

Students' perceptions of online assessment, feedback practices, and challenges

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ABSTRACT

Online learning has become an integral part of today's educational system, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. In art and design classrooms, which usually require face-to-face critique as part of a cycle of action and reflection, students may face challenges with the rapid transition to online assessment and feedback approaches. Consequently, it is curial to investigate these challenges as well as students' perceptions towards the online assessment and feedback methods that they have experienced. This student-oriented study investigated art and design students' preferences, concerns, and challenges with online assessment and feedback strategies. Moreover, it explored the most effective online assessment and feedback tools and applications for art and design courses. The research adopted a quantitative method by conducting a questionnaire with 104 art and design students of a university in Bahrain and a university in Jordan. Based on the findings, the study seeks to ultimately provide art and design educators with insights and recommendations for the most effective art and design assessment practices.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As online learning is evolving rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic, educators and students had to deal with various challenges [1]–[3]. Effective implementation of online assessment and feedback is one of the core issues, which had to be investigated as the educators were obliged to shift to digital assessment tools. The students consequently needed to adapt to new assessment methods.

Assessment is one of the key components that provide students and their instructors with opportunities to evaluate academic performance and progress, develop skills, and gain knowledge. It also allows instructors to measure students' achievements and grades as indicators of success or failure in achieving the course learning outcome [4], [5]. Nonetheless, there is hardly any recent relevant literature about online assessment approaches in art and design classrooms. Therefore, this paper investigates art and design students' preferences, experiences, concerns, and challenges toward online assessment and feedback tools. It also explores the most effective online assessment and feedback practices for art and design students.

The next section highlights the global online assessment and feedback practices implemented in art and design classrooms. The third section explores the art and design students' perceptions and preferences toward existing digital assessment and feedback approaches at the University of Bahrain and Petra University in Jordan. Based on the research findings, the conclusion provides recommendations for effective student-oriented online assessment and feedback approaches in art and design classrooms.

As universities shifted rapidly to online learning due to the sudden outbreak of COVID-19, many doubts and questions related to online assessment and feedback approaches started arising. These doubts stemmed from “the limited exposure of teachers to online teaching” prior to the pandemic, and the uncertainty and confusion that they felt, which led many of them to carry out online assessment, with “a lot of trial and error” [6]. Online assessment and feedback in practice-based disciplines, such as art and design, could be challenging due to several reasons. Evaluating the quality of ink used in a printed design, determining the texture of paper, or accurately seeing the value of the actual color painted on canvas are not possible through the screen. Such limitations may lead to some concerns among art and design students and may cause a lack of communication, misunderstandings, and unfairness during online assessment and feedback. Other concerns may arise due to the technical issues that may prevent students from completing or uploading their projects on time, which may affect their assessment and grades. There may also be additional challenges and concerns that are related to the peculiarities of distance education in arts and design, which necessitate further attention, exploration, and analysis. According to Doucet *et al.* [7], there is no one-size-fits-all online learning strategy as there are a variety of specializations with varying challenges and requirements. This study focuses on students’ perceptions towards online assessment and feedback methods within the context of higher education in art and design. Because recent research revealed that educators are in a “dilemma” as to which approaches and “which tools to adopt” [6] this paper will investigate students’ preferences and recommendations in an attempt to provide their educators with insights and suggestions to help them employ relevant assessment and feedback strategies and utilize the most effective tools and platforms for this discipline.

The research questions of the article are: i) What are art and design students’ preferences, experiences, concerns, and challenges with online assessment and feedback?; ii) What are the most effective online assessment and feedback practices and tools for art and design students?; and iii) How can the online assessment and feedback experience be improved for art and design students? While the research objectives are: i) To investigate art and design students’ concerns and challenges related to online assessment and feedback; ii) To examine and understand art and design students’ preferences and experiences of online assessment and feedback; iii) To explore and recommend effective online assessment and feedback practices in art and design education; and iv) To investigate and recommend the most effective online assessment and feedback practices, tools, and applications for art and design courses.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic has forcefully shifted education from face-to-face to online learning in most, if not all, higher education institutions. In an attempt to mitigate the adverse impact of the pandemic, educational institutions initiated the momentum of educating the students through different types and ways of e-learning, assessments, and feedback [8]. Distance learning played a significant role in “helping students face the challenges of learning without face-to-face processes” [8]. Yet, distance learning is a new experience for many teachers and students. Because of their lack of experience with distance learning [9], students have been experiencing anxiety [10] as they faced some challenges with online learning and assessment [11] which led to uncertainties about their performance and progress. Reassuring students through targeted communication, assessment, and feedback became a priority, and educators must give their students full attention in order to reassure them [12].

Online learning is evolving, and methods of assessing students’ learning are constantly being reviewed, developed, and improved. This also applies to art and design education, which requires specific online assessment and feedback approaches such as public critique, cyclic feedback, and other approaches that are relevant to practice-based courses. Some researchers believe that art and design courses cannot be taught completely remotely because “they are application-oriented” [13]. Each branch of science has different characteristics, requirements and specific educational philosophy that it is based on [14]; thus each practice had its own difficulties and adaptation problems which may affect assessment methods during the transition to online education. Conducting assessment in visual arts may be more challenging due to issues that may lead to concerns related to the reliability and validity of educators’ subjective judgments [15].

In the Kingdom of Bahrain, the education system’s efforts in investing in ICT infrastructure had reflected through the instant adoption of distance learning technologies during the pandemic [1], [16]. Consequently, the Ministry of Education and Bahrain Information and eGovernment Authority adopted several distance learning approaches by joining the Microsoft Teams and Office 365 programs and Amazon Web Services to provide the students and teachers with a learning portal to continue their studies remotely. Bahrain, like the rest of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, is equipped with learning management systems (LMS), such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Blackboard, Google Classroom and other platforms that enabled educational institutions to have a flexible shift from traditional learning to distance learning [17].

In an attempt to ensure the education quality and to leverage the distance learning methods and tools, the Ministry of Education and Microsoft conducted a series of e-workshops to train educators on how to better use remote learning and assessment tools. The ministry also offered a quality assurance system to assist/support teachers and students in using Microsoft Teams [17], [18]. Thus, the rapid implementation of effective virtual learning platforms and strategies in many educational institutions in Bahrain is the outcome of wide-ranging endeavors and investments over time in robust ICT infrastructure, advanced technologies, and innovative learning pedagogies [19]. In Jordan, on the other hand, the Ministry of Higher Education did not have adequate policies to support universities to incorporate elements of modern educational technologies used in distance learning before COVID-19 [20]. In the beginning of COVID-19, Jordan implemented e-learning systems in its higher education institutions and started to use blended learning to teach students and to develop new ideas as it empowered ICT infrastructures in education institutions [21], [22].

In various parts of the world, educators started experimenting with various assessment strategies, and provided recommendations for effective assessment and feedback through e-learning. There are several studies to explore and determine effective assessment and feedback strategies [23]–[27]. According to Fjortoft [23], “Embedding performance assessment tasks as part of classroom learning activities is considered a viable strategy for teachers seeking to integrate learning and assessment.” Assessment is an essential constituent of the curriculum, which is frequently not given sufficient attention during the curriculum-planning process [15]. Boughton stated, “When it is well designed, assessment can promote creative thinking and risk-taking; poorly designed assessments can do the opposite” [15]. Thus, a well-structured curriculum must clearly consist of appropriate forms of assessment that effectively enable instructors to evaluate the extent to which students have achieved the objectives and the course learning outcomes.

In accordance with the previous view, Joshi *et al.* [25], stressed that “assessment is resource-intensive and needs careful evaluation and response to learner’s objectives and details of how the target was achieved”. A recent study suggested the inclusion of asynchronous, synchronous, or a combination of both, which gives the learner the ability to interact with the instructor using different educational platforms, in which different assessment methods and learning practices are applied [14]. Assessments of learning visual arts need to focus on a broad spectrum of criteria ranging from learning conceptual and theoretical information to technical and design skills as well as interpersonal and communication skills. Art and Design educators are familiar and acquainted with traditional face-to-face approaches of assessing all these skills. However, more difficulties, challenges, and also opportunities may arise when educators attempt to assess creative artistic expression and provide their feedback on it remotely [28]. Dilmaç [13] conducted a study that aims to determine the challenges and the opinions of undergraduate students in Turkey regarding learning art and design remotely. According to some students, the exams in online platforms usually consist of multiple-choice questions, which limit the variety and possibilities of normally written exams. Moreover, if the infrastructure of the educational institution is not prepared for e-learning, students may encounter many technical issues while conducting the exam. Some students may encounter difficulties in completing their exams or uploading their projects due to technical or internet connection problems [13]. Some students believe that “the online examination system in online education is not sufficient to evaluate the student” [13]. Others feel that distance education does not allow students to easily work in groups and socialize like they used to do while working on projects.

Despite all the challenges, distance education in an art and design context may lead to positive outcomes and opportunities. Online assessments through various online teaching platforms can allow for comprehensive, formative feedback that can structure the students’ learning process, and help them to self-evaluate and enhance their learning outcomes while preparing for summative assessment. These types of assessments are globally recognized as important elements of the educational experience, because they provide true evidence of learning, determine students’ progress, and demonstrate understanding of the course objectives. In art and design classrooms, cyclic assessment and feedback are the main core component of students’ learning process and progress especially because educators need to implement assessment for learning in addition to assessment of learning [14]. Online assessment, if applied effectively, may give students the advantage of higher control on their projects and their overall learning experience by using friendly interface applications such as Moodle and Microsoft Teams. It may allow for higher flexibility on timing and delivering projects, fast and easy accessibility from remote areas, receiving immediate quantitative as well as qualitative feedback from instructor, and increased motivation to enhance performance [25]. Distance education and online assessment make it possible to reach a wide range of attendees [29] and allow educators’ to easily invite other students, graduates, artists, and designers to any virtual session that involves submissions and presentations of projects and requires public critique. Thus, students will have the opportunity to easily receive peer feedback as well as feedback from experts in the field.

Another benefit is that the time required to commute to and from university can now be dedicated to studying and working on projects, which may help students manage their time and demonstrate higher levels of performance [29], [30]. Their performance level may also become higher because their access to a variety

of online resources has become easier [13]. In the study conducted by Dilmaç [13] in Turkey, some art and design students indicated that working on their projects in a quiet and comfortable environment at home makes them more productive and “positively affects their performance”. Another benefit that was voiced by some students in the study is that many educators replaced exams with home works, assignments, and projects, which allowed them to read more articles and learn from various electronic resources. One of the students thought weekly assignments during the pandemic increase students’ mental activity and help them feel positively occupied and even more responsible during quarantine. Another student indicated that one of the opportunities of distance education is that students learned to develop online galleries to display their artworks. These galleries can be saved and re-visited by anyone from any part of the world over and over again in the future. These online galleries and any student projects can be assessed by external examiners from various parts of the world.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The paper involves a descriptive analysis of literature on the global online assessment and feedback practices in art and design distance classrooms. It also involves conducting a questionnaire with a purposive sample of 104 undergraduate art and design students studying at the University of Bahrain and Petra University in Jordan during the spring semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. A quantitative method approach was adopted to collect and analyze data. The survey was designed to obtain information about the students’ online assessment experiences, challenges, perceptions, and their evaluation of specific aspects such as effects of various online assessment and feedback methods on the learning process and usage preferences of online assessment tools and approaches. Several open-ended questions were included in the survey to explore students’ perceptions of online assessment methods.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this section is to report on an analysis of the challenges, preferences, and perceptions among a sample of art and design students in Bahrain and Jordan. The study surveyed 104 art and design students from The University of Bahrain (n=51, 49%) and Petra University in Jordan (n=53, 51%). These students were reached through purposive sampling via an announcement by their instructors, who encouraged them to volunteer by participating in the survey. An online survey designed in SurveyMonkey was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data from the students.

The majority of the students who participated in the survey were specialized in Graphic Design (n=36, 35%). The rest of the students were from various related disciplines including fine arts, animation, and multimedia. When asked about the assessment approaches that they prefer, the majority of the students (n=68, 65%) indicated that they prefer direct face-to-face assessment rather than online assessment as displayed in Figure 1.

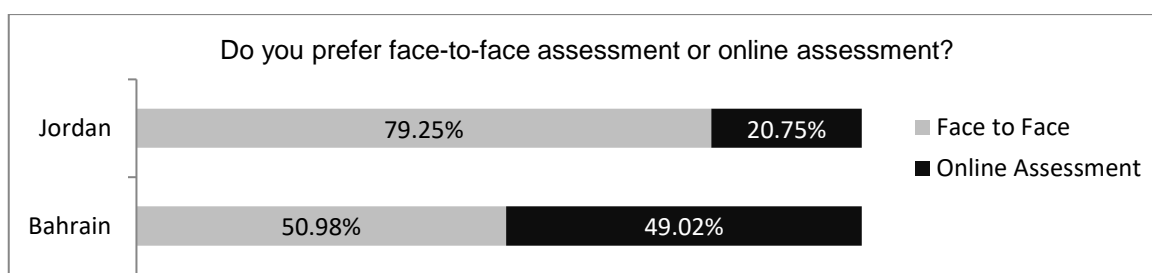


Figure 1. The number of students who prefer face-to-face assessment and students who prefer online assessment in Bahrain and Jordan

However, it is important to note that among the 51 participants from the University of Bahrain, 26 students preferred face-to-face assessment while 25 students preferred online assessment. Since the difference is not significant, it is possible to infer that the students’ experiences of face-to-face assessment and online assessment in Bahrain are almost equally effective. On the other hand, at the University of Petra, there is a significant disparity between the number of participants who prefer face-to-face assessment (n=42, 80%) and the number of participants who prefer online assessment (n=11, 21%). It is vital to understand the challenges that may have led to this disparity at the University of Petra, and which if resolved

may allow students to perceive online assessment as equally effective as face-to-face assessment as is the case at the University of Bahrain. Upon further analysis of the challenges faced by the students at the University of Petra and comparing them with the challenges faced by students at the University of Bahrain, the results revealed some similarities and some differences. The main issues that were ranked as most challenging by students in Jordan but ranked as the least challenging by students in Bahrain as shown in Figure 2, and which may be considered among the main factors that led to a major difference in the experience of online assessment between both universities are: i) Difficulty knowing the elements that require development and modification in the design or artwork that the instructor refers to while providing feedback on the projects; and ii) Not getting enough time to present the project and all its aspects. Focusing on resolving and minimizing these two particular challenges may therefore be considered critical in significantly transforming the online assessment experience into an experience that is equally effective and preferable as face-to-face assessment by students.

In accordance with the majority of students' preference of face-to-face assessment approaches, most of the students (n=46, 44%) indicated that online learning and assessment negatively influenced their academic performance, 34% of the students (n=35) indicated that it did not affect their performance, and only 22% (n=23) believed that it influenced their performance positively. Many of the students, who indicated that their academic performance was positively impacted, stated that not having to go to the university saved their time for working on their projects and achieving better outcomes. One of them noted that because learning had to be done remotely, he was worried about getting lower marks. This motivated him to try harder to design and present his work in the best way possible, which led him to achieve higher grades. Another reason for his improved performance is "the availability of numerous online resources, which helped him get exposed to more knowledge, information, and skills".

On the other hand, students who indicated that their academic performance was negatively impacted, stated a number of reasons. One of them stated that during juries or presentations, he/she does not get enough time to present and defend the project. Another student stated, "the artworks are of lower quality when photographed and the colors in the paintings change". This opinion was reiterated by one more student who stated that photographing the painting does not give it justice. One of the students also believes that "practical courses are not suitable for any form of distance education". Another reason, which was stated is that the pandemic has adversely affected students' mental health and hence their academic performance. Thus, there is no doubt that students faced some challenges not only in learning remotely but also in being assessed and given feedback remotely. The investigation of the difficulties that they faced revealed several salient challenges. The foremost prominent challenge is that the tones and colors of some hand-drawn artworks change when photographed and sent over the Internet (n=59, 57%). The second most challenging issue is the inability to see the instructors' expressions and to clearly and visually understand their reactions and impressions of the submitted projects (n=59, 57%). The third most challenging matter is not having enough time to present the project in all its aspects. The rest of the challenges are displayed in Figure 2.

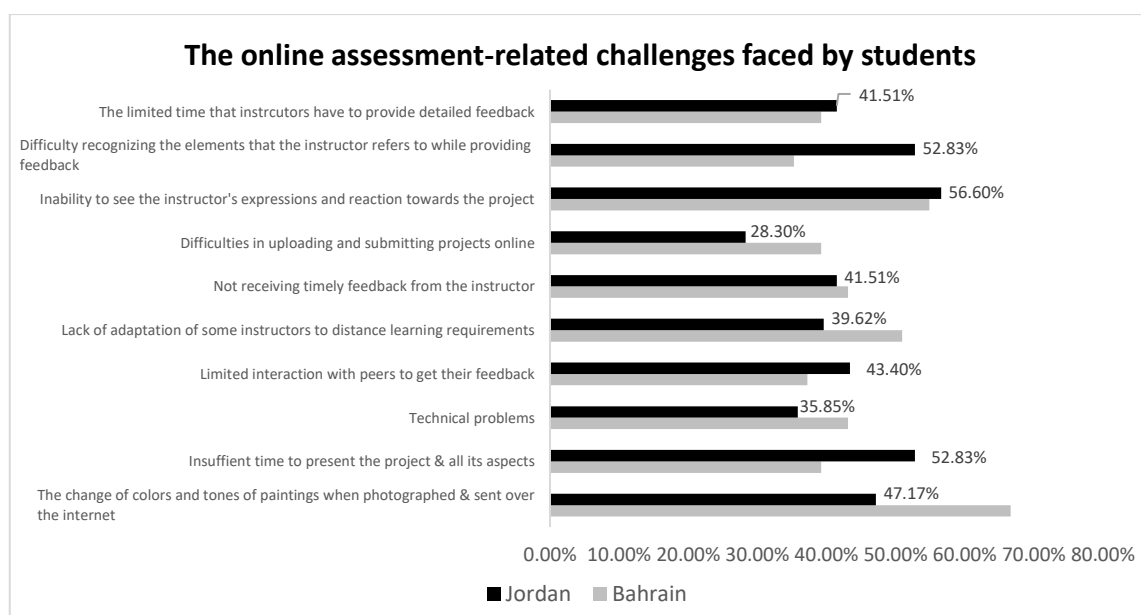


Figure 2. Challenges faced by art and design students with online assessment and feedback approaches

Students' perceptions of online assessment, feedback practices and challenges (Sama'a Al Hashimi)

In addition to the challenges, the students also expressed some concerns. One of them stated that the exam duration might not be enough to complete it, especially if the internet connection is bad and if the student faces technical issues during the exam. Another student complained suggesting that it is hard to remotely communicate with classmates for group projects and to motivate them to cooperate. A third student expressed his/her worry that online assessment might not be fair.

The students were also asked to rank a list of additional possible concerns that they might have. The extent of equity and fairness in assessment was the utmost concern for the majority of participants (n=68, 65%). The second most cause of concern is “technical issues” (n=57, 55%), which has also been recurrently reported as an issue of concern by students in other higher education institutions [31]. The third cause of concern is having less opportunity to get clarifications and details on project specifications and requirements, followed by the unclarity in assignment guidelines. Their least concern was the instructors’ level of proficiency in technology, probably because the instructors in such disciplines as graphic design, animation, and multimedia usually have good design and technical skills and may easily adapt to the skills and approaches required for distance education.

It is worthy to note that unlike what may be expected, technical problems and difficulties related to the upload and submission of project files online were considered the least challenging of all the difficulties that students encountered. It is also important to remark that even though technical issues were considered least challenging, they were considered the second most concerning issue to the students. This disparity may be an indication of the students’ and their instructors’ technical abilities and skills as designers, which enabled them to deal with many of the technical issues they may have faced in the past. Yet, when addressing their concerns, which are associated with their emotions rather than their mental abilities and technical skills and which are also pertinent to the unknown future, they still feel concerned about the technical problems that they may face at any moment while attempting to submit their projects or to do their exams. Perhaps, these challenges and concerns are also related to their preference in terms of whether they prefer to be assessed through only one assessment approach or a variety of approaches and methods.

The majority of students (n=71, 68%) indicated that they prefer the latter. Because the majority of students indicated that equity and fairness in assessment was their top concern, the majority of them also prefer to be assessed through a variety of approaches to ensure fairness in assessment. One of the students, for instance, stated that s/he prefers a variety of assessment approaches because this allows the instructor to look at and evaluate the project from different perspectives, which will allow for a more accurate assessment. Another student remarked that the multiplicity of assessment methods will increase the opportunities for the instructor and the student to discover and appreciate the aspects in which the student is creative and will allow them both to hone the other aspects, which require further enhancement.

Other students also believed that it would be more logical and fairer to apply various assessment methods in accordance with the varying projects and their specifications and learning outcomes. One of the students also suggested not limiting assessments to the presentation only, but mainly assessing the work that the students submit electronically in the event of their absence during presentations for any reason, including internet connection problems. This need for more flexibility was also reiterated by another student who believes that getting written feedback in addition to vocal feedback will be more effective, especially when the internet connection is weak, and the student is unable to clearly hear the instructor’s verbal feedback. This belief corresponds with the feedback preferences of the majority of students; when they were asked to rank their most preferred ways of getting feedback on projects, most of the students indicated that their most preferred way is to listen to the voiced comments of the instructor immediately after the project is presented during the virtual lecture as shown in Figure 3. The second preferred way is to receive written feedback outside lecture time via an e-learning platform. Another preference of an equal weight to students is to directly contact the instructor to get instant feedback during an online meeting. The least preference is receiving a video recording that contains the instructor’s feedback outside the lecture time.

These preferences may indicate the importance for students to have the opportunity to interact with the instructor while receiving feedback, either to explain a specific point of view, to further defend the project, or to enquire about any unclear aspect in the feedback. It may be logical to correlate the aforementioned preferences with the students’ most preferred digital platforms or applications for getting online feedback from the instructor. The findings revealed that the majority of art and design students prefer getting online feedback through Microsoft Teams, followed by WhatsApp, e-mail, Blackboard, Moodle, and Zoom, respectively as displayed in Figure 4. Because getting instant vocal feedback during the presentation of projects was the most preferred feedback option among the participants, and because Microsoft Teams is one of the main online platforms that the students use in The University of Bahrain and at Petra University, it seems reasonable for students to select Microsoft Teams as their most preferred platform for receiving feedback. It allows for live feedback during the lecture and text feedback during or outside the lecture time. It allows screen sharing, conducting online meetings or office hours, making a voice call as well as sending

voice messages and attachments. Microsoft Teams also allows instructors to easily find a specific student either by typing the student's ID, or by typing the student's first initials and benefiting from the autocomplete feature that would automatically display the full name. This finding is also supported by another study in which students at Nusa Nipa University in Indonesia expressed their positive experience with the use of Microsoft Teams because they thought that it performs more effectively and efficiently [32].

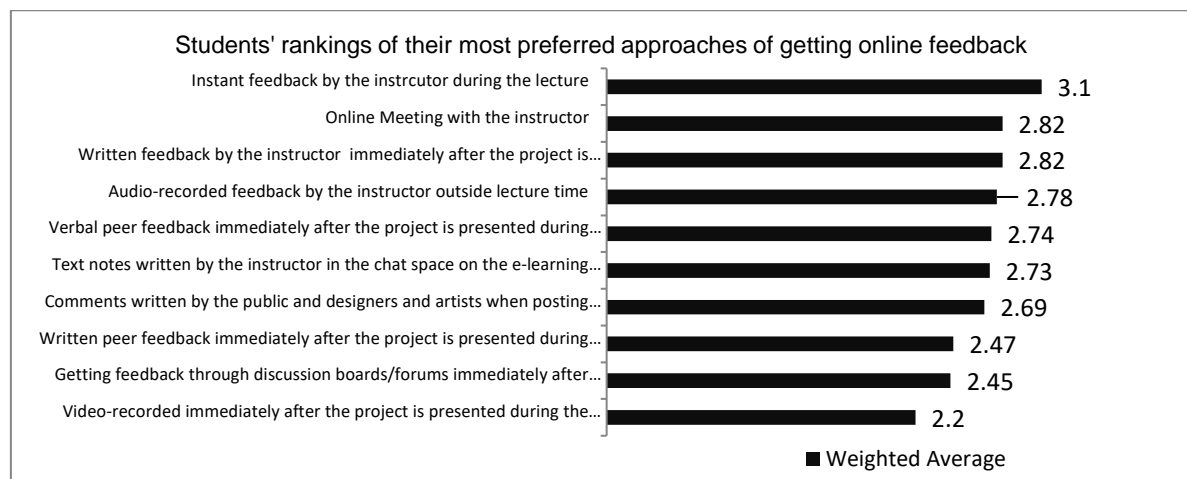


Figure 3. Students' rankings of getting feedback on projects and assignments

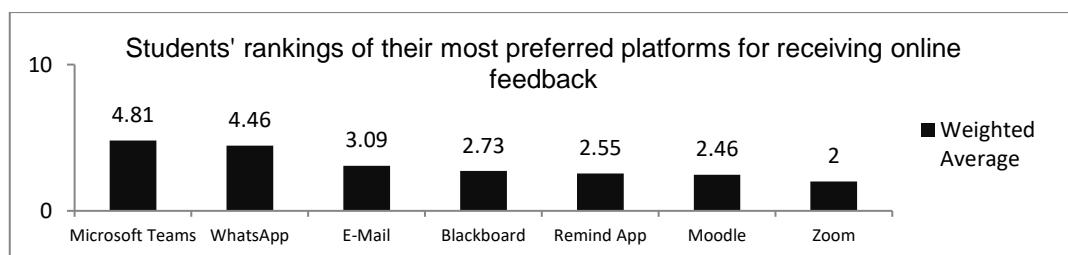


Figure 4. Students' rankings of digital platforms for getting online feedback from the instructor

The ease of sending voice messages and attachments is also a common feature in WhatsApp, which the students selected as their second preferred platform. WhatsApp, for instance, allows for sending voice messages without a limited duration, unlike the other platforms, which have a time limit for voice messages. Both Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp allow for notifications to pop up on the screen, thus allowing for instantaneous response and communication. Both platforms allow users to add a profile picture, thus allowing both the student and instructor to easily find and recognize each other. Both platforms allow the users to have immediate access to the files that they need to share and to easily respond to chat, voice messages, and join meetings with one click and in one virtual environment. Likewise, a study conducted in India during the lockdown shows that WhatsApp has a great potential to be adopted as a professional e-learning app as it is accompanied by multiple learning features such as sharing of videos, PowerPoint presentations, pre-prepared notes, and it has several technical, educational and instructional advantages [33]. Another observation is that approaches that involve any form of peer feedback, whether written in forums or in the chat space during or outside the lecture time, seem to be amongst the less preferred options among students. The factors that led to these results necessitate further investigation. An in-depth analysis of the factors will help researchers determine whether students' do not highly prefer peer feedback because online learning does not allow them to get to know and trust their peers, or because of many other reasons that have previously been suggested in literature. These reasons may include students' concerns about their relationships with their peers or about "personal bias on the feedback exercise, the interpretation of criteria, and the capacity of the students to be reviewers" [34]. This result is not surprising as it corresponds to the findings of a recent study [35] which reported that many instructors expressed "problems with peer review related to lack of confidence, low appreciation for peer feedback, and reluctance to provide critical comments" [35].

The students were also asked about their most preferred online assessment approaches or types of assignments and tasks that they believe are more appropriate for online assessment in art and design. The most preferred type of assessments or projects is e-portfolios, followed by research projects, written essays, and digital posters, respectively as revealed in Figure 5. These findings may be correlated with their opinions regarding the most appropriate types of questions and assignments for assessing their educational achievements through distance learning. Figure 6 shows that the majority of students (n=60, 58%) think that questions and assignments that require creativity and imagination are the most appropriate, followed by questions and assignments that require personal explanation or opinion (n=47, 45%), and comprehension questions and assignments related to the topics taught by the instructor (n=45, 43%), respectively.

Questions and assignments that require some tools to collect and measure data through a questionnaire, interview, or other data collection tool were, in their opinion, the least appropriate for assessing their performance through distance learning. The finding that reflected that the majority of students preferred research projects seems to contradict the finding that suggests that most of them believe that questions and assignments that involve data collection are least appropriate for distance learning. This contradiction may suggest that many of the students lack an in-depth understanding of research methodologies and perhaps have the misconception that research may be done easily through collecting data and literature from the internet or other resources, without any need to conduct questionnaires or interviews. This may be the logical explanation for such a contradictory finding because a meta-analysis of the collected data and further filtering and correlation revealed that the majority of students who indicated that they prefer research projects are first-year students who still did not take the Research Methodology course, which is offered in the second year in both universities. Accordingly, these initially inexplicable findings which led to further analysis revealed that the online assessment and feedback preferences differ between students from one educational stage/level to another. Fourth-year students, for instance, ranked questions and assignments that require comprehension of the topics discussed in class as their second preference after questions and assignments that require creativity and imagination.

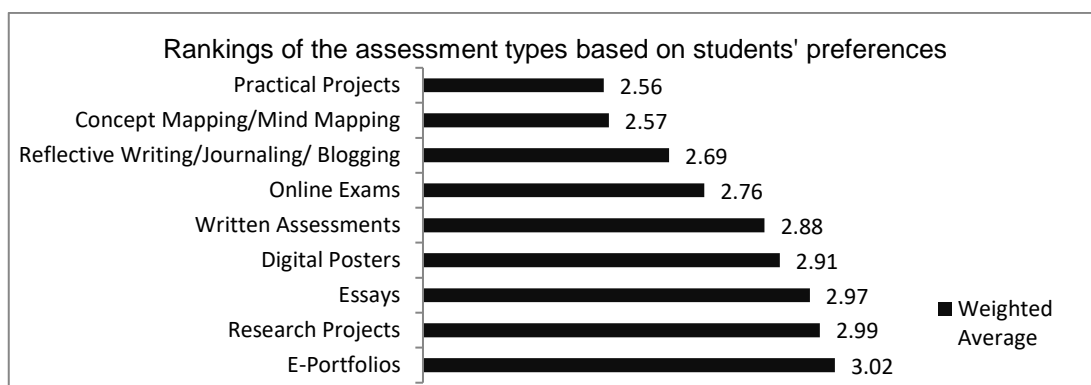


Figure 5. Students' rankings of assessment types based on their preferences

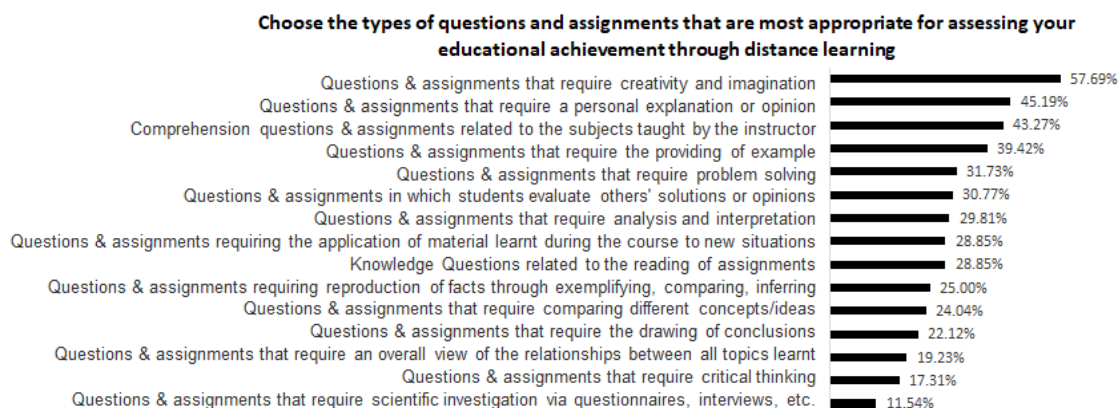


Figure 6. Rankings of the types of questions and assignments that students consider most appropriate for online assessment in art and design (The question types are based on a study [36])

On the other hand, first-year students ranked questions and assignments that require problem-solving as their second preference. Another noteworthy finding is that the most preferred online feedback approach by the majority of first-year students is getting written feedback or audio-recorded feedback outside the lecture. On the other hand, the most preferred online feedback approach by the majority of fourth-year students is listening to the instructor's feedback while presenting their projects during the lecture. This finding seems justifiable as first-year students may feel shy or embarrassed to receive negative feedback in front of their peers, while the fear of getting instant feedback in front of peers during the presentation decreases as students become more senior. Therefore, it is vital for instructors to keep into consideration the importance of being more careful with their words and tone of voice while giving feedback to students in their earlier years.

There are other aspects that are important for instructors to consider, based on students' suggestions and recommendations; Artworks and design projects require more time for presenting and for getting feedback on all their multimodal aspects and dimensions, especially if a single project includes typography, photography, animation, video, and interaction, in addition to the theoretical dimensions which include psychological, economical social, and political aspects. Moreover, art and design students need to see their instructors' facial expressions and reactions during their project presentations to recognize their impressions and the extent of their appreciation or lack of appreciation of the work presented. This aspect is peculiar to arts and aesthetics, which usually make the designer or artist feel urged to visually perceive the immediate responses of the beholders to evaluate the beauty of their own work through gauging their admiration. To support this argument, one of the participants stated "the recipient's facial expressions are something we have lost during online assessment. To us, students of art and design, in particular, the moment the instructor sees our work and we see his/her reaction makes a difference in the way the next work is done. Only listening to the instructor's voice is not enough".

Additionally, the presentation of artworks and design projects through online platforms require further research and development of built-in features in learning management systems (LMS) that allow instructors to easily point at, zoom into, draw on, or even add visual effects to the elements that they refer to while giving feedback. It may also be useful to integrate some tools and widgets that exist in various Adobe programs into the interface of LMS. Another very important and recurrent suggestion by the students is using feed-forward and not only feedback strategies. In other words, instead of only evaluating and assessing a student's performance in the past, instructors must also focus on their development and ongoing progress in the meantime and in the future. This recommendation is also well-supported by literature as researchers stated that feedforward helps students see opportunities for growth and they believe that "students need to have opportunities to make mistakes and to learn from before summative assessment (through formative assessment and feedback)" [24]. Overall, the students also expressed their need to get more time and more detailed feedback from their instructors, preferably with examples of how to improve their work. Unlike feedback given on a report or a research paper, feedback on artworks and designs usually involves a visualization in the instructor's imagination that, if applied to the artwork, will enhance it. For this visualization to be perceived and imagined by the student, more time is needed from the instructors to elaborate, illustrate, and demonstrate their suggestions for improvement. For similar reasons, more time must be devoted by instructors to explain the project specifications and to elaborate on what the final outcome should look like for students to be able to visualize it and execute it successfully.

5. CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to develop a greater awareness of effective online assessment and feedback practices in art and design. The findings have a useful implication for improving academic practice in the field. First, there is a need to acknowledge the impact of Covid-19 and the rapid transition to remote learning on changing the nature of art and design higher education. Second, it is important to accordingly consider adapting assessment and feedback approaches to the students' needs, challenges, and preferences. In particular, higher education institutions, which offer art and design programs should consider the extent to which they offer art and design students opportunities for effective assessment and feedback. It is also important that the preferences of both students and staff are considered in relation to the development of effective approaches to assessment. The transition into online assessment and feedback requires substantial attention to the recommendations outlined in this study. It is now timely to address the challenges that students faced and may have negatively impacted their learning experience.

The findings revealed that these challenges include color discrepancy between the original artwork and the displayed version on screen, technical issues that impede submission of projects or exams on time, not getting enough time to present the projects or to receive feedback on them, not getting enough clarification about the project requirements and specifications, and not seeing instructors' facial expressions and not being able to recognize their impressions and aesthetic appreciation of the artwork or design. The

findings also indicated that students' preferences are influenced by their educational stages. The majority of senior students, for instance, prefer getting instant feedback during their presentations, while the majority of junior students prefer privately getting feedback outside the lecture time. It is hoped that such findings may further motivate educators to consider employing different feedback approaches with different age groups. In addition, art and design students need feedforward before submitting their projects as much as they need feedback upon the final submission of their projects. Thus, this study focused on online assessment and feedback strategies in an art and design educational context and their links to the students' preferences and challenges. In doing so, it provides an important basis for further research to examine and recommend ways to develop educators' skills in assessing and giving online feedback to art and design students.




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