professor, lack of self-control, lack of self-motivation, and a feeling of isolation (p. 868-869). When students were asked to assess the quality of online learning based on their experience. The responses were moderate, indicating that the students were dissatisfied with the education they received. The student's personality may affect how they feel about their learning. Studying online requires a lot of behavioral changes. The factor that is not related to the character of the student is the professor (p. 872). Moreover, students feel discouraged because of the lack of timely responses. The disorganized content confuses the student when a textbook approach makes learning ineffective for students, Yang and Cornelious (2004) conclude that in ensuring the quality of online learning professor play an important role, and they also suggest that universities should use the IHEP benchmark to measure online course results, and this study also shows that more research is needed to improve curricula, communication, and using the multimedia.

Bournemouth University at United Kingdom

Toheeb Adediran (2020) found that the big challenge is using technology and equipment procurement. The lack of computer proficiency and the relatively high workload discourage students. When adapting to distance learning via the Internet, most students are worried about their future careers and academic problems. They feel bored, nervous, and irritable. Toheeb Adediran recommends that education should encourage everyone to formulate countermeasures to cope with the uncertainty of future situations like the Covid-19 situation. Education should be aware of the problem of distance learning via the Internet as well.

Dow University of Health Sciences at Pakistan

Sarwar et al. (2020) stated that, according to the article "Self-Reported Effectiveness of e-Learning Classes during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Nation-Wide Survey of Pakistani Undergraduate Dentistry Students," the objective of the research is to study the effectiveness of online classes. The results indicate that the majority of the 1,207 dentistry students from throughout Pakistan who took part in the online survey are unhappy with studying via online courses and the "quality of learning resources accessible." Dentistry requires on-site practical instruction from dental professors who can supervise students' training processes and provide appropriate advice. A case study of undergraduate dentistry students taking online classes is one relevant research article. Numerous colleges and institutions were compelled to temporarily stop holding on-site lectures because of the Covid-19 outbreak until the government could guarantee the safety of people from Covid-19 and people getting fully vaccinated. The efficiency of online classes given by professors, the students' understanding of the online class lectures, and other topics have all been the subject of several case studies on students' experiences with online courses.

Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT)

Ranadewa et al., (2021) stated that if the Covid-19 epidemic were to continue, satisfaction with online learning efficiency would be measured by offering a conceptual model that is organized. The study was based on a literature review that evaluated and analyzed around 40 empirical studies. "The literature review examined journal and research articles on online learning and e-learning during COVID-19 from worldwide and local scholars during the preceding five years" (Ranadewa et al., 2021). Several factors, including "academic issues, accessibility issues, technological skills, mental well-being, and lecturer commitment," appear to have a significant impact on the effectiveness of online learning, as evidenced by the Covid-19 findings. These factors

contribute to learner satisfaction and learner responsibility (Ranadewa et al., 2021). In addition, there are no experimental studies evaluating the effectiveness of online learning (Ranadewa et al., 2021). Therefore, this research article presents a new structured conceptual model comprised of seven factors, including academic issues, accessibility issues, technological skills, mental well-being, lecturers' commitment, learners' satisfaction, and learners' commitment, demonstrating how each factor influences learners' satisfaction and commitment (Ranadewa et al., 2021).

Case studies from Thailand

Faculty of Education, and Learning and Technology Innovation Center and Khon Kaen University in Thailand

According to Somabut & Tuamsuk (2021), students are obliged to study in their residence halls, houses, or apartments while the COVID-19 virus is spreading on campus. They are unable to concentrate well in their courses or anywhere else on campus. Students benefit greatly from the new adventure that is online learning. The majority of people have never participated in a completely online educational experience. Learners may face a variety of obstacles, including those related to responsibility, self-regulation, study planning, self-evaluation of their own learning, and time allocation for the achievement of their learning goals.

The Faculty of Curriculum and Instruction, Ramkhamhaeng University

According to Imsa-ard (2020), indicate that the perceptions of university students in Thailand about the unexpected transition to "forced" online learning as a consequence of the COVID-19 problem have been explored and evaluated. This was done as a result of the fact that the COVID-19 issue was brought up. The study focuses on five aspects: the benefits of online education, the methods that teachers use to teach, the degree to which students are receptive to online education, and the challenges that are linked with it. The views expressed by the students were varied, but for the most part they were negative. The vast majority of students had the opinion that the "forced" online learning environment did not enhance the overall quality of the education or encourage proper access to it. Despite the fact that the majority of students believed that their teachers were unable to effectively plan the lessons, those students said that they were pleased with the constructive comments and support they got from their teachers. In addition, most students said that they were able to study online and did so without much difficulty; nevertheless, some did report experiencing some technological challenges. Many students also believed that in-person classrooms were more enjoyable than online ones and chose to attend in-person classes rather than participate in online ones. In addition to this, many claimed that they had little interest in carrying on their education online. Concerning challenges, many students who participated in online education experienced a few distinct obstacles during their studies, such as communication and technology concerns. In addition to this, they found that when students were studying online, it was very easy for them to get distracted, and they quickly lost motivation.

Graduate School of Commerce, Burapha University

According to Susiva (2021), Thai university students thought online learning was acceptable during the pandemic, although it was less successful than on-site learning. Universities' most prevalent online teaching strategy is to use online meeting platforms. Google Meets and Zoom meetings are the most popular. However, there are a few universities that provide instructors and students with many platforms to choose from based on their interests, and these students seem to have a better experience. Personal variables that influence the online learning experience include age, level of education, family income, and talents, however the sole delivery method that influences the online learning experience is the online learning platform. The data may also indicate that undergraduate and graduate students have distinct online learning experiences. Finally, it was shown that online learning experience is positively correlated with the efficacy of the results. Therefore, if the institution wants to enhance the efficacy of the results, it should consider providing students with a more enriching educational experience.

3. Objective
1) To find out the preference of college students toward either online study or onsite study.
2) To provide this study to help Thai educational institutions understanding college student's satisfactions and challenges during online studying.
3) To study what could be forces of influence that could help college students study online effectively.

4) To study what could be the significant problems that could impact both professor's lectures and college students learning via online.

4. Study Hypothesis

H1: Studying Online was positively associated with satisfaction.

H2: Concentration is the biggest challenge of studying online during Covid-19.

H3: The age range can consider the perceived opportunities for online learning during COVID-19.

H4: Hybrid class was positively associated with satisfaction for online learning during COVID-19.

5. Methodology

This research study was carried out at Rangsit university, which is located in Pathum Thani province of Thailand. Because the Covid-19 pandemic that occurred between 2020 and 2022's first and second quarters caused a panic situation, Rangsit University has implemented a new class regulation that required students to attend their classes online rather than on campus. Therefore, Rangsit students had around two years of prior experience in learning online through the use of various online meeting platforms and programs.

Google Forms (https://docs.google.com/forms) was utilized in the process of designing the questionnaire for the survey. Through the use of the LINE program and the scanning of QR codes, the form was disseminated to LINE groups comprised of Rangsit students as well as Rangsit international college students. This research is based on 20 questions that identify participants' demographic information, challenges, difficulties, feelings toward online study, satisfaction, and preference during the Covid-19 pandemic. The purpose of this research is to study how students feel about online study via internet platforms. The Yamane method $[n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}]$ was used to estimate the sample size from a particular population using the questionnaire (Uakarn et al., 2021). Since we wanted to keep the margin of error at a value of 5 percent, we conducted the questionnaire and were able to receive the total response of 318 students from Rangsit university (Israel,1992). The implementation of the Yamane formula yielded the conclusion that the appropriate sample size for the minimal requirements was 177 students by using the population study of 318 that we successfully obtained the completed answers to our questionnaire.

In addition, the Cronbach's Alpha formular $[\alpha = \frac{K}{K-1}\left(1 - \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{K} \sigma_{Y_i}^2}{\sigma_X^2}\right)]$ was applied to evaluate the scale of reliability and reflect the level of internal consistency that the questionnaire possessed (Bonett & Wright, 2015). The value of Cronbach's Alpha that was obtained at by the calculation is 0.76843, which indicates an acceptable level of internal consistency (Table 7). The survey was divided into five categories, with a total of 318 respondents. In the first section, students were asked for their demographic information, including nationality, gender, and age range (Table 1). In the second section, students who participated in the survey indicated challenges and obstacles (Table 2). In the third section of the survey, students' attitudes toward online learning, including whether they were productive or unproductive during online classes, were measured (Table 3). In the fourth section, satisfaction and preference were used to determine whether students were content with how their professor handled online teaching, how students participate in online class, and whether if they prefer studying on campus more than online class (Table 4). In the final section, students could choose whether they would prefer an online class, an onsite class, or a hybrid class (Table 5).

6. Result

Table 1 The demographic of respondents (Total respondents = 318)

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent (%)
Nationality:		
Thai	269	84.6%
China	15	4.7%
American	4	1.3%
Europe	2	0.6%
Myanmar	16	5.0%
Indian	1	0.3%
Other	11	3.5%
Gender:		
Male	91	28.6%
Female	227	71.4%
Age range:		

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent (%)
12-18	18	5.7%
18-24	269	84.6%
24-28	28	8.8%
Above 28	3	0.9%

According to Table 1, 84.6% of the participants were Thai, 4.7% were Chinese, 1.3% were Americans, 0.6% were European, 5.0% were from Myanmar, 0.3% were Indian, and 3.5% were of other nationalities. In addition, 71.4% of the participants in the study were female and 28.6% were male university students. The majority of participants were between 12 and 18 years old (5.7%), 18 to 24 years old (84.6%), 24 to 28 years old (8.8%), and 28 or older (0.9%).

Table 2 Cronbach's Alpha α = Reliability

Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Classification
Challenges and Difficulties:		
Technology		
Internet		
Concentration		
Comprehension	Alpha = 0.822	GOOD
Interaction		
Communication		
Environment		
Exam		
Satisfaction:		
Teaching method		
Time management		
Lectures' technology skills	Alpha = 0.782	ACCEPTABLE
Online class participation		
Motivation		
How do you prefer having onsite class?		

Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Classification
318 Respondents 20 Questions	0.768	0.774	ACCEPTABLE

The results of this research model's statistical analysis were shown in Table 2. The alpha values served as the basis for determining the survey's reliability. The recognized value of alpha for assessing reliability is higher than 0.70, as stated by Nunnally (1994) and She et al. (2021), and each component was regarded as trustworthy based on standard and Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.782 to 0.82

Table 3 Challenge and Difficulty of studying online during Covid-19 Pandemic (Total respondent = 318)

	Technology	Internet	Concentration	Comprehension	Interaction	Communication	Environment	Exam
			Difficulty Level 1 to 5 of studying online during Covid-19 Pandemic					
Mean	2.471698	2.679245	3.389937	3.226415	3.207547	3.185535	3.194969	3.003145
Standard Error	0.066757	0.06924	0.067819	0.066044	0.070449	0.06652	0.068276	0.067771
Standard Deviation	1.190453	1.234728	1.209385	1.177735	1.25628	1.186216	1.217527	1.208535
Kurtosis	-0.75435	-0.87454	-0.79672	-0.81747	-0.90321	-0.89895	-0.96304	-0.83084
Skewness	0.36674	0.235324	-0.28937	-0.14449	-0.16708	-0.08997	-0.09359	0.09106
Sum	786	852	1078	1026	1020	1013	1016	955

Challenge and associated online issues in Thai college students' online learning obtained the highest scores of any statistical measure, as shown in the results section. The research focused on the difficulties that the majority of Thai college students had during COVID-19 online learning; the majority of students were coming from home or dorms where attention was strained as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, as all students shifted to work online. Learners had trouble concentrating in online classrooms, and students described this as the most significant issue. Other students were unable to focus on mobile internet learning because they were easily distracted by other applications. In addition to technology, the internet, understanding, interaction, communication, the surroundings, and the examination, the students encountered a variety of additional challenges.

Table 4 Satisfaction of Studying online during Covid-19 Pandemic (Total respondent = 318)

	Teaching method	Time management	Lectures' technology Skills	Online class participation	Motivation	How do you prefer having onsite class?
			Satisfaction Level 1 to 5 of Studying online during Covid-19 Pandemic			
Mean	2.896226	3.053459	3.037736	2.833333	2.672956	3.845912
Standard Error	0.051904	0.058254	0.054874	0.059441	0.057041	0.060866
Standard Deviation	0.925584	1.038822	0.978551	1.059978	1.017183	1.085392
Kurtosis	-0.1703	-0.33755	-0.25086	-0.46725	-0.41166	0.146212
Skewness	-0.0084	-0.02241	0.025813	0.113435	0.201863	-0.77759
Sum	921	971	966	901	850	1223

In consideration of the COVID-19 problem, this discussion examined the overall happiness of students with online education. Initially, the majority of students were first-time Internet users. They lacked the time management skills necessary for online learning through a new medium. After some time, the majority of students were able to overcome the majority of online learning system obstacles. Despite this, Thai institutions continued to have issues with online education in the midst of the pandemic. These findings contributed to the growing body of literature on the significant challenges and problems that Thai college students encountered during the sudden transition to online learning as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the necessary steps were required to facilitate the online education process and overcome these reported problems.

Table 5 If it is possible to choose which one do you prefer? (On-site, online, or hybrid class)

	Frequency	Percent (%)
On-site class	111	34.9%
Online class	31	9.7%
Hybrid class	176	55.3%

	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation	Kurtosis	Skewness	Sum
Question: If it is possible to choose which one do you prefer?	2.2044	0.05211	0.92922	-1.717	-0.418	701

Based on the findings, 34.9% of the people who participated were preferred. 9.7% of respondents indicated a preference for online classes, while the remaining students indicated a preference for hybrid classes.

7.   Conclusion

According to the findings of the survey, college students in Thailand indicated a level of satisfaction with online learning that ranges from moderate to high. It helps discover other ways to study such as switching classes between online and on-site according to the occasion and suitability or using teaching materials and managing tasks via the Internet. It is great for distance learners.

The students' level of satisfaction with other aspects of the course, such as the teaching approach, the management of their time, the technological abilities of the lecturers, their involvement in online classes, and their level of motivation, was moderate. Online learning is more prevalent in the COVID-19 situation. Most students in Thailand are unfamiliar with this learning process. This caused problems in managing learning via the Internet, but they were able to adapt well.

On the other hand, when asked about their choice between traditional on-campus programs, online classes, and hybrid classes, more than half of students said they would choose the hybrid classes. As mentioned above, most students discover new ways of learning by considering the appropriate method in each subject, for example, if it is not practical. It can be considered to study online.

The most significant obstacle confronted by Thai college students was concentration, which ranges from moderate to high levels of challenge because most students study online from home and are in stressful situations due to the COVID situation, it is easy to be disturbed by stimuli such as phone.

Other challenges, including technology, the internet, comprehension, interaction, communication, the environment, and examinations, range from low to moderate levels of difficulty. Internet issues can arise all the time for online learning, and sometimes confuse access to online classes. Online learning results in lack of interaction resulting in little to no communication between the learners. Although most students are able to adapt to online learning, they encounter different challenges, and can discover new ways of learning which hopefully will benefit the Thai education system in the future.

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