Students' and Faculty Members' Perceptions of Online vs. Traditional Courses: Case Study EMU School of Computing and Technology

Ali S. Milad El Ghomati

Submitted to the
Institute of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science
in
Information and Communication Technologies in Education

Eastern Mediterranean University
February 2015
Famagusta, North Cyprus

Approval of the Institute of Graduate Studies and Research

Prof. Dr. Serhan Çiftçioğlu
Acting Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science in Information and Communication Technologies in Education.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ersun İşçiolu
Chair, Department of Information and Communication Technologies

We certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate in scope and quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science in Information and Communication Technologies in Education.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa İlkan
Co- Supervisor

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ersun İşçiolu
Supervisor

Examining Committee

1. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ersun İşçioğlu

2. Asst. Prof. Dr.Fahme Dabaj

3. Dr. Fatma Tansu Hocanın

ABSTRACT

This study examined the perception of selected students and faculty members of online versus traditional course. The selected case study was the School of Computing and Technology at the Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus. In addressing the research questions, mixed method was employed to solicit data using questionnaires to conduct survey and interviews. Data collected by survey technique had 140 participants while interview was conducted 16 students and 15 faculty members.

The survey data was analyzed quantitatively, while interviews were analyzed qualitatively. Results showed that students' perception revealed that both online and traditional courses are satisfactory and enables them attain the academic successes. In the same vein, students hold strong view that online courses are not better than traditional courses but can serve meaningfully to complement each other. The viewpoint held by faculty members complies with that of students that online courses are very efficient but serve more appropriately for theory-based courses. So traditional mode remains the best approach to teach and learn practical courses. However, online facilities are very useful in facilitative classroom learning.

Keywords: Online courses, traditional courses, perception, students, faculty members

ÖZ

Bu çalışmada seçilen öğrencilerin algıları ve çevrimiçi ve geleneksel ders öğretimi incelenmiştir. Seçilen durum çalışması Kuzey Kıbrıs'da Doğu Akdeniz Üniversitesi Bilgisayar ve Teknoloji okulunda yapılmıştır. Araştırma soruları ele alınırken, araştırma ve görüşmeler yapılmak üzere anketler kullanılarak veri toplamak için karma yöntem kullanılmıştır. Veriler, 140 katılımcı ile anket yöntemiyle toplanırken, görüşmeler 16 öğrenci ve 15 fakülte üyesi ile gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Anket verileri nicel olarak analiz edilmiş olup , yapılan görüşme ise nitel olarak analiz edilmiştir. Sonuçlara göre öğrencilerin algıları hem online hemde geleneksel derslerin tatmin edici olduğu ve akademik başarı elde edilmesini sağlıyor. Ayni şekilde, öğrenciler online derslerin geleneksel derslere göre daha iyi olmadığını ancak bir birini tamamlayan anlamlı hizmet verebildiği görüşüne sahiptirler. Fakülte tarafından düzenlenen bakış açısına göre, online dersler çok verimli fakat teori tabanlı dersler için daha uygun olarak hizmet verebilirler. Bu yüzden geleneksel yöntem, pratik dersleri öğretmek ve öğrenmek için en iyi yaklaşım olarak kalır. Ancak, online imkanlar kolaylaştırıcı sınıf öğretiminde de çok yararlıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Online dersler, geleneksel dersler, algı, öğrenciler, fakülte

DEDICATION

To God Almighty, family and friends. To my mother and my wife, Mrs. EL.Gomati. your words full of wisdom has a source of inspiration along this path. To my kids, my daughter Noor and my sons Salem and Abdul Rahman, my brothers who have supported me, I am most grateful.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am forever indebted to god almighty, who has led me through until this point of fulfillment. I like to acknowledge and thank Eastern Mediterranean University for being the channel though which I have achieved this good success.

Special thanks to my supervisors, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mustafa İlkan who is the Director School Computing Technology and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ersun Iscioglu, the Chair of the Department of Information and Communication Technologies. You presented me with opportunities to widen my horizons. Your continuous support guidance as a teachers and supervisors has immensely been the driving force of this study.

A very big thank you to all my teachers, friends, and family worldwide who have encouraged and supported me morally.

My family, though thousands of miles were supportive and encouraging.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In the last two decades, the education sector worldwide has experienced growth and development, in what most people ascribe it to a technically motivated one; just the way it has influenced all other aspects of life. As a result of this impressive progress, the education sector has employed several innovation and techniques for students on the one hand and the mode of teaching on the other. Through the use of technology, a lot of investors have also found it fit to invest, giving rise to an expansion, which is observed today.

This seeming sophistication by a large number of users across the globe has re-assured the importance of internet and information communication technologies to the education process. With the ability to instantly access a wide-range of learning resources and information, students do not have their necessity to wait for their lecturers for the desired knowledge. According to Batson and Bass (1996, p.42) a system of teaching and learning is already in place, and a powerful set of benefits and theories propels the search for better teaching and learning technologies. This translates to the fact that the faculty members has not fully incorporated information and learning technologies into the fabric of teaching, therefore learning can become more as a collaborative, contextual and active event.

The process of the adoption of information and communication technologies for lecturers and students mean different things in different quarters, and so in the information technology sector, it is a welcomed development. In the words of Knupfer (1993, p.171), the effective use of the computer as a resource in education brings about changes that the teacher now assumes the role of facilitator of information while the student is simply guided to the point of learning. The view Knupfer holds reveals that for the faculty members to be effective in his duty as the facilitator of knowledge, there must be willingness to let go of the control (that hitherto existed) to the student and still maintain a comfortable role (p.173). Berge and Collins (2001, p.2), explain that the tools made available by computer-mediated communication provide discussion forums, electronic mailing, interface for tele-conferencing, which makes it possible for fuller range of interactive methodologies. These tools enable the faculty members to pay intense attention to the instructional need for the students to gain knowledge, while improving the quality, quantity as well as patterns of communication for students to practice and/or learn.

In defining what this means, Pallof and Prat (2001, p.1) reveal that through learning collectively, students have the opportunity to extend and develop their learning capability, experiment new ideas through sharing with those in the same group for the purpose to get the desired feedback. It results into the likelihood of successful achievement of learning objectives, according to them, achieving course competences is increased through collaborative engagement.

With the development in technology, education sources have been enhanced through the availability of e-learning, which allows the student ample freedom to choose

from the courses offered. This explains why many universities and colleges now use the internet in education and into learning process, thereby giving rise to what is today called modern education. Also, the performance of the faculty members or call them instructors is enhanced for the knowledge need in the plethora of (multi)disciplines that are introduced into the school curriculum. As a result of this growing concern, many universities nowadays have or are rather increasing the amount of courses to be studied online. This method of studying online is becoming very popular day-by-day, especially for courses unavailable for study and students who are not unable to register within their country of residence in a traditional manner.

In developed nations, it is believed that there is an increasing rate of online student enrolment over the hitherto traditional form, and qualifications obtained through this form have since enjoyed acceptance in the wider society. Very importantly too, online education (also known as distance learning) makes it possible for universities to accept a greater number of students who seek to study at their convenience, and for those that would not have been unable to cope with other demands and studies at the same time. Allen and Seaman (2010, p.4) in their research on class differences with online education corroborate that there is nearly 30% of students in higher education now take at least one online course during their degree program. It is not an exception in less developed countries of the world, as this trend has been long accepted.

From the foregoing, it is very important to state that though the use of high technology has brought about a breakthrough for an innovative education, certain

issues must be considered. The faculty members and students alike need to come forward with what benefits and/or loss that online learning process presents to them, either individually or collectively. This has become important because the perception of the faculty members is likely not going to be the same as that which of the students.

In considering the above, the perceptions of the faculty members and the use of technology vary with that of the student. For instance, a student is likely going to be motivated to enroll for a course upon attraction of how it is used according to the presentation by the instructor. Subsequently, the perception will either broaden or change totally to other reasons as soon as the enrollment is done and studies commences. It is in light of this fact that the researcher seeks to study the different perceptions of students and instructors in the School of Computing and Technology at the Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In trying to unveil the different perceptions held by both faculty members and students on the effectiveness and relevance of online courses compared to the face-to-face system of learning, a problem statement will narrow our perspective to a more interesting dimension.

In a nutshell, with the increasing growth experienced in online or electronic learning, several new methods have been introduced by institutions as preferred systems and networks for the purpose of internet access. Also, as a result that the traditional classroom learning is old and more vast, the existing frameworks are more favorable unlike in the online form. In light of the above, this research seeks to unravel the

perception of both faculty members and students: whether there is a desired satisfaction in teaching and learning for online courses as much as the traditional classroom pattern.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to carry out a research on the perception of students and faculty members on online and traditional courses in the School of Computing and Technology. More specifically, the objectives are as follows:

1. To identify the viewpoints of students on online and traditional courses.
2. To compare the perception of faculty members on online and traditional courses.
3. To ascertain if students' enrolment for online courses is influenced by the technology use.
4. To examine the ability of faculty members to adequately deliver the best to their students in either online and/or traditional courses.
5. To establish the effectiveness of instruction components for online courses as opposed to the traditional courses.

1.4 Research Questions

This study set out to answer the following questions:

1. What is the viewpoint of students to online versus traditional courses?
2. What is the perception of faculty members to online versus traditional courses?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is relevant for students who are acquiring or aspiring to obtain knowledge on the perception of online and traditional courses especially as it relates to the learning processes that are used. It highlights the perception of students and instructors about both forms of learning and how they are carried out.

For the purpose of proper development, this study when successfully carried out will enhance the understanding of the institution's management to know the opinions held by both faculty members and students on the processes and successes achieved by electronic and traditional mode of learning. The end result will help identify the obstacles that prevent the successes of both forms of learning with the use of opinions of students and faculty members.

In short, this will enable the researcher to proffer possible solutions, through which it is believed to offer contributions to the development of education and information technology.

This study will also be relevant to students, faculty members and the general public by providing them with enabling information towards actualizing a hitch-free online and traditional learning processes.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The researcher was faced with time constraint. The available time was divided between attending lectures, administering questionnaires, conducting interviews, sourcing for resource materials for literature review. It proved almost difficult to get participants to respond to the questionnaires because other students were also busy with their academic demands. Therefore, their routines were not defined especially

on the days set aside to administer questionnaires because it was difficult to meet all of them within the stipulated time despite the reduced sample size. In the end, the inconveniences encountered were overcome by the researcher and questionnaires successfully administered.

1.7 Definition of Terms

i. Online: In the context of usage, this term represents the status when a computer is connected to an international network known as the Internet. At this time, the user can access a pool of information, documents as well as connect with other users too. Connecting to the internet can be done using a cable local area network, dial-up system, wireless connection, etc. In this discourse, online will be used to stand for the online instructions used as courses, which is how the students take part, using virtual classrooms, videos and/or conference chats. The students and lecturers do not appear in person to attend, though in very rare cases, teleconferencing is used for students to watch and speak with their lecturer. This form of learning is a twentieth century practice and has enjoyed wide acceptance the world over, because it can stand on its own and also be used alongside the traditional form of teaching and learning. (Allen, I.E. and Seaman, J., 2010)

ii. Traditional: This refers to the face-to-face or classroom system of teaching and learning, where the lecturers and students are available in the classroom. Here, books are used as a tool for teaching and learning, with now intensive use of the internet for teachers and students respectively to support their individual achievements. Several internet tools support this form but the learning process is not online-based in anyway. This is believed to be the oldest form of learning in the education sector (Allen, I.E. and Seaman, J., 2010)

iii. Student: In this discourse, a student is a person who enrolls and pays a fee in learning especially at the Eastern Mediterranean University to study for a bachelor, graduate and postgraduate academic qualifications. He or she enrolls either for online or traditional courses made available by the university (Pallof, R. and Prat, K., 2001).

iv. Faculty members : This is an academic, educator and university lecturer whose duty is to teach the student using the available tools and methods for online and/or face-to-face instruction. He or she is hired by the university and paid salaries for his intellectual services (Knupfer, N. N., 1993).

v. Course: It is an academic course for which the student enrolls and that the faculty members teaches. It is an element of teaching offered for a period of an academic term. A stipulated number of courses for the basic requirements a student must complete before being awarded a diploma certificate by the university. With the advent of online learning, the student has leverage to enroll for courses online. For their performances, every student is graded for course units and academic credit summed up at the end of the term (Allen, I.E. and Seaman, J., 2006).

vi. Perception: In a layman's language, the concept of perception simply implies that there is a perceiver and that which is perceived in form of a situation as it best relates to our context of discourse, as well as the process of nature of perception by means of experiencing leading to the realization of percepts. As a matter of fact, perception is a responsiveness that occurs as a result of a most elaborate evaluation, with knowledge of influences experienced about phenomena. (Berge, Z.L. and Collins, M.P. Eds.,1995)

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, relevant literature is reviewed, particularly tracing the growth of classroom teaching and learning up till today, when the information and communication technologies are used in the education system. The theoretical framework is also discussed.

In essence, this chapter shows scholarly opinions of previous researchers and how they support the aim of current study. It is guided by the objectives as outlined in chapter one and will establish differed opinions, theoretical approach and how the entire literature relates to this study. The use of secondary sources such as published essays, books, peer-reviewed articles is employed by the researcher to familiarize with previous studies to study the current context of research and give areas for further study.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research forms the basis on which to establish a link between the theoretical and practical components of online and classroom learning and teaching. It is important to consider this section because it 'has implications for every decision made in the research process' (Mertens, 1998, p.3). This is further buttressed by Agherdien (2007, p.2) who is of the view that a

theoretical framework is the ‘foundation for the thinking, planning, design, conceptualization and execution of research’.

Two philosophical approaches of teaching and learning: constructivism and connectivism are found relevant upon which this study is anchored as discussed below.

2.1.1 Constructivism

According to Wilson (2012, p.46), the instructional theory emerged in 1960 and was concerned with how teaching impacted on the learner. The cognitive learning theory was next to come through in 1980, whose interest was how people perceived information meant to enhance education. However, 1990s brought about another shift and this time to constructivism came to limelight, raising awareness on quality reasoning**.**

Wilson (2012, p. 47) accounts that constructivism was more concerned with achievement rather than the practicalities that were involved in acquiring knowledge. This resulted to increased awareness among researchers and made it possible for more commitment to practice by year 2000, through the use of educational games, media, and internet. Also, old forms motivation paved way for new and more interesting ones that enabled participation which both learners and instructors benefitted.

Wilson (2012, p.46) accounts that constructivism is founded on the notion that knowledge is fabricated by an individual who discerns with the help of rational action, herein referred to as ‘meaning-making rooted in the context where individuals

create their knowledge of and give meaning to the external world'. This point to the basic tenets of this ideology, which presupposes that learning, involves activity gained through life experiences and interactions with our environment. Thus, people learn when they encounter conflict, compete, confusion and make effort to proffer solutions to such circumstances. Also, learning is inspired by our social interactions whether it is as a result of association, team spirit or observation; it causes one to learn by independently thinking and valuating on activities that transpired.

The fundamental idea as it relates to our discourse is captured in the affirmation of Stacey (1999, p.15) that 'people construct their own understanding by actively processing content in order to establish their own meaning' and for learners. This is not a passive act because it reflects knowledge. After it is conceived, knowledge is further shared with others through socialization. With the intent of the individual providing information in return for response for the benefit of the others is abled.

Relating constructivism to classroom or online situation, learning can take direction of given instruction; for instance, when students are charged to utilize techniques that are activity-laden to experiment, it proves possible for more knowledge and enables a reflection and change to take place.

The tenets of constructivism have found relevance across disciplines, yet, it has suffered criticism by its assumption. For instance, Wilson (2012, p.48) reveals that 'learners construct their own reality' and 'assessments should be goal free'. As a result, many more scholars have brought up their criticisms but constructivism has continued to find relevance in contemporary research ideas.

2.1.2 Connectivism

The idea of connectivism was conceived by George Siemens and Stephen Downes in 2005. Siemens published Connectivism: learning as network creation, while Downes wrote An introduction to connective knowledge. Both authors provided ideas upon which debates about connectivism have found relevance as a learning theory of digital age. The tenets of this theory are found relevant in this discourse on online and classroom learning and teaching.

First of all, connectivism is a theory of learning concerned with what to learn rather than how the learning takes place and secondly, the ability to do something that enables the learner to operate more efficiently. Through some form of motivation and speedy judgment creation, a student is able to consciously develop an ability to operate the computer and other technologies. Siemens (2005) is of the view that learning takes place inside environments that are not defined, which means that there are no specific rules. Learning for which he refers to as 'actionable knowledge' takes place within and outside of oneself with the sole aim of linking one form of information with several others.

The form of learning concerning connectivism is a process of converging nodes in form of data sources and all the students need to do is plug into the existing network. It is up-to-date, for which Siemens (2010, p.4) reveals is 'focused on connecting specialized information sets' intended to help the learner know more about what he or she already knew. Landauer and Dumais (1997, p.2) argue that people do have knowledge much more than perceived in the quality of the content to which they are exposed. The connectivity notion is that 'some domains of knowledge contain vast

amount of weak interrelation that if properly exploited, can greatly amplify learning by a process of influence'.

Siemens advances on the consistency this theory has with the needs of the twenty-first century, by considering the importance of learning trends, the use of systematic know-how and the dwindling needs to know more. The relevance of this theory in present digital age is considered because it uses the framework of combined tenets of other learning theories. Downes (2007) explained in slogan form a basic theory of practice that 'to teach is to model and demonstrate, to learn is to practice and reflect'.

According to Anderson and Dron (2011, p.88) teaching is made possible when the learning paths are built when intended to maintain links in a manner 'that learners make connections with existing and new knowledge resources'. In this age of technologically enhanced education, the teachers and students come together to build the content. In doing this, they redesign and set standard for other learning routines.

In the same vein, connectivism makes effort to solve problems that might exist in the case of managing learning activities. Siemens accounts this king of knowledge 'resides in a database and needs to be connected with right people in the right context to be classified as learning'. This cycle of knowledge development enables students to keep up-to-date on facts in their discipline as a result of the link with the existing database.

2.2 Education

2.2.1 Overview

The history of education can be traced to the medieval times up to the year 3500BC (Fisher, 2004, p.36) and it was until the middle ages that what we today refer to as formal education took firm roots in Europe. This development sailed through all continents in different forms, waging the storms it faced. The growth we witness today has made governments and several philanthropic bodies to hold unto the general belief that education is still ensures orderly and moral conduct in the society. Several accounts hold that by the nineteenth century, the need arose for classroom supervision to be incorporated into the teaching process, thereby making education compulsory. The twentieth century ushered in new teaching approaches with the integration of television, radio, internet, multimedia and other technology-based apparatuses across continents. Today, education has become part and parcel of everyday lives, thereby giving rise to a decline in illiteracy percentile.

Since then, learning has not remained the same and contemporary learning activity has moved from formal to an informal but technologically enhanced network. According to Siemens (2010, p.1) technology has redefined our daily activities most especially how information is shared and the style of learning has also be largely influenced. The advent of information and communication technologies has altered difficulty previously experienced by educators to enable learning and learners as well. Subsequently, the new form of learning makes it possible for learning to be achieved by a lot more numbers, while providing a pool of resources to be retrieved at anytime and anywhere.

In this discourse, particular concern is centered on the forms that emanated through historical growth and developments; thus, education has been progressively established the formal, non-formal and informal practices.

2.2.2 Formal Education

The historical scenario led to the widely accepted formal education, which is classified as classroom-based mode, where there is an interaction between trained teachers and students.

According to Merriam et al (2007, p.29), formal education is 'highly institutionalized, bureaucratic, curriculum driven and formally recognized with grades, diplomas and certificates'. This process has teachers and students attending class daily for several days into weeks, months and even years.

Here, the teacher undergoes some form of professional training to be able to give instructions for the students to follow. Dib (1987, p.300) argues that formal education 'corresponds to a systematic, organized model, structured and administered according to a given set of laws and norms'. This means, apart from the fact that the process consist of teacher, student and institution; there is a stipulated curriculum to achieve set objectives through use of accepted methods.

2.2.3 Non-Formal Education

In the same way formal education encountered a steady progress, non-formal education also found its way through the rough waves of history. Merriam et al (2007, p.30) wrote that 'the term non-formal education has been used most often to describe organized learning outside of the formal education system; short-term based, voluntary and have few prerequisites'. This implies that the method has

similar compositions to that of formal education, but differs on the part where it is home-based.

It is not institutionalized as explained in the view of Paradise and Rogoff (2009, p.104) that it is 'a persistent and pervasive ongoing phenomena of learning via participation or knowledge creation unlike that of the formal process. In trying to establish a more appropriate description of non-formal education Ward et al (1974, p.38) are of the view that it is not yet certain about one particular explanation. According to them, the desired definition will eventually be identified when more educational issues relating to non-formal education have been addressed.

Today, this form of education since the 20th century has recorded widely acceptance especially in developed nations of the world, common in forms known as correspondence learning, open systems and distance learning, because of their peculiar features within the non-formal scope.

2.2.4 Informal Education

Very importantly too, informal education assumes a dissimilar form from the other two, while still sustaining a close connection with them. Dib Dib (1987, p.306) holds the view that there is no form of correspondence whatsoever with the conventional definition of education because of the absence of clear objectives and study concepts but 'it is aimed at students as much as the public at large and imposes no obligations whatever their nature'.

The position it assumes is that of an addition and not an alternative to formal and non-formal forms of education. There are several activities classified as informal

such as visit to museums, scientific exhibitions, listening to radio broadcasts, watching television programmes on different themes, reading text from magazines, newspapers, books, journals and participating in contests.

Most recently, technology explosion has presented several platforms on which these activities are all possible with just a click. While so many scholars have argued that the use of technology only supplements the learning process, others hold the view that it is in its sense, a form of learning

2.3 Learning

2.3.1 Classroom Learning

In traditional teaching according to Novak (1998, p.24), the teacher exercises power by assuming the role of instructor and decision maker because the student is perceived in this context 'as having knowledge holes that need to be filled with information'. On the other hand, as the students pay close attention to instructions laid down, learning is believed to be done in a competitive way as a result of the need to assume high positions. As they strive to learn, students master knowledge through drill and repetitive practice.

Though this classroom situation is centered on the student, existing relationship between the teacher and students is one in which the former is a leader. Theroux (2002) hold the view that the 'students are in control of their own learning and the power and responsibility are the students concern as learning may assume an independent, collaborative, cooperative and competitive' dimension. This implies that despite taking a center stage, the students do play an engaging role in constructing their own knowledge.

Of course the teacher takes control of this method by engaging the students jointly or separately for which McKenzie (1998) says involves 'questioning, disciplining, guiding, validating, monitoring, motivating, encouraging, suggesting, modelling and clarifying'.

The good experience about classroom learning is that the student can listen to the teacher and get physical visual cues as they are illustrated on the whiteboard and other kinds of images. There is a form of direct accessibility and interaction which makes it possible for the student to participate in and learn from firsthand account of experiences shared from other students.

The classroom learning no doubt enables students to become more familiar and to relate more with people even when they find themselves in the wider society. Put differently, traditional classroom involves active participatory learning which offers immediate feedback, motivates the students, enables them to cultivate ability to socialize with others, and bridges acquaintance between students and teachers. Rosenberg (2006) holds a strong view that classroom will carry on the role it has always played in any education approach through providing 'a place where students, teachers can interact, experiment and collaborate' towards achieving desired goals.

There are benefits of the traditional learning environment but still it has some negative influences. There is a lot of time devoted and it can be very expensive to maintain. There is also overreliance on the teacher, even as it is student-centered method. For students who have difficulty concentrating in crowded learning environments, it tends to be difficult for such to boast of success.

2.3.2 Online Learning

The term online learning is conceived relatively differently by various authors based on the context of usage, but no universal definition has been clearly outlined. Terminologies such as internet learning, networked learning, virtual learning, computer mediated learning, internet-based learning, e-learning and distance learning are few of the numerous that are used when describing online learning. One thing remains peculiar with all the terms stated above; there is proximity between participants and the use of technologies is applied to make interaction between teacher and student achievable.

In his view, Carliner (1999, p.9) defines online learning as 'educational material that is presented on a computer' while Khan (1997, p.12) describes it as a new method for training a learner, in which the cyberspace is used as the medium. Ally (2004, p.4) argues that online learning is more than just a medium of instruction but particularly focuses on the learner and the learning process. He elaborates further that this style of learning makes use of Internet by saving resource materials, which enables participants to engage in a form of interaction while gaining support through the learning process to gain understanding for personal growth and know-how.

As a form of computer-assisted learning, materials are accessed electronically to students who are dispersed at remote locations with the help of internet facilities. Learning materials are available in different formats ranging from texts, images, audio-visual, media, compact discs, satellites and a host of others which can be derived from the computer networks using search engines, automated libraries and wikis.

Moore et al (2011, p.130) explain that the term online learning has proved difficult to define in a globally accepted manner. Some scholars define it by characterizing it as a whole entity of internet, while others differ on the position that it is simply medium of learning. In simple terms, online learning has enabled students to combine education and the use of information and communication technologies. Ladyshewsky (2004, p.3) argues that as a medium of instruction technology uses well organized designs to improve and/or causes changes in learning. This implies that the online environments have many competences and contains many preferences and prospects for teachers and students.

As a result of the multimedia integration, it is possible for two people or more to engage in learning interactions towards reaching set knowledge goals. Through online learning, there is enhanced makeover of the education process from the old one and the student can now access learning resources at will. This has led to a transformation where the concept of the educational process and learning now go beyond the limits that existed in the traditional classroom, ushering in a more opulent atmosphere of learning.

There are several benefits accrued to online learning, one of which is assisting in the achievement of corresponding scholastic opportunities while preserving impartiality between students. For the general interest of society, this method of learning has opened doors for responsive measures to curtail educational needs especially for citizens who under normal circumstances are not able to find time to enroll for classroom-based learning.

In an online environment, the student who assumes the position of learner enjoys more leverage because there is ample time available, thereby according flexibility to proximity. Also, there is a global audience for this method of learning which can be effectively utilized by the nature of unlimited pool of learning materials which can be used, re-used and shared across the cyberspace.

On the contrary, feedback is not immediate if participants do not have easy access to Internet. Unlike the classroom situation, students tend to experience frustration as a result of anxiety and confusion.

2.3.3 Characteristics of Online Learning Environments

2.3.3.1 Computer-Mediated Communication

The learning environment has several characteristics such as the electronic performance support system, multimedia/hypermedia and the web as well as computer-mediated communication, on which this discourse places particular concern. The computer-mediated communication (CMC) is thought to have facilitated the new wave in teaching and learning methodologies in higher institutions of learning across the globe.

In their definition, Berge and Collins (1995, p.11) assert that computer-mediated communication when the computer systems networks are used for the purpose of sending and receiving information. This way, the computer and network system primarily acts as channel rather than a mainframe of information. CMC is also described as a form of planned collaboration between participants to utilize the computer and the various components that are networked on the cyberspace to achieve the object or either teaching or learning.

CMC stands out as the fastest developing innovation in education, which can be used for teaching and learning techniques such as experiential exercises, interpersonal interaction and group facilitation. It is categorized into asynchronous communication, which is the web-based form and the synchronous communication, expressed as traditional. The former can take place in classroom, at home, office, and wherever the user learner finds it convenient, and can be employed to support experiential learning. Also, its hyper-text nature makes it possible for access to varied sources of information which the user can check by desired volition. The latter is equally space-bound because, learning takes place within physical boundaries.

2.3.1.2 Asynchronous versus Synchronous Communication

The asynchronous and synchronous can be used to distinguish the different forms in which the computer-mediated communication (CMC) is applied. Palloff and Pratt (1999) clearly state that there were two common styles of web-centered communication, the asynchronous (delayed, anytime, any pace, any place) and synchronous (immediate, real time) communication. Light and Light (1999, p.163), both terms are used to refer to computer mediated tools of learning 'adopted in higher education for the purpose of teaching and learning, especially in web education and distant learning classrooms'.

Asynchronous - According to Bonk (2004, p.3) many scholars hold the opinion that asynchronous communication gives learners more time to reflect on their ideas, which in turn promotes critical thinking and encourage learner autonomy. Allen and Seaman (2004, p.13) assert that the activities of asynchronous communication do not occur in real time, whereby when a message is sent across to one another, the

feedback is not expected at that particular time. This notion is expressed with ‘there is a time lag between the time the learner sent the message and you replied, even if the time lag is short’ and the reply is provided at a convenient time.

Bonk (2004, p.3) agrees that ‘asynchronous environments are also called delayed or learn anywhere, anytime technologies’. This means there is enhanced flexibility for participants to work with under little or no duress, making it possible also for a conscious digestion of the message and instructions pass across.

Synchronous communication otherwise refers to as real time occurs in conversation (as the name suggests) in which there is immediate feedback because all parties involved are available online at the time the communication is going on. In the words of Allen and Seaman (2004) ‘some online courses require learners and teachers to get together at least once (or sometimes several times) in person, by conference call, or through closed-circuit television links’. With the use of multimedia tools, synchronous learning is possible and enhanced through audio-visual feeds. Of course it is instantaneous and functions just like face-to-face learning between participants so that it can be likened to the natural way of relating with one another.

Allen and Seaman (2006) further buttresses that synchronous is more interactive than asynchronous communication, but instant messaging, chats and other means used in synchronous have not gained wide acceptance as much as the electronic mail as used by the asynchronous form. The immediacy in synchronous tend to pose a threat especially for participants who are more comfortable with deep thinking before responding to conversations.

2.4 Teacher Role in Traditional and Online Learning

Learning in classroom and online environments have been adequately discussed above in section (2-3), in this subsection, the teacher's role will be considered in both instances. In the traditional or classroom learning, the task of the teacher is to provide direct instructions for courses and this of course requires a concentrated amount of time. While planning to design and shape the activities of students, the teachers concern was primarily to ensure a level playing ground for all members of the class by assuming the role of commanding students on the other hand as followers.

2.4.1 Classroom

According to Anderson et al (2001, p.1), the teacher had several roles in the classroom. This means the teachers design, plan and administer instructions, evaluate the competence and performances of students, facilitate and co-create the social environment. Another very important duty is to provide direct instructions through a process of known as scaffolding.

Dabbagh (2003, p.39) scaffolding is an idea of aiding students by regulating the complications and steadily removing them to pave way for the knowledge and skills to be acquired. He further buttresses that teachers in classroom environment use this concept to provide students with the support they need to help them engage themselves to solving task without always seeking help. Through the online learning technique, this role has assumed a different dimension by placing limitations on face-to-face interaction between the teachers and students.

Since the advent of information and telecommunication technologies, learning has assumed a new dimension by creating a student-centered style where the teacher is there to only guide the student through instructions on the objective of study. Berge and Collins (1995, p. 8) agree that relationship between the teacher and student has improved and the online learning environment has also helped students to achieve an active social learning. Maor (2003, p.127) expresses clearly that learning has assumed a more interactive status, in which 'collaboration between individuals in a social learning environment is an essential part' of the learning experience.

2.4.2 Online

In the online learning situation, the student holds freewill and is no longer subjected to the instruction-follower position. Still yet, the role of the teacher is necessary to help create the necessary cordiality needed in online learning environment. This is because the online learning conditions that apply techniques to give instructions and information are a reflection of the classroom. Norton and Hathaway (2008, p.476) argue that in online learning environment, the teachers generate and/or gather materials and information into parts for the students. This way, it is possible for the teacher to actively intervene through active use of two-way process to achieve supportive learning.

Upon registering for online courses, students are aware of what is expected in a learning environment through earlier gained familiarity in formal schools, to know that the demands in this new setting are not the same. Unlike the formal classroom learning, roles are explicitly defined for the teacher and student to abide and live up to that which is expected. Though the teacher's role in online learning structures see to have changed, Maor (2003, p.128) maintained that 'the traditional teacher-

centered knowledge transmission metaphor still dominates in online units'. This is because the students still get to provide the instructions before students go on to search the web's pool of learning resources to do as directed. The concern here is that the teachers have also become practicing learners who must reflect on and understand the process of teaching and learning online to be able to function effectively, thus, a depart from concentrating on the teaching objectives alone as is the case with classroom environment.

By assuming a collaborative nature, common actions and reactions in online system have shifted from the traditional planning, contributing and seeking input from students to an independent state, which is confirmed in Curtis and Lawson (2001, p.29) that 'very few students actively challenged others or attempted to explain and elaborate on others ideas'. This implies that students only compare their ideas to ensure they conform to instructions or defined formats but certainly apply independently generated knowledge with the help of online resources. On this note, Maor (2003, p.128) advocates that 'online teaching is an entirely new type of educational experience, which requires a re-examination of the role of the instructors'.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This study aims primarily to study the perception held by students and faculty members about online and traditional courses in the School of Computing and Technology at the Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus. The research questions act as guide to enable the researcher to prepare a methodology that will lead to the data collection. These are:

1. What is the viewpoint of students on online and traditional courses?
2. What is the perception of faculty members on online and traditional courses?

In this chapter, the researcher described the sampled population and also the various techniques applied to conduct, collect and analyze data.

3.1 Method

To solicit responses from the students and faculty members, the mixed method approach was applied on a primary level, to address the outlined research questions. Mixed method was preferred because it makes possible for the researcher to gather data from participants using questionnaires and interviews. The researcher administered questionnaires to students and semi-structured interviews were conducted for selected students and faculty members.

3.2 Participants

The selected sample size in this study is comprised of students and faculty members in the Department of Information Technology which falls under the School of Computing and Technology. The reason for this choice is because the researcher is a student in this department.

According to details generated from the school's website, there are around one thousand students in the School of Computing and Technology, registered in the various programmes as undergraduate and undergraduates. The academic staffs who work full time are about thirty.

Using purposive sampling technique, the researcher administered questionnaires to one hundred and forty students. This sample represents 14% of the entire population of students in the School of Computing and Technology. In selecting the number of faculty members to interview, the researcher used the proportionate-stratified random sampling. The total number of faculty members was divided into two and half of the total number 15 representing 50% was considered. To achieve reliable and valid results Tabachnick and Fidel (2001).

$$N \geq 50+8M$$

The researcher selected one hundred and forty students for the survey, additional sixteen students for interview and fifteen faculty members for interview as well. This was done on purpose because different academic schedules would have made it difficult for a larger number to be reached within the stipulated time for research.

3.3 Data Collection Tools

The primary data collection tool used was the questionnaire for both survey and interviews. Mathers *et* al (2009, p.20) hold the view that it is possible to develop questionnaires and also adapt from a research conducted by other researchers. In this study, the questionnaire used is originally developed and was not adopted from any previous research.

The reason for using questionnaire is because it is economically viable and do not pose challenges that will hinder the success of the study. The cost of producing the questionnaires was minimal and the researcher got two assistants in administering questions and conducting the interviews.

The questionnaire issued to students gathered demographics and used seven point Likert scale of strongly disagree to strongly agree to solicit information of their perception. The interview used open ended questions to enable participants provide responses in their own words on the duration of their teaching experience for classroom and online learning, as well as their perception of both.

The questionnaire used the seven point Likert scale for questionnaire administered to the students. An interview was also conducted among some students and some faculty members in the school of computing and technology in the university. The result gotten was written down in a paper and also a recording of what they said about their opinions on students' and faculty members' perceptions of online versus traditional courses was recorded .

The questionnaires used for survey was scrutinized by the supervisor, after which questions not properly framed were adjusted and the ambiguous words replaced. This was to make sure that the design was appropriate to make sure that questions were easily understood by the participants.

For secondary data, the researcher carried out a review of literature to discuss on education, classroom and online learning using relevant literatures obtained from books, peer reviewed articles and internet materials.

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

Using the outlined research questions, the researcher sought to know the perception of students and faculty members about online and traditional courses.

The type of data analysis used was qualitative analysis and the frequency, percentage was gotten and the descriptive method was also used in the analysis.

The statistical tool utilized is Statistical Package for Social Sciences. SPSS is a tool used for research purposes to enter data, analysis and create tables in an orderly manner that would have proved difficult if done manually.

Data was generated from surveys and interviews, presented and interpreted in form of frequencies and simple percentages. Analysis also was done based on the results generated.

Chapter 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter presents the perceptions held by students and faculty member about online and traditional courses, from data which was derived from survey and interviews. This presentation makes use of tables, which contain frequencies and percentages. The study was carried out to know the perception of students and faculty member about online and traditional courses. The School of Computing and Technology as the case study provided the participants to whom questionnaires were administered and interviews conducted to solicit primary data for study. The participants came to a total of one hundred and forty students responded to the survey, sixteen students were interviewed and fifteen faculty members were interviewed.

4.1 Demography of the Students and the Faculty Members (participants)

4.1.1 Students' Information

Table 1. Showing demographics of students in survey

Age	Frequency	Valid Percent
up to 20 years	33	23.6
21-30 years	92	65.7
31-40 years	14	10.0
40 years and above	1	0.7
Total	140	100.0
Gender		
Male	96	68.6
Female	44	31.4

Total	140	100.0
Programme of Study		
Undergraduate	96	68.6
Graduate	44	31.4
Total	140	100.0

Table 1 shows the age, gender and programme of study of respondents. For age, 33 respondents representing 23.6% were up to 20 years, 92 respondents representing 65.7% were in the category of 21-30 years, 14 respondents representing 10% were 31-40 years, while only 1 respondent representing 0.7% is 40 years and above. This implies that those who are 21-30 years were the highest number of respondents. For Gender, there were male 96 respondents representing 68.6% while females 44 representing 31.4%. This means there were more male respondents than the female. The researcher did not administer to less female on purpose, because students responded based on availability. For programme of study, we have 96 respondents representing 68.6% undergraduates and 44 respondents representing 31.4% graduate. This means that there were more undergraduates than graduate students, all of whose participation in the survey will be meaningful.

Table 2. Showing nationality of students in survey

Nationality	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Tajikistan	6	4.3
Azerbaijan	8	5.7
Jordan	3	2.1
Moroccan	3	2.1
Libyan	17	12.1
Uzbekistan	2	1.4
Syrian	4	2.9
Sudan	1	0.7
Chadian	1	0.7
Iraqi	1	0.7
Kazakhstan	2	1.4
Nigerian	52	37.1
Niger	1	0.7
Turkmenistan	1	0.7

Tanzanian	1	0.7
South African	1	0.7-
Tunisian	1	0.7
Turkish	14	10.0
Ghanaian	3	2.1
Iranian	8	5.7
Palestinian	3	2.1
Cameroonian	3	2.1
Indian	1	0.7
Russian	3	2.1
Total	140	100.0

Table 2 shows the nationality of respondents. In order of highest to lowest respondents, 52 representing 37.1% were Nigerians, 17 representing 12.1% were Libyans and 14 representing 10% were Turkish. Both Iranians and Azeri had 8 respondents representing 5.7% respectively, 6 representing 4.3% were Tajik, 4 respondents representing 2.9% were Syrians. Also, there were 3 respondents representing 2.1% each from Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Russia, Ghana and Cameroon. There were 2 respondents representing 1.4% from Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan respectively, while Sudan, Chad, Iraq, Niger, Turkmenistan, Tanzania, South Africa, Tunisia and India each had 1 respondent representing 0.7%. This implies that respondents were students from 24 different nationalities.

4.1.2 Faculty Members Information

Table 3. Showing how long have you been working in this faculty

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
up to 5 years	5	33.3	33.3
6-10 years	1	6.7	6.7
11-15 years	5	33.3	33.3
16-20 years	3	20.0	20.0
21-25 years	1	6.7	6.7
Total	15	100.0	100.0

Table 3 shows details about years of experience of faculty members, 5 interviewees representing 33.3% have worked up to 5 years, 1 representing 6.7% for 6-10 years, 5 representing 33.3% for 11-15 years, 3 representing 20% 16-20 years and 1 representing 6.7% worked 21-25 years. This implies that the faculty members who have responded have very high working experience and their perceptions will be very useful in this study.

4.2 Viewpoint of the Students to Online versus Traditional Courses

Table 4. Online courses provide a better learning experience than traditional courses

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	22	15.7	15.7
Disagree	24	17.1	17.1
Disagree somewhat	20	14.3	14.3
Undecided	27	19.3	19.3
Agree somewhat	29	20.7	20.7
Agree	8	5.7	5.7
Strongly agree	10	7.1	7.1
Total	140	100.0	100.0

Table 4 shows that 22 respondents representing 15.7% strongly disagree, 24 representing 17.1% disagree, 20 disagree somewhat, 27 representing 19.3% for undecided, 29 representing 20.7% agree somewhat, 8 representing 5.7% agree and 10 representing 7.1% strongly agree to the statement provided. The highest responses 20.7% agree somewhat, 19.3% undecided and 17.1% disagree and 15.7% strongly agree that online courses to a considerable degree provide a better learning experience than traditional courses. The responses show different views held by 20.7% that online courses provide a better learning experience a bit more than the traditional courses (Table 4). This agrees with the view held by interviewed

“students that online courses provide a lot of reading materials and gives them more leverage to develop their knowledge”.

In the table below a large percent of the student disagree that online courses require more of students time than traditional courses.

Table 5. Online courses require more of a student's time than traditional courses

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	13	9.3	9.3
Disagree	17	12.1	12.1
Disagree somewhat	35	25.0	25.0
Undecided	31	22.1	22.1
Agree somewhat	20	14.3	14.3
Agree	14	10.0	10.0
Strongly agree	10	7.1	7.1
Total	140	100.0	100.0

In Table 5, 13 (9.3%) strongly disagree, 17 representing 12.1% disagree, 35 representing 25% disagree somewhat, 31 representing 22.1% undecided, 20 representing 14.3% agree somewhat, 14 representing 10% agree and 10 representing 7.1% strongly agree. With 25% of the responses disagreeing somewhat to the statement implies that in some measure, online courses require more of a student's time than traditional courses. This is followed by responses with 22.1% undecided and 14.3% agree somewhat. From these opinions of students, it is understand that online courses do not require more of a student's time than traditional courses. From the interview, one of the students says,

"No, you can manage the time in online course".

In the table below a large percent of the student are undecided that an online course does not really need a teacher and followed by a large percent of student who disagree that online course does not need a teacher that it is self-directed learning.

Table 6. An online course does not really need a teacher - it usually ends up being self-directed learning

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	11	7.9	7.9
Disagree	12	8.6	8.6
Disagree somewhat	27	19.3	19.3
Undecided	38	27.1	27.1
Agree somewhat	26	18.6	18.6
Agree	16	11.4	11.4
Strongly agree	10	7.1	7.1
Total	140	100.0	100.0

In the table above, 11 7.9% respondents strongly disagree, 12 representing 8.6% disagree, 27 representing 19.3% disagree somewhat, 38 representing 27.1% are undecided, 26 representing 2.5% agree somewhat, 16 representing 11.4% agree and 10 representing 7.1% strongly agree. From the above responses, it is obvious the highest percentage 27.1% are undecided, followed by 19.3% disagree somewhat and 18.6% agree somewhat that online courses do not really need a teacher because it usually ends up being self-directed learning. The interview, one of the students says,

> "No students don't need a teacher during an online course since the course materials are available for the student".

Since the course materials are available online, students just need to go online and teach themselves.

In the table below a large percent of the student are undecided that the overall quality of online course is better than traditional courses and followed by a large percent of student who agree somewhat that the overall quality of online course is better than traditional courses.

Table 7. The overall quality of online courses is better than that of traditional courses

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	17	12.1	12.1
Disagree	14	10.0	10.0
Disagree somewhat	20	14.3	14.3
Undecided	44	31.4	31.4
Agree somewhat	30	21.4	21.4
Agree	6	4.3	4.3
Strongly agree	9	6.4	6.4
Total	140	100.0	100.0

In this table, 17 respondents representing 12.1% strongly disagree, 14 respondents representing 10% disagree, 20 representing 14.3% disagree somewhat, 44 representing 31.4% were undecided, 30 representing 21.4% agree somewhat, 6 representing 4.3% agree while 9 representing 6.4% strongly agree to the statement. Responses show that 31.4% neither agree or disagree and so are undecided, followed by 21.4% who agree that the overall quality of online could be better than that of traditional courses.

In the table below shows a large percent of the student are agree somewhat that amount of material that is presented to students in an online course is greater than in a traditional course.

Table 8. The amount of material that is presented to students in an online course is greater than in a traditional course

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	10	7.1	7.1
Disagree	15	10.7	10.7
Disagree somewhat	22	15.7	15.7
Undecided	28	20.0	20.0
Agree somewhat	38	27.1	27.1
Agree	19	13.6	13.6
Strongly agree	8	5.7	5.7
Total	140	100.0	100.0

When asked if the amount of material that is presented to students in an online course is greater than in a traditional course 10 respondents representing 7.1% strongly disagree, 15 representing 10.7% disagree, 22 representing 15.7% disagree somewhat, 28 representing 20% are undecided, 38 representing 27.1% agree somewhat, 19 representing 13.6% agree while 8 representing 5.7% strongly agree. The highest percentage of 27.1% points that to a considerable degree, there are more amount of materials presented to students in the online courses as compared to traditional courses.

In the table below a large percent of the student are undecided followed by a large percent of student who agree somewhat that the online courses are easier than traditional course.

Table 9. Online courses are easier than traditional course

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	11	7.9	7.9
Disagree	12	8.6	8.6
Disagree somewhat	19	13.6	13.6
Undecided	41	29.3	29.3
Agree somewhat	33	23.6	23.6
Agree	14	10.0	10.0
Strongly agree	10	7.1	7.1
Total	140	100.0	100.0

Table 9 shows that 11 respondents representing 7.9% strongly disagree, 12 representing 8.6% disagree, 19 representing 13.6% disagree somewhat, 41 representing 29.3% undecided, 33 representing 23.6% agree somewhat, 14 representing 10% agree while 10 representing 7.1% strongly agree. The distribution in this table shows that the highest percentage 29.3% of the responses is undecided. This is followed by 23.6% who agree somewhat that online courses are easier than traditional courses, giving a margin to 13.6% who disagree somewhat to this statement. From the interview, one of the students says, have enough time and available resources to take the courses.

In the table below a large percent of the student are undecided followed by a large percent of student who disagree somewhat that the students receive better quality teaching from online courses than they receive from traditional courses.

Table 10.Students receive better quality teaching from online courses than they receive from traditional courses

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	13	9.3	9.3
Disagree	15	10.7	10.7
Disagree somewhat	31	22.1	22.1
Undecided	34	24.3	24.3
Agree somewhat	26	18.6	18.6
Agree	13	9.3	9.3
Strongly agree	8	5.7	5.7
Total	140	100.0	100.0

In table 10, respondents were asked if the students receive better quality teaching from online courses than they receive from traditional courses. The responses derived showed that 13 representing 9.3% strongly disagree, 15 representing 10.7% disagree, 31 representing 24.3% disagree somewhat, 34 representing 24.3% undecided, 26 representing 18.6% agree somewhat, 13 representing 9.3% agree and 8 representing 5.7% strongly agree. This shows that the highest number of responses 24.3% undecided and so neither agree nor disagree to the statement. This is followed by those who agree somewhat 18.6% on better quality of teaching from online course over traditional courses

In the table below a large percent of the student are undecided followed by a large percent of student who agree somewhat that online courses are easier to cheat in than traditional course.

Table 11. It is easier for students to cheat in online courses than in traditional courses

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	8	5.7	5.7
Disagree	11	7.9	7.9
Disagree somewhat	24	17.1	17.1
Undecided	37	26.4	26.4
Agree somewhat	30	21.4	21.4
Agree	15	10.7	10.7
Strongly agree	15	10.7	10.7
Total	140	100.0	100.0

Table 11, there are 8 representing 5.7% who strongly agree, 11 representing 7.9% disagree, 24 representing 17.1% disagree somewhat, 37 representing 26.4% undecided, 30 representing 21.4% agree somewhat, 15 representing 10.7 agree and strongly agree respectively. This points that 26.4% are undecided, followed by 21.4% agree somewhat and 17.1% disagree somewhat that it is easier for students to cheat in online than in traditional courses.

In the table below a large percent of the student agree somewhat that students feel more disconnected from other students taking online courses than when taking traditional courses.

Table 12. Students feel more disconnected from other students taking online courses than when taking traditional courses

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	3	2.1	2.1
Disagree	14	10.0	10.0
Disagree somewhat	19	13.6	13.6
Undecided	29	20.7	20.7
Agree somewhat	34	24.3	24.3
Agree	20	14.3	14.3
Strongly agree	21	15.0	15.0
Total	140	100.0	100.0

In this table, 3 respondents representing 2.1% strongly agree, 14 representing 10% disagree, 19 representing 13.6% disagree somewhat, 29 representing 20.7% undecided, 34 representing 24.3% agree somewhat, 20 representing 14.3% agree ad 21 representing 15% strongly agree. This distribution shows that 24.3% agree somewhat that the students feel more disconnected from other students taking online courses than when taking traditional courses. This is followed by 20.7% undecided, 14.3% agree and 15% strongly agree to the statement.

In the table below a large percent of the student agree somewhat that students feel more disconnected from other students taking online courses than when taking traditional courses.

Table 13. Students feel more disconnected from their teachers when taking online courses than when taking traditional courses

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	9	6.4	6.4
Disagree	13	9.3	9.3
Disagree somewhat	19	13.6	13.6
Undecided	32	22.9	22.9
Agree somewhat	33	23.6	23.6
Agree	23	16.4	16.4
Strongly agree	11	7.9	7.9
Total	140	100.0	100.0

This table shows that 9 responses representing 6.4% strongly disagree, 13 representing 9.3% disagree, 19 representing 13.6% disagree somewhat, 32 representing 22.9% undecided, 33 representing 23.6% agree somewhat, 23 representing 16.4% agree and 11 representing 7.9% strongly agree. This implies that 23.6% agree somewhat that the students feel more disconnected from their teachers when taking online courses than when taking traditional courses, followed by 22.9% undecided responses and 16.4% agree.

In the table below a large percent of the student are undecided followed by a large percent of student who agree somewhat that the students are more satisfied with online courses than they are with traditional courses.

Table 14. Students are more satisfied with online courses than they are with traditional courses

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	8	5.7	5.7
Disagree	10	7.1	7.1
Disagree somewhat	28	20.0	20.0
Undecided	43	30.7	30.7
Agree somewhat	32	22.9	22.9
Agree	12	8.6	8.6
Strongly agree	7	5.0	5.0
Total	140	100.0	100.0

Table 14 shows that 8 respondents representing 5.7% strongly disagree, 10 representing 7.1% disagree, 28 representing 20% disagree somewhat, 43 representing 30.7% undecided, 32 representing 22.9% agree somewhat, 12 representing 8.6% agree and 7 representing 5% strongly agree. This implies that majority 30.7% neither agree nor disagree that students are more satisfied with online courses than they are with traditional courses. This is followed by 22.9% who agree somewhat and 20% disagree somewhat to the statement. This agrees with the view held by interviewed

> "Yes, because they learn everything and anything they want at their own convenient"

.In the table below a large percent of the student agree somewhat that the students must be more self-motivated when taking online courses than when taking traditional courses.

Table 15. Students must be more self-motivated when taking online courses than when taking traditional courses

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	7	5.0	5.0
Disagree	14	10.0	10.0
Disagree somewhat	16	11.4	11.4
Undecided	29	20.7	20.7
Agree somewhat	38	27.1	27.1
Agree	20	14.3	14.3
Strongly agree	16	11.4	11.4
Total	140	100.0	100.0

Table 15 shows that 7 respondents representing 5% strongly disagree, 14 representing 10% disagree, 16 representing 11.4% disagree somewhat, 29 representing 20.7% undecided, 38 representing 27.1% agree somewhat, 20 representing 14.3% agree while 16 representing 11.4% strongly agree. This table shows that the highest percentage 27.1% agree somewhat that students are more self-motivated when taking online courses than when taking traditional courses. This is followed by 20.7% who neither agree nor disagree and 14.3% agree to the statement. From the interview, one of the students says,

> "Yes, simply because online courses absorb flexibility so everyone need easier and flexible things. Online course motivates students to want to learn because they can study any time they want ".

In the table below a large percent of the student agree somewhat that the Students must be more willing to 'teach themselves' when taking online courses than when taking traditional courses.

Table 16. Students must be more willing to 'teach themselves' when taking online courses than when taking traditional courses

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	3	2.1	2.1
Disagree	10	7.1	7.1
Disagree somewhat	11	7.9	7.9
Undecided	29	20.7	20.7
Agree somewhat	45	32.1	32.1
Agree	18	12.9	12.9
Strongly agree	24	17.1	17.1
Total	140	100.0	100.0

This table shows that 3 responses representing 2.1% strongly disagree, 10 representing 7.1% disagree, 11 representing 7.9% disagree somewhat, 29 representing 20.7% undecided, 45 representing 32.1% agree somewhat, 18 representing 12.9% agree and 24 representing 17.1% strongly agree. This implies that 32.1% agree somewhat that the students must be more willing to 'teach themselves' when taking online courses than when taking traditional courses. This is followed by 20.7% undecided and 17.1% responses for strongly agree. Based on the interview, one of the students says,

> "Yes, because you have lots of materials to read and learn from and also there is no time limits to study. Students decide their break and resumption time to study".

In the table below a large percent of the student agree somewhat that the Students who take online classes are more willing to spend the time on coursework than students in traditional classes.

Table 17. Students who take online classes are more willing to spend the time on coursework than students in traditional classes

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	9	6.4	6.4
Disagree	10	7.1	7.1
Disagree somewhat	16	11.4	11.4
Undecided	36	25.7	25.7
Agree somewhat	40	28.6	28.6
Agree	16	11.4	11.4
Strongly agree	13	9.3	9.3
Total	140	100.0	100.0

In this table, 9 responses representing 6.4% strongly disagree, 10 representing 7.1% disagree, 16 representing 11.4% disagree somewhat, 36 representing 25.7% undecided, 40 representing 28.6% agree somewhat, 16 representing 11.4% agree and 13 representing 9.3% strongly agree. This implies that 28.6% agree somewhat that the students who take online classes are more willing to spend the time on coursework than students in traditional classes. This is followed by 25.7% undecided leaving a wide margin for 11.4% responses for disagree somewhat and agree respectively. From the interview, one of the students says,

> **"**Yes, depending on individual some people like to spend their time on internet which some people don't like spending much time on internet".

In the table below a large percent of the student agree somewhat that the Students must spend more time reading course materials on their own when taking online courses than when taking traditional courses.

Table 18. Students must spend more time reading course materials on their own when taking online courses than when taking traditional courses

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	4	2.9	2.9
Disagree	6	4.3	4.3
Disagree somewhat	16	11.4	11.4
Undecided	34	24.3	24.3
Agree somewhat	35	25.0	25.0
Agree	25	17.9	17.9
Strongly agree	20	14.3	14.3
Total	140	100.0	100.0

Table 18 shows that 4 respondents representing 2.9% strongly disagree, 6 representing 4.3% disagree, 16 representing 11.4% disagree somewhat, 34 representing 24.3% undecided, 35 representing 25% agree somewhat, 25 representing 17.9% agree and 20 representing 14.3% strongly agree. This implies that 25% agree somewhat that the students must spend more time reading course materials on their own when taking online courses than when taking traditional courses. This is followed by 24.3% undecided, 17.9% agree and 14.3% strongly agree.

In the table below a large percent of the student are undecided followed by a large percent of student who agree somewhat that most students take online courses because they believe that online courses are easier than traditional courses.

Table 19. Most students take online courses because they believe that online courses are easier than traditional courses

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	4	2.9	2.9
Disagree	13	9.3	9.3
Disagree somewhat	21	15.0	15.0
Undecided	49	35.0	35.0
Agree somewhat	31	22.1	22.1
Agree	9	6.4	6.4
Strongly agree	13	9.3	9.3
Total	140	100.0	100.0

Table 19 shows that 4 respondents representing 2.9% strongly disagree, 13 representing 9.3% disagree, 21 representing 15% disagree somewhat, 49 representing 35% undecided, 31 representing 22.1% agree somewhat, 9 representing 6.4% agree and 13 representing 9.3% strongly agree. This implies that majority 35% neither agree nor disagree to the statement that most students take online courses because they believe online courses are easier than traditional courses. This is followed by 22.1% who agree somewhat and 15% disagree somewhat disagree to the statement.

In the table below a large percent of the student agree somewhat that most students who take online courses must be more disciplined in their studying than students who take traditional courses.

Table 20. Students who take online courses must be more disciplined in their studying than students who take traditional courses

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	7	5.0	5.0
Disagree	9	6.4	6.4
Disagree somewhat	21	15.0	15.0
Undecided	32	22.9	22.9
Agree somewhat	35	25.0	25.0
Agree	19	13.6	13.6
Strongly agree	17	12.1	12.1
Total	140	100.0	100.0

Table 20 shows that 7 respondents representing 5% strongly disagree, 9 representing 6.4 % disagree, 21 representing 15% disagree somewhat, 32 representing 22.9% undecided, 35 representing 25% agree somewhat, 19 representing 13.6% agree and 19 representing 12.1% strongly agree. This implies that majority 35% agree somewhat that the students who take online courses must be more disciplined in their studying than students who take traditional courses. This is followed by 22.9% who agree somewhat and 15% disagree somewhat disagree to the statement. From the interview, one of the students says,

> "Yes, depend on individual, since it is self-directed learning the student must be more discipline because there is no teacher present there".

4.2.1 General Opinions of Students to Online vs Traditional Courses

Based on the interviews conducted with selected students, themes that arise are ease, study materials, time, learning experience, teacher need, satisfaction, motivation, self-teaching and effect.

Ease – the questions asked to the students was why they perceive online courses are easier than traditional courses. Some responses support this statement for online courses for reasons such as it accords more time to study, helps the student become independent, it is shorter and easier to comprehension and also accords the student more reference materials. From the interview, one of the students says,

> "Yes, because you can use a lot of reference and computer ".

Yet, a number of responses suggested that not all the students felt online courses are easier, for reasons such as unavailability of teacher guide, lack of traditional learning experience, lack of concert and non-practical nature. From the interview, one of the students says,

> "No, some students find it difficult to learn personally so they need someone to teach them and put them through ".

Study materials – when asked if they perceive more learning materials in online than traditional courses, responses suggest positive. The reasons are that because there are more materials online than traditional course learning, students are able to learn more, research more and despite less or no contact with instructor, there is still every material a student needs. From the interview, one of the students says,

> "Yes, student must get more materials for studies".

Those whose responses were negative gave reasons that point the absence of instructor. From the interview, one of the students says,

"No, student must not get more materials for studies".

Time – on whether online courses require more time than traditional course, interviewees agreed, adding that this made it possible for convenience to read more. From the interview, one of the students says,

"Yes, because you need more time for study".

The negative responses suggested that it becomes difficult for students to manage their time for more productive activities. As a result of the online course, it takes more time from the student and makes them stay online, browsing social networks and other activities unrelated to academics. From the interview, one of the students says,

" No, because of limited time ".

Learning experience – the question posed was if online provides more learning experience than traditional courses. Few responses agreed but responses that the pool of literature that can be found using the internet, there is no need to ask questions, traditional learning more difficult and easy understanding. From the interview, one of the students says,

"Yes, because you have a lot of material to read ".

Also, the remaining responses were negative. From the responses, the inability to have face-to-face contact with the teacher has eliminated the part where the instructor explains phenomena in simple terms. The inability for students to meet each other has also eliminated the interaction, thereby making students more private

and unable to have good interpersonal skills. From the interview, one of the students says,

> "No, because in traditional courses you can relate with another student and you are in educational environment. I think this experience is better than online learning".

Teacher need – responses suggest that teachers are needed everywhere. From the interview, one of the students says,

> **"**Yes, of course and for better understanding**".**

When they get confused on issues, they are unable to find their way around it without guide. The teacher is needed for instant clarification, knowledge, guide, extra knowledge and better insight. Few responses disagree for need teachers during online courses. From the interview, one of the students says,

> "No, student do not need a teacher during online courses so the courses materials are available, he/she must go online and teach them self".

Satisfaction – students expressed satisfaction to some extent due largely to the opportunity to learn anything, anytime at chosen convenience. From the interview, one of the students says,

> "Yes, because they feel relax and not afraid or scared when the teaching is on".

Some say it is comfortable and relaxing while others are of the opinion that it is boring learning alone. Another set of responses suggested that since students have different preferences, it depends largely on the individual's motivation, learning needs and capability. From the interview, one of the students says,

> "No, because they do not have the classroom experience".

Motivation – responses suggested that online course learning are more flexible, motivating and accords more time to respond to tasks. From the interview, one of the students says,

> "Yes, simply because online course absorb flexibility, so everyone need easier and flexible things. Online course motivates student to always want to study because they can study any time the want".

Students who study online are motivated to imbibe self-discipline. Yet, do not prefer online because it reduces their motivation to study due to lack of interaction with other students and tempting to abandon studies since there are no strict rules. From the interview, one of the students says,

> "No, because there is no interaction with student"

Self-teaching – the responses indicated that there is an opportunity to study twenty-four hours, anytime of the week, in fact, all the time. Self-teaching enables the student to develop more boldness, easy to understand and enables students to develop reading culture. From the interview, one of the students says,

> "Yes, in the sense that it available for 24/7 and it can be retrieve anytime and anywhere compare to traditional class that cannot be accesses anywhere and anytime".

Unlike the traditional course, online learning makes it possible for students to retrieve more materials by self-determined purposes and has diverted from teacher-centered to student-centered. From the interview, one of the students says,

> "No, very difficult to have deep understanding".

Effect – the positive responses suggested that depending on the student, online learning can lead to successes of students. From the interview, one of the students says,

"Yes, it depends on individual view, some people might believe that it has a positive impact or negative impact on student".

As well as it tend to enhance negative attitudes towards learning. Also, as a result there are too many reading materials and no contact with instructors makes it ineffective. For this reason, the traditional courses are preferred. Other responses were that students tend to spend more time to study but this depends on the individual's preferences and abilities. From the interview, one of the students says, "No, because you don't have contact with the teacher".

4.3Perception of the Faculty Members to Online vs Traditional Courses

4.3.1 Faculty Members' Views to Online vs Traditional Courses

In the table below a large percent of the interviewer disagree that online courses areusually taught by professors with less credentials. They agreed that faculty like teaching online courses and they also disagree that it takes more of a faculty's time to teach online course than it takes for traditional courses. Some agree and some disagree that the better faculty teach traditional courses and that the weaker ones teach online courses. A larger percent disagree that the faculty are more available to students in online than in traditional courses. Some faculty members agree and some disagree that the faculty gives quick feedbacks to students quicker in online courses than traditional courses. And finally, a larger percent of the faculty disagree that the faculty gives better quality instruction in online courses than in traditional courses.

Table 21. Online courses are usually taught by professors with less credentials

Statement	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Strongly disagree	5	33.3	33.3
Disagree	3	20.0	20.0
Disagree somewhat	0	0.0	0.0

Undecided	3	20.0	20.0
Agree somewhat	2	13.3	13.3
Agree	0	0.0	0.0
Strongly agree	2	13.3	13.3
Total	15	100.0	100.0
Faculty like teaching online courses			
Strongly disagree	1	6.7	6.7
Disagree	0	0.0	0.0
Disagree somewhat	0	0.0	0.0
Undecided	6	40.0	40.0
Agree somewhat	4	26.7	26.7
Agree	4	26.7	26.7
Strongly agree	0	0.0	0.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0
It takes more of a faculty's time to teach online than it does to teach a traditional course			
Strongly disagree	1	6.7	6.7
Disagree	1	6.7	6.7
Disagree somewhat	5	33.3	33.3
Undecided	0	0.0	0.0
Agree somewhat	2	13.3	13.3
Agree	3	20.0	20.0
Strongly agree	3	20.0	20.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0
The better faculty members teach traditional courses, whereas, the weaker (lesser) ones teach online courses			
Strongly disagree	3	20.0	20.0
Disagree	1	6.7	6.7
Disagree somewhat	0	0.0	0.0
Undecided	8	53.3	53.3
Agree somewhat	0	0.0	0.0
Agree	3	20.0	20.0
Strongly agree	0	0.0	0.0
Total	15	100.0	100.0
Faculty members are more available to students in online courses than in traditional courses			
Strongly disagree	1	6.7	6.7
Disagree	0	0.0	0.0
Disagree somewhat	5	33.3	33.3
Undecided	6	40.0	40.0
Agree somewhat	1	6.7	6.7
Agree	1	6.7	6.7
Strongly Agree	1	6.7	6.7
Total	15	100.0	100.0
Faculty members gives feedback to students quicker in online courses than in traditional courses			
Strongly disagree	1	6.7	6.7
Disagree	0	0.0	0.0
Disagree somewhat	5	33.3	33.3

Undecided	1	6.7	6.7
Agree somewhat	3	20.0	20.0
Agree	0	0.0	0.0
Strongly agree	5	33.3	33.3
Total	15	100.0	100.0
Faculty gives better quality instruction in online courses than in traditional courses			
Strongly disagree	3	20.0	20.0
Disagree	0	0.0	0.0
Disagree somewhat	5	33.3	33.3
Undecided	2	13.3	13.3
Agree somewhat	4	26.7	26.7
Agree	0	0.0	0.0
Strongly agree	1	6.7	6.7
Total	15	100.0	100.0

In Table 21, the interviewers were asked their perception about the quality of faculty who teach online courses, 5 representing 33.3% strongly disagree to the claim that they are poor, 3 representing 20% disagree, 3 representing 20% undecided, 2 each representing 13.3% agree somewhat and strong agree respectively. This implies by 33.3% that faculty members who teach online courses do not have poor performances.

The faculty members were asked if they like teaching courses, 1 representing 6.7% strongly disagree, 6 representing 40% undecided and 4 each representing 26.7% agree somewhat and agree respectively. This implies that majority with 40% neither agrees nor disagrees, followed by 26.7% who agree and strongly agree.

According to one of the faculty member,

> " I teach at classrooms or laboratories with the aid of computer and over-head projector".

On of it takes more time for faculty members to teach online than in traditional courses, 1 each representing 6.7% strongly agree and disagree respectively, 5

representing 33.3% disagree somewhat, 2 representing 13.3% agree somewhat and 3 each representing 20% agree and strongly agree respectively. This means that 33.3% disagree somewhat with the statement that teaching online takes more time than traditional course. According to one faculty member,

> " Both of them are same, but online takes less time".

Lastly, the faculty members was asked if teaching online courses meant they were better than those teaching traditional courses, 3 representing 20% strongly disagree, 1 representing 6.7% disagree, 8 representing 53.3% undecided and 3 representing 20% agree. This shows that majority 53.3% of the faculty members neither agree or disagree with the statement that the better faculty teach traditional courses, whereas, the weaker (lesser) ones teach online courses. According to one faculty member,

> "Students performance cannot be easily accessed. In my opinion traditional classroom learning is more efficient for undergraduate students because it provide a medium of socialization and information sharing between students compare to online learning".

When asked on faculty members availability to students both online and traditional courses, 1 representing 6.7% strongly disagree, 5 representing 33.3% disagree somewhat, 6 representing 40% undecided, 1 each representing 6.7% for agree somewhat, agree and strongly agree respectively. This means that the faculty members 40% neither agree nor disagree with the statement. However, this response is closely followed up with 33.3% who indicate that they disagree somewhat.

On whether faculty members responds quicker to students in online than traditional courses, 1 interviewee representing 6.7% strongly disagree, 5 representing 33.3% disagree somewhat, 1 representing 6.7% undecided, 3 representing 20% agree

somewhat and 5 representing 33.3% strongly disagree with this claim. This implies that an equal percentage of the faculty members strongly agree and disagree somehow that they are able to respond to students quicker in online courses than they do traditionally. According to one faculty member,

> "It's difficult to sustain an interactive learning environment outside of the classrooms".

The faculty members were also asked whether there is a better form of instruction in online courses than in traditional course. Responses show that 3 representing 20% strongly disagree, 5 representing 33.3% disagree somewhat, 2 representing 13.3% undecided, 4 representing 26.7% agree somewhat and 1 representing 6.7% strongly agree. It shows that 33.3% disagree somewhat that the quality of instructions of course provided for students is not better with online than in traditional courses. However, to a reasonable extent, they do not disagree totally, giving room for those who agree somewhat 26.7% to be considered. According to one faculty member,

> "Online courses are conducted by the teacher to manage learners who feel afraid or shy to speak in physical classroom ,they feel more brave and learn better in an online classrooms".

4.3.2 General Findings about the perceptions of the Faculty Members to Online vs Traditional Courses

Interview conducted with 15 faculty members reveal four themes, namely: efficiency, differences, alternative and drawbacks. Those interviewed indicated variously that they teach in either both and/or one of classroom, laboratory and computer mediated.

Efficiency - the researcher gathered from the responses that online courses are efficient to some extent. Others specified that it was effective for theoretical courses

but not practically-based ones. Also, responses suggest that traditional courses are more effective for undergraduate students and online learning provides medium for socialization, information sharing between students because it profits only targeted students. According to one of the faculty members,

> "Yes to some extent i see online learning as an efficient form of learning".

Differences – both online and traditional courses are same, but online definitely eases time. There are fewer questions asked with the use of online medium and it is possible for students to repeat taught sessions if desired or preferred. Online is modern, futuristic yet traditional medium is old, prevalent but most preferred. According to one of the faculty members,

> "Some of the major differences between online and traditional courses are interactivity, the way the information is being transferred and the teaching skills"

Alternative – as an alternative, some faculty members feel online learning makes it possible for tasks to be carried out easily, which ordinarily would have proved unsolvable in traditional manner. There are credible reasons why online should be an alternative to support classroom teaching and learning; yet, some courses do not need online at all to and so are not necessary. According to one of the faculty members,

> "No, online learning should not be an alternative for younger students because teacher and student contact is very essential but it may be used as an alternative for the advanced learners".

Drawbacks – the drawbacks highlighted here are that online learning is more suitable for advanced learning. Also, that since teacher contact with younger students is essential, online activities might not be totally absorbed in the education system. According to one of the faculty members,

“Students performance cannot be easily accessed. In my opinion traditional classroom learning is more efficient for undergraduate students because it provide a medium of socialization and information sharing between students”.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

This study set out to examine the perception of student and faculty members about online and traditional courses in the School of Computing and Technology at the Eastern Mediterranean University, North Cyprus. The primary data obtained using survey and interviews provided the researcher with insight on the topic of discourse. Based on these findings, conclusion is drawn as follows.

Overall, there is not striking difference suggesting that either students or faculty members consider any of online and traditional courses as most preferred. “Considering the first research view point of the students to online vs traditional courses?”, from the responses of students, online courses provide them with a better learning experience a bit more than the traditional courses and a lot of reading materials are available for them to develop their knowledge. The availability of plenty study materials pose a challenge for some students who feel that the materials available are too many and they find it uninteresting that there is no contact with other students taking similar courses. To analyze the findings of this study, responses generated will be provided as answers to the outlined research questions. The students are from the Department of Information Technology who have enrolled to study either undergraduate or graduate programmes, male and female, are of

different ages from up to 20 and above 40 years and are nationalities of different countries.

This same view is countered in responses by other students which suggest that online courses do not provide a better learning experience over traditional courses because it becomes simpler when the instructor explains. For this reason, self-discipline is one factor that students in online courses can achieve academic successes.

The time devoted to online courses also does not significantly differ from that of traditional courses. While learning in online courses can be self-directed, students largely hold the view that the role of the instructor is necessary because they tend to make it easier to understand issues while studying. The opportunity and convenience they enjoy is that online courses are student-centered as compared to the traditional courses, which is teacher-centered.

According to the second research question “What is the perception of faculty members to online vs traditional courses?”, the faculty members are of the view that efficiency of online courses can be determined only when used for courses that are theoretical and not the practical ones. Online courses are very effective too because they serve the students and faculty members appropriately. Their responses suggest that online can be used to complement learning and teaching of traditional courses, but not as a replacement.

As experienced teachers, the faculty members confirm that computer-mediated learning has given a facelift to education by offering teaching and learning alternatives. Those teaching traditional courses also get to apply features that are used in online courses. Though learning process in online courses in centered on the individual, it enable students socialize more. The online learning environment makes it possible for students to receive instant feedback as compared to the traditional courses.

The faculty members confirmed that both online and traditional forms of teaching and learning are useful. Online definitely makes tasks easier because it is up-to-date and innovative. Traditional on the other hand has being there for a long time and still remains the commonest and most easily preferred.

Of these two, online learning provides a platform on which tasks are solved easily. Using online facilities, faculty member is able to access more resource materials that help him carryout tasks while capitalizing on it to gain knowledge too. For online also, faculty member must become compliant with information and communication technologies to enable the learning and teaching more beneficial.

In classroom learning, there are no stringent rules like online environment, and so deciding to use ICTs in teaching is an option for which is optional. On a whole, if the faculty members decides to take to the use of online as an alternative in classroom, it will help facilitate the process of learning for students and teaching as well.

5.2 Recommendations for Further Research

The educational system is thriving with consistent innovations and so students' perception needs to be studied to help identify the needs and how best to address and improve on them. This study establishes a significant discourse on student's perceptions for further researchers who wish to adopt similar methodology or concentrate on one type to support findings. By so doing, there will be a larger sample size that will be selected, in which students' perception can be examined separately from that of faculty members. This means that online experience of students can be studied separately, so is that of faculty members.

The innovations of technology are changing every day and computer-mediated learning is gradually being introduced in both online and classroom learning. An extended study from the findings in this discourse will make it possible for new techniques to improve the already existing structure. This will make it possible for students to reconcile the differences they hold and adopt both forms of learning.

There is need to conduct further research also because additional data on the perception of students will be used to promote programmes of study for institutions of higher learning. In this study, the focus is on just EMU and the school of communication and Technology, next time am doing a research of this such the researcher will focus more on other faculties and departments. The researcher will also visit more universities to conduct my research for my questionnaire.

REFERENCES

Agherdien, N. (2007), 'A review of theoretical frameworks in educational information and communication technology research at leading South African Universities', A dissertation in the Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg.

Allen, I.E. and Seaman, J. (2004), *Entering the Mainstream: The Quality and Extent of Online Education in the United States, 2003 and 2004*, Needham, Mass.: The Sloan Consortium.

Allen, I.E. and Seaman, J. (2006), *Making the Grade: Online Education in the United States*, Needham, Mass.: The Sloan Consortium.

Allen, I.E. and Seaman, J. (2010), 'Class differences: online education in the United State 2010'In *The Sloan Consortium*, November, accessed on 25/10/2014 from http://www.onlinelearningsurvey.com/reports/class-differences.pdf.

Ally, M. (2004), 'Foundations of educational theory for online learning' In Anderson, T. and Elloumi, F. (Eds), *Theory and Practice of Online Learning*, retrieved on 5/12/2014 from http://cde.athabascau.ca/online_book/pdf/TPOL_chp01.pdf.

Anderson, T. and Dron, J. (2011), 'Three Generations of Distance Education Pedagogy', In *International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning*, 12(3), March, pp. 80-97, accessed on 10/12/2014 from http://www.irrodl.org/index.php/irrodl/article/view/890/1826.

Anderson, T., Rouke, L., Garrison, R.D. and Archer, W. (2001), 'Assessing teaching presence in a computer conferencing context' In *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 5(2), September, retrieved on 12/12/2014 from http://auspace.athabascau.ca/bitstream/2149/725/1/assessing_teaching_presence.pdf.

Batson, T. and Bass, R. (1996), 'Primary of process: Teaching and learning in the computer age' In *Change*, Vol. 28, No.2, March-April, pp.42-47.

Berge, Z.L. and Collins, M.P. (Eds) (1995), 'Overview and perspectives' In *Computer mediated communication and the online classroom: Overview and perspectives*, Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press Inc.

Berge, Z.L. and Collins, M.P. (Eds) (1995), *Computer Mediated Communication and the Online Classroom*, New Jersey: Hampton Press.

Bonk, C.J. (2004), 'The perfect e-storm emerging technology, enormous learner demand, enhanced pedagogy, and erased budgets' *The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education, Part 1, Storms number 1 and number 2, June, accessed on 5/12/2014 from http://www.publicationshare.com/part1.pdf.*

Carliner, S. (1999), *Overview of online learning*, Amherst, MA: Human Resource Development Press.

Curtis, D. and Lawson, M. (2001), 'Exploring collaborative online learning' In *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, 5(1), pp. 21-34, retrieved on

12/12/2014 from http://wikieducator.org/images/6/60/ALN_Collaborative_Learning.pdf.

Dabbagh, N. (2003), 'Scaffolding: An important teacher competency in online learning' In *TechTrends*, *47*(2), 39-44, retrieved on 5/12/2014 from http://www.ecoisonline.org/file.php/8/lesson_1/required%20reading/Scaffolding%20an%20important%20teacher%20competency.pdf.

Dib, C.Z. (1988), 'Formal, non-formal and informal education: Concepts and applicability' Presented at the Inter-American Conference on Physics Education, Oaxtepec Mexico, retrieved on 10/12/2014 form http://www.techne-dib.com.br/downloads/6.pdf.

Downes, S. (2007), 'What connectivism is' Half an Hour, 7th February, accessed on 10/12/2014 from http://halfanhour.blogspot.co.uk/2007/02/what-connectivism-is.html.

Fischer, S.R. (200'4), *A history of writing*, Reaktion Books.

Khan, B.H. (ed) (1997), 'Web-based instruction: What is it and why is it?' In *Web-based instruction*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publications.

Knupfer, N. N. (1993), 'Teachers and educational computing: Changing roles and changing pedagogy' In Muffoletto, R. and Knupfer, N. N. (Eds.), *Computers*

in Education: Social, Political and Historical Perspectives, New Jersey: Hampton Press Inc.

Kothari, C.R. (2004). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques Second Revised Edition*, New Delhi: New Age (P) Limited, Publishers, p.8.

Ladyshewsky, R. K. (2004), 'Online learning versus face to face learning: What is the difference?' In *Teaching and Learning Forum*, retrieved on 5/12/2014 from http://otl.curtin.edu.au/events/conferences/tlf/tlf2004/ladyshewsky.html.

Landauer, T.K. and Dumais, S.T. (1997), 'A solution to Plato's problem: The latent semantic analysis theory of acquisition, induction and representation of knowledge, accessed on 10/12/2014 from http://lsa.colorado.edu/papers/plato/plato.annote.html.

Light, P. and Light, V. (1999), 'Analyzing asynchronous learning interaction: computer-mediated communication in a conventional undergraduate setting' In Littleton, K.L. (ed), *Learning with Computers: analyzing productive interaction*, London: Routledge.

Maor, D. (2003), 'The Teacher's Role in Developing Interaction and Ref lection in an Online

Learning Community' In *Education Media International*, Online, *14(1&2), pp.127-137 retrieved on 10/12/2014 from http://englishnet.or.kr/class/elearningnelt/teacherrole_interaction.pdf*.

Mathers, N,. Fox, N. and Hunn, A. (2009 revised), Surveys and Questionnaires, Trent RDSU, accessed on 5/01/2015 from www.rds-eastmidlands.nihr.ac.uk/.../11-surverys-and-questionnaires.html.

McKenzie, J. (1998), 'Creating Technology Enhanced Student-Centered Learning Environments' excerpts from The Wired Classroom, retrieved on 2/12/2014 from http://www.fromnowon.org/mar98/flotilla.html.

Merriam, S.B., Caffarella, R. and Baumgartner, L. (2007), *Learning in Adulthood: A comprehensive guide 3rd edition*, New York: Wiley.

Mertens, D. (1998), *Research Methods in Education and Psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative and qualitative approaches*, Sage publications.

Moore, J.L., Dickson-Deane, C. and Galyen, K. (2011), 'e-Learning, online learning, and distance learning environments: Are they the same?' In *Internet and Higher Education*, 14, pp. 129–135.

Norton, P. and Hathaway, D. (2008), 'Exploring two teacher education online designs: a classroom of one or many?' In *Journal of Research in Technology*, 40(4), pp. 476-495, retrieved on 12/12/2014 from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ826087.pdf.

Novak, J. (1998), *Learning, Creating and Using Knowledge: Concept Maps as Facilitative Tools in Schools and Corporations*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Inc.

Oblinger, D.G. and Oblinger, J. L. (Eds) (2005), Educating the Net Generation, Colombia: *EDUCAUSE,* retrieved on 5/12/2014 from http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/pub7101.pdf.

Pallof, R. and Prat, K. (2001), 'Learning together in community: collaboration online' Presented during the 20th annual conference on distance teaching and learning, accessed on 27/10/2014 from http://www.oakland.k12.mi.us/portals/0/learning/04_1127.pdf.

Palloff, R. and Pratt, K. (1999), *Building learning communities in cyberspace: effective strategies for the online classroom,* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Paradise, R. and Rogoff, B. (2009), 'Side by side: Learning by observing and pitching in' In *Journal of the Society of Psychological Anthropology,* pp. 102-138.

Rosenberg, M.J. (2006), *Beyond e-learning: approaches and technologies to enhance organizational knowledge, learning and performance,* San Francisco: Pfeiffer.

Sidhu, R.K. and Embi, M.A. (2010), 'Learner E-tivities: exploring Malaysian learners' role in asynchronous computer mediated communication' In *European Journal of Educational Studies, 2(2), pp. 157-174, accessed on 05/12/2014 from http://ozelacademy.com/EJES_v2n2_11.pdf.*

Siemens, G. (2004), 'Connectivism: a learning theory of the digital age', 12th December, accessed on 10/12/2014 from http://www.itdl.org/journal/jan_05/article01.htm.

Stacey, E. (1999), 'Collaborative Learning in an Online Environment' *In International Journal of e-learning and Distance Education,* 14(2), 14-33, accessed on 12/12/2014 from *http://www.ijede.ca/index.php/jde/article/view/154/379*.

Theroux, P. (2001), 'Comparing Traditional Teaching and Student Centered, Collaborative Learning, retrieved on 2/12/2014 from www.cssd.ab.ca/tech/oth/learn/differentiating.htm**.**

Ward, T.W., Sawyer, F.D., McKinney, L. and Dettoni, J. (1974), 'Effective learning: lessons to be learned from schooling' In Ward, T.W. and Herzog, W.A. Jr (Eds), *Effective learning in non-formal education*, East Lansing: Michigan State University.

Wilson, B. G. (2012), 'Constructivism in practical and historical context' In *Trends and issues in instructional design and technology*, *3*, 45-52, retrieved on 12/12/2014 from http://carbon.ucdenver.edu/~bwilson/Constructivism.pdf.

Wilson, B. G. (ed) (1996), 'What is a constructivist learning environment' In *Constructivist learning environments: Case studies in instructional design,* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Educational Technology Publication, accessed on

12/12/2014 from

http://books.google.com.cy/books?hl=en&lr=&id=mpsHa5f712wC&oi=fnd&pg=PR5&dq=Constructivist+Learning+Environments:+Case+Studies+in+Instructional+Design&ots=sYajzkgSRn&sig=_2D_aK0M9G6xxIl0pvchUjZylmc&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Constructivist%20Learning%20Environments%3A%20Case%20Studies%20in%20Instructional%20Design&f=false.

APPENDICES

Appendıx A:Questıonnaire for Students

Dear Respondent,

This is a questionnaire I have structured to enable me complete my Master Thesis on the topic: **'Students' and Faculty Members' Perception of Online vs Traditional Courses: A Case Study of EMU School Computing Technology'**. Your responses will be treated with confidentiality. Please, provide answers to the questions but do not feel obliged to answer if you are uncomfortable or unable to do so.

Thanks for your cooperation.

1. What is your age:
    a. up to 20 years
    a. 21-30 years
    b. 31-40 years
    c. 40 years and above
2. Gender:
    a. Male
    b. Female
3. Nationality: a) _____
4. In what programme are you currently enrolled?
    a. undergraduate
    b. graduate

Perceptions of Online versus Traditional Courses

S/N	Statement	Strongly Disagree			Neither	Strongly Agree		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	Online courses provide a better learning experience than traditional courses.							
6.	Online courses require more of a student's time than traditional courses.							
7.	An online course does not really need a teacher - it usually ends up being self-directed learning.							
8.	The overall quality of online courses is better than that of traditional courses							
9.	The amount of material that is presented to students in an online course is greater than in a traditional course.							
10.	Online courses are easier than traditional course.							
11.	Students receive better quality teaching from online courses than they receive from traditional courses.							
12.	It is easier for students to cheat in online courses than in traditional courses.							
13.	Students feel more disconnected from other students taking online courses than when taking traditional courses.							
14.	Students feel more disconnected from their teachers when taking online courses than when taking traditional courses.							
15.	Students are more satisfied with online courses than they are with traditional courses.							
16.	Students must be more self-motivated when taking online courses than when							

	taking traditional courses.							
17.	Students must be more willing to 'teach themselves' when taking online courses than when taking traditional courses							
18.	Students who take online classes are more willing to spend the time on coursework than students in traditional classes.							
19.	Students must spend more time reading course materials on their own when taking online courses than when taking traditional courses.							
20.	Most students take online courses because they believe that online courses are easier than traditional courses.							
21.	Students who take online courses must be more disciplined in their studying than students who take traditional courses.							

Appendıx B:Interveiw Questions for Students

1. re online courses easier than traditional courses? And why?
2. Do you think that amount of learning materials is greater for online students more than traditional courses?
3. Do online courses take more time from students than traditional courses?
4. Do you think online courses provide a better learning experience and knowledge than traditional courses?
5. Is there need for teacher during online courses?
6. Are students more satisfied during online courses? Why?
7. Do you think online course impact on basic motivation of students?
8. Can online courses impact on students' interest for self-teaching?
9. Do you think that online course make students willing to spend more time learning?
10. Do you agree that online course has positive affect on students discipline than traditional course?

Appendıx C:Interveiw Questions for Faculty Members

The following questions for the academic staff in the EMU IT Department to ascertain their perception of online and classroom learning.

1. How long have you been working in this faculty?
2. In what form of learning environment do you teach the students?
3. Do you see online learning as an efficient form of learning?
4. How can you assess students' performance in both online and classroom learning?
5. What views do you hold about existing differences between online and classroom teaching and learning?
6. Should online learning serve as a complement or an alternative to replace to classroom learning?

Perceptions of faculty members who teach online versus traditional courses

S/N	Statement	Strongly Disagree			Neither	Strongly Agree		
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	Faculty are more available to students in online courses than in traditional courses.							
8.	Faculty gives feedback to students quicker in online courses than in traditional courses.							

9.	Faculty gives better quality instruction in online courses than in traditional courses							
10.	Online courses are usually taught by professors who are poor teachers.							
11.	Faculty like teaching online courses.							
12.	It takes more of a faculty's time to teach online than it does to teach a traditional course.							
13.	The better faculty teach traditional courses, whereas, the weaker (lesser) ones teach online courses.							