International Students' Perceived Usefulness and Satisfaction with Professional Midwifery Blended Learning Course

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Abstract Although higher education institution interested in the blended learning, it is still in its construction phase at Egyptian Universities. **Aim:** To assess international students' perceived usefulness and satisfaction with Midwifery blended learning course. **Method:** A descriptive research design was utilized on 76 International students at Faculty of Nursing, Mansoura University. **Tool of data collection:** An on-line self-administered questionnaire which consisted of three parts to assess the international students' general characteristics, international students' perceived usefulness of Professional Midwifery blended learning course and factors affecting international students' satisfaction with the blended learning. **Results**: The present study revealed that most international students had positive perception about usefulness of Midwifery blended course, as it offered a variety of ways to assess students' learning, provided fewer face to face lecture and more learning material processed in the electronic form and also that blended learning course had attractive features. Additionally, most international students were satisfied with teacher performance in handling the Midwifery blended course and satisfied with the course flexibility. Furthermore, all international students were satisfied with educational environment provided by the blended course, while most of them were not satisfied with the internet speed at University. **Conclusion:** The present study revealed that most international students had positive perception about usefulness of, and satisfied with Midwifery blended course. **Recommendation:** Applying extra internet server for University to improve the internet speed.

Keywords: international students, perceived usefulness, students' satisfaction

1. Introduction

Blended learning (BL) is a popular learning approach among higher education institutions, as it integrates face to face teaching with frequent online learning. In another ward, it is the term used to describe the way of applying electronic learning when combined with traditional classroom method [1]. Blended learning is directed to increase the student's learning abilities in which, there is upgrading from the passive knowledge gaining of a massive number of students in the traditional classroom to self- dependent learning by electronic platform [2,3].

Worldwide, higher education Universities have transformed into multi-choice e-learning environments. At Mansoura University, the online platform that usually used to produce electronic environment is called MOODLE which is an acronym for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. Moodle is a free open tool of learning management systems (LMS) which is controlled by Mansoura university to provide opportunity to the teacher to upload the course content to the students, allow the students to be active participant in the learning process by submitting electronic assignments and tasks, participate in educational chat-room and forum, training on electronic quizzes which depend on questions' bank uploaded by teachers and also, viewing interactive lectures which registered for the teacher in the Central Electronic Unit at Mansoura University [4,5].

Blended learning supports distance learning that complement classroom learning experience and increase learning based on individual preference, which is independent of time and place [6,7]. Of course, this transaction is a normal consequence of the developed trend of technology utilization and availability of information and communication technologies (ICT) in our daily routine lives, which in turn has brought about changes related to knowledge construction, distribution, and reconstruction [8].

There are several factors that can affect blended learning success and affect students' satisfaction about it such as readiness of the teacher and students to upgrading their teaching and learning experience, teachers' and

students' ability to handle educational technology effectively, students' perceived usefulness of blended learning course, flexibility of the course, reliability of the electronic system used and educational environment motivation which allow utilization of all benefits of blended learning [9,10,11].

First of all, blended learning improves communication between teachers and students than in the traditional courses and also BL offers students who have many contexts to interact and work with each other. In addition, BL covers all learning styles and is cost-effectiveness and has the flexibility in presenting course content in many ways [10,12]. Moreover, BL permits students to access diverse online resources, giving students more chances to interact with other colleagues and to get variety points of view. In this way, students can improve their capacities, be more involved in learning process and be more able to fit in any learning context [13,14,15].

International students are the universities' target to gain their attachment to scholarship in educational institutions. At Mansoura University, international students' perceived usefulness and satisfaction with the blended learning is a chief factor affecting the success of e-learning environment and shapes the direction of its future use and upgrading. So, the present study was conducted to assess international students' perceived usefulness and satisfaction with Professional Midwifery blended learning course which is one blended course provided by Woman' Health and Midwifery Nursing Department.

1.1. Significance of the Study

A great need for utilization of blended learning is approaching especially in the educational universities, this great need derived from the Egyptian Government desire to make use of new technology strategies in educational context. Blended learning is the first step for distance learning and is the coming approach in Egyptian Faculties. Moreover, the adoption of E-learning at Faculty of Nursing, Mansoura University can provide suitable solution for the growing numbers of students attending the faculty yearly and also for the students with busy schedule. Also, the Faculty demands for more scholarship for more involvement of international students in the nursing filed not only for the benefit of country economy but also for the great impact on education and on our university ranking. So, assessment of international students' perception of usefulness and satisfaction with blended learning is very important.

1.2. Operational Definitions

Students' perceived usefulness is the thoughtful idea about the expected benefits of blended learning utilizing.

Students' satisfaction is the students 'subjective perceptions of how well a learning environment supports academic learning experience.

Blended learning is the combination of face to face lectures with electronic learning systems, integrating on-ground teaching environments with internet technology.

1.3. Aim of the Study

To assess international students' perceived usefulness and satisfaction with Midwifery blended learning course.

1.4. Research Questions

Question 1: What are the international students' perceived usefulness of Professional Midwifery blended learning course?

Question 2: Are international students satisfied with Professional Midwifery blended learning course?

2. Method

Research deign: A descriptive research design.

Setting: The research was conducted at Faculty of Nursing, Mansoura University, Egypt.

Sample: The study involved a purposive sample of all (76) International students at their third level, in1st semester of academic year 2015–2016 and enrolled in the Professional Midwifery credit course.

2.1. Instrument

On-line self-administered questionnaire utilized to collect the required data. It was adapted from [16]. The questionnaire included three parts; the first part related to the international students' general characteristics such as age, gender and previous blended learning experiences; the second part related to the international students' perceived usefulness of Professional Midwifery blended learning course which included 12 items and the third part related to factors affecting international students' satisfaction with the blended learning course which consisted of five domains; the first domain consisted of four items which related to the international students' satisfaction with blended learning teachers ; the second domain consisted of five items which related to international students' satisfaction with flexibility of the blended learning course; the third domain consisted of four items which related to the international students' satisfaction with Electronic system handle the blended learning course; the fourth domain consisted of two items which related to the international students satisfaction with Internet speed; and the fifth domain consisted of four items which related to the international students' satisfaction with the education environment provided through the blended learning course. Three-point Likert scale used for all domains (1=disagree, 2= neutral, 3= agree).

2.2. Validity and Reliability

Validity of this tool was tested by five experts in the field of Woman's Health & Midwifery Nursing, Community Health Nursing, and Computer Science and in Education. Their suggested configurations were made in the sequence of the tool items. The reliability of the tool was tested by Alpha Cronbach's coefficient test. The alpha reliability was (0.90).

2.3. Ethical Considerations

An ethical approval letter was attained from Research Ethics Committee, Faculty of Nursing, Mansoura University to conduct the research. At the start of the semester, all international students were informed about

the aim of the research and also were informed that their voluntary participation in the research have no effect on their academic evaluation.

2.4. Pilot Study

It was conducted on 10% of total international students to test the objectivity and applicability of the research tool. Students involved in the pilot study were excluded from the research.

2.5. Procedure

The researchers explained the aim of the research to all international students enrolled in the Professional Midwifery credit course at the start of the first semester of academic year 2015-2016. The blended learning course involve mix between face to face lessons which were given at the Faculty of Nursing classroom and illustrated by discussion and PowerPoint presentation and also include the use of an e-learning platform MOODLE to view the electronic interactive lectures, submit electronic assignments and tasks and solve the electronic quizzes. The international students were asked to view the interactive lessons, solve quizzes, complete tasks individually or by group and submit their work online. Also, there was a specific time for electronic chatting which is known for all international students and for the teachers. Furthermore, the course content, suggested reading materials, specific suggested references, illustrated videos, discussion forum and requested assignment were involved in the e- learning platform via MOODLE. The online learning lectures and materials were used more than the face to face lectures for all course content.

After finishing the blended learning course and after the end of the first semester, all international students responded to the online questionnaire to assess their perceived effectiveness and satisfaction with Professional Midwifery blended learning course. The online questionnaire uploaded to the students via the e-learning platform which is MOODLE.

2.6. Statistical Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 was used for the statistical analysis of the obtained data. Data were presented using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations for quantitative variables.

3. Results

Table 1 illuminates that the mean age of the international students was 20.45 ± 1.603 years. Also, all international students were Nigerian students and hadn't any previous experience of studying blended learning course.

Table 2 describes the international students' perceived usefulness of blended learning course. It shows that, most (98.7%) of international students agreed that blended learning course offered variety of ways to assess students' learning, provided fewer lectures in face to face and more learning material processed in the e- form and had attractive features.

Additionally, all (100%) international students agreed that, course specification was illustrated on blended learning Midwifery course at the start of the semester. Also, all international students agreed that, BL provided an easy way of submitting activities and offered learning materials and tasks which were consistent with the lectures in the classroom and provided learning materials and activities which help to study the course content effectively.

Table 1. Distribution of International Students according to age (n=76)

Age	No.	%
18 -20	22	28.9
20 ≥22	33	43.4
22 > 25	21	27.6
SD± Mean	1.603±20.45	

Table 2. International students' perceived usefulness of blended learning course (n= 76)

| Blended Learning	Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Provides interactive lectures of the course is organized transparently.	0	0	5	6.6	71	93.4
Offers a variety of ways to assess students' learning via assignment, quizzes, files and forum.	0	0	1	1.3	75	98.7
Lets the students receive the teachers' feedback on an assignment with in few days.	0	0	3	3.9	73	96.1
Provide fewer lectures in face-to-face and more learning material processed in the e- form.	0	0	1	1.3	75	98.7
Has a good general impression.	0	0	3	3.9	73	96.1
Provide study materials and tasks in a clear and understandable way.	0	0	2	2.6	74	97.4
Has attractive features.	0	0	1	1.3	75	98.7
Provide more tutorials in the course.	0	0	3	3.9	73	96.7
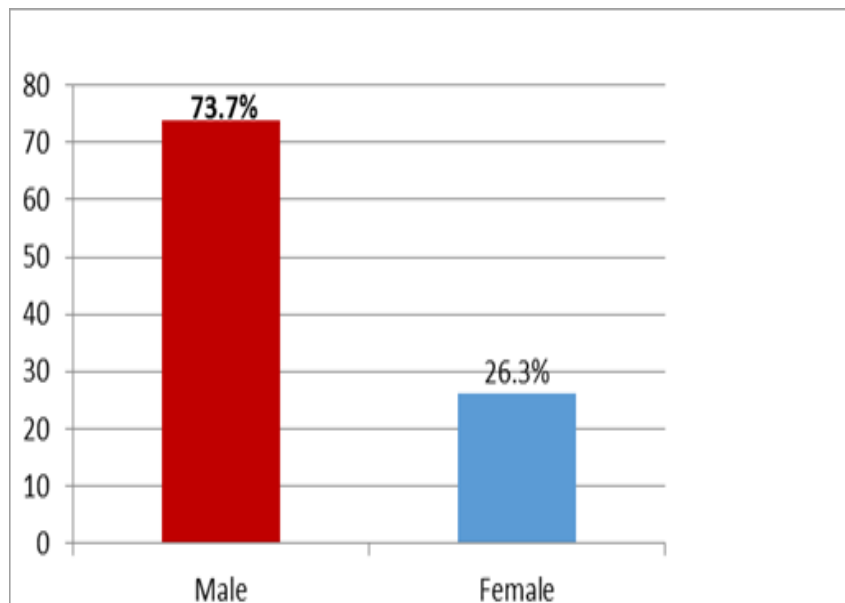
Figure 1. Percentage of international students according to gender

Figure 1 shows that almost three quarters (73.7%) of international students were male students.

Table 3, Demonstrate factors affecting international students' satisfaction with blended learning course. It represents that most (98.7%) of international students strongly agreed that their teacher provided a timely feedback on assignment, teacher was enthusiastic about teaching the blended course and teacher handle the information technology effectively. Furthermore, most international students (97.4%) strongly agreed that their teacher explain how to use the e-learning system clearly. Regarding international students' satisfaction with flexibility of the blended course, Table 3 represents that most (98.7%) of international students' agreed that blended course quality is better compared to the traditional courses and blended course saved my time, in addition, most (97.4%) of international students agreed that blended course allowed class work arrangement effectively and

also allowed interactive lecture for some lectures which would be missed for any reason. Also, (93.4%) of them agreed that blended course allowed courses schedule arrangement for this semester more effectively. Concerning international students' satisfaction with electronic system handle the course, all (100%) of international students agreed that the electronic system was flexible and easy to obtain and to use and had many good functions. In relation to the internet speed, most (97.4%) of international students not satisfied with the internet speed on university and most (93.4%) of them didn't find it easy to go on line on university. Finally, for international students' satisfaction with education environment, all (100%) of international students agreed that class discussion was easier to participate in, quality of class discussion was high, classroom dynamic was much better and teacher provided educational environment to enhance students' interaction.

Table 3. Factors affecting International students' satisfaction with blended learning course

Students' satisfaction	Disagree		Neutral		Agree	
With Teacher	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Teacher provides a timely feedback on assignment.	0	0.00	1	1.3	75	98.7
Teacher was enthusiastic about teaching the blended course.	0	0.00	1	1.3	75	98.7
Teacher handle the information technology effectively.	0	0.00	1	1.3	75	98.7
Teacher explain how to use the e-learning system clearly.	0	0.00	2	2.6	74	97.4
With Flexibility of the course	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Blended course allowed class work arrangement effectively.	0	0.00	2	2.6	74	97.4
Blended course allowed courses schedule arrangement for this semester more effectively.	0	0.00	5	6.6	71	93.4
Blended course improved the quality of the course compared to the traditional courses.	0	0.00	1	1.3	75	98.7
Blended course allowed an interactive lecture for some lectures which would be missed for any reason.	0	0.00	2	2.6	74	97.4
Blended course saved my time.	0	0.00	1	1.3	75	98.7
With Internet speed	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
I am satisfied with the internet speed on university	74	97.4	2	2.6	0	0.00
It is easy to go on line on university	71	93.4	5	6.6	0	0.00

4. Discussion

Worldwide, the rapid development of information, internet technologies, web-based applications and communication technologies have initiated unparalleled transformation in universities. The integration of e-learning into the educational system has reshaped the process of acquisition and dissemination of knowledge [17]. Especially with the growing demand of increase the scholarships of international students and raising the economic income to Universities and Faculties. So, blended learning as a first step of distance learning is very important to be integrated into the university educational field. The present study aimed to assess international students' perceived usefulness and satisfaction with Midwifery blended learning course.

Students' perceived usefulness means the thoughtful idea about the expected benefits of blended learning utilizing. The present study findings revealed that mostinternational students agreed that Midwifery blended learning course offered a variety of ways to assess students' learning, provided fewer lectures in face-to-face and more learning material processed in the e- form and had attractive features. At this context, several studies cited at [18] reported that students who use the blended learning in higher education have varying positive perceptionregarding their blended learning experiences due toflexibility in providing e-learning lectures more than face to face classroom and the chance for varying assessment of students' performance related to their learning process.

The present study finding showed that all international students agreed that blended learning Midwifery course introduced the course specification at the start of the semester. This study finding can be attributed to the skills of the trained teacher about how to prepare for a blended course at Faculty of Nursing, Mansoura University. The present study finding is Resemble to a descriptive study conducted at Tanta University conducted by [19] on 314 undergraduates' students they reported that students indicated their agreement that the blended learning course provided them with all information regarding the course at the start of the semester. Also, the present study findings revealed that all international students agreed that, BL provided an easy way of submitting activities and offered learning materials and tasks which were consistent with the lectures in the classroom and provided a high-speed information access and provided learning materials and activities which help to study the course content effectively.

Parallel, a survey research conducted by [20] at Ghana University to examine students' perceptions on incorporating e-learning into teaching and learning on 534 students. The students reported a higher percentage of agreement that blended learning course improve their learning experience and they were agree about the usability of the blended learning course.

Concerning the second part of the discussion, student satisfaction is the subjective perceptions on students' part of how well a learning environment supports academic success. High level of students' satisfaction implies that appropriately educational method were utilized and a well-trained teacher who provide a flexible course and are serving to trigger students' thinking and learning [21].

The present study findings revealed that most international students were satisfied with teacher performance in handling the Midwifery blended course; they reported that the teacher provided a timely feedback on assignment, teacher was enthusiastic about teaching the blended course and handle the information technology effectively. The present study findings may be contributed to good teacher experience in teaching with E-courses and sufficient in-service training for teachers about how to manage blended learning. The present study findings are in concordance with a previous descriptive study conducted by [22] on 78 university students at USA to determine student's satisfaction factors affect the perceived learning. They reported that the students were satisfied regarding the teacher performance who played a great role in directing the students for active participation in learning process with adequate encouragement and supporting.

In relation to student's satisfaction with flexibility of the course, the present study findings revealed that most international students were satisfied with blended course as it allowed to attend class lectures as well as allowed to view and participate in the interactive lecture electronically. This study finding is consistent with a descriptive study conducted by [23] on 75 students at Gulf Medical University to estimate students' perception of blended learning courses. They reported that presenting the course in blended format made it easy to enhance their learning as the course was more flexible. Concerning the international students' satisfaction with electronic system handle the course, the present study findings revealed that, all international students were agreed that the electronic system was flexible and easily utilized. This study finding is in the same line with another descriptive study conducted by [24] on 207 students from different faculties at Austria to identify students' expectations of, and experiences in e-learning in relation to learning achievements and course satisfaction. They reported that successful students were more likely to attribute their satisfaction with the course to the quality of supported, flexible electronic system they already received during studying the course. While this study finding is controversial to [19] who reported that the cause of dissatisfaction about blended learning is related to items concerning the improper electronic system quality and usability.

As regards to student's satisfaction with internet speed, although all international students were satisfied with the electronic system handle the blended course, most of themdidn't find it easy to go on line at the University and were not satisfied about the internet speed. The present study findings are contrasted with a cross sectional study conducted by [20] on 534 students at Ghana University to assess how perceived easiness of utilizing e-learning will affect students' intention to use E-learning. They reported that high internet speed enhanced the e-learning experience and utilization.

Finally, student's satisfaction with education environment, the present study finding revealed that all international students were satisfied with quality of class discussion, classroom dynamic and the educational environment which enhanced students' interaction. The present study findings are in accordance with an experimental study conducted by [25] on 107 students at turkey to analyze effects of blended learning environment on middle

school students' engagement and academic achievement. They reported that blended learning environment had meaningfully increased the students' satisfaction.

5. Conclusion

The present study concluded that most international students had positive perception about usefulness of Midwifery blended course as it offered variety of ways to assess students' learning, provided fewer face to face lecture and more learning material processed in the e-form and also that blended learning had attractive features. Additionally, most international students were satisfied with teacher performance in handling the Midwifery blended course and satisfied with Midwifery blended course flexibility. Furthermore, all international students were satisfied with educational environment provided by the blended course, electronic system handled the blended course while most of them were not satisfied with the internet speed at University.

6. Recommendation

Applying extra internet server for University to improve the internet speed.

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