Online Learning @ FSEDU

May, 2020

Online Learning : The Unplanned Plan B

A plan B is usually set when a plan A might not work. However, no one imagined that face-to-face learning (Plan A) would, under any circumstances, stop completely for such a long period of time. The sudden outbreak of the coronavirus has made online learning (Plan B) the only logical thing to do. However, no one was ready for such a journey; neither the faculty members nor the students…

Although online tools turned out to be relatively easy to learn and use, the main challenge remains: *readiness and cultural predispositions regarding online learning.* Despite the importance of technical or logistical issues that govern online learning, one shouldn't undermine the pedagogical and perceptual aspects of online learning. That's why, the FSEDU decided to run a short survey in an attempt to optimize its online learning environment for both students and faculty members.

![USJ Saint Joseph University of Beirut - Faculty of Educational Sciences logo]

Question1: The program that you are enrolled in?

This survey targeted the students who took at least one online course and also the faculty members who gave at least one online course. Around 62% of the targeted population responded or participated in this survey. In addition, almost all the faculty members who gave online courses participated in this survey.

The participants

| Section	N	%
French	26	47%
Arabic	25	46%
English	4	7%

The participants
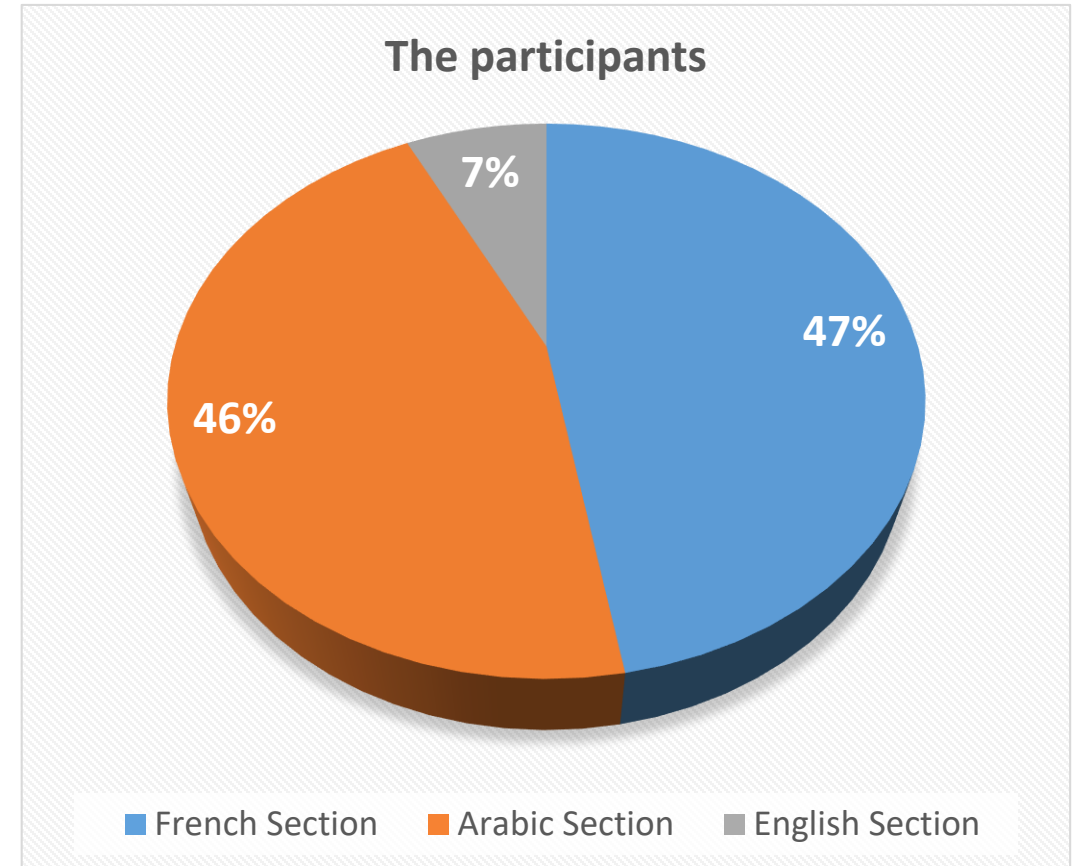
The aim of this question is to uncover the status of the internet connections in students' houses. The numbers showed that the connections were acceptable to a great extent. Only 7.27% of our sample reported that they suffered from weak internet connection. Such an evaluation is somehow similar to the rating done by the faculty members in the sample.

N	Valid	55
	Missing	0
Mean		2.51
Median		2.00

Internet Connection

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Weak	4	7.3	7.3	7.3
	Fair	24	43.6	43.6	50.9
	Good	22	40.0	40.0	90.9
	Excellent	5	9.1	9.1	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Internet Connection
Weak 7.27%, Fair 43.64%, Good 40.00%, Excellent 9.09%
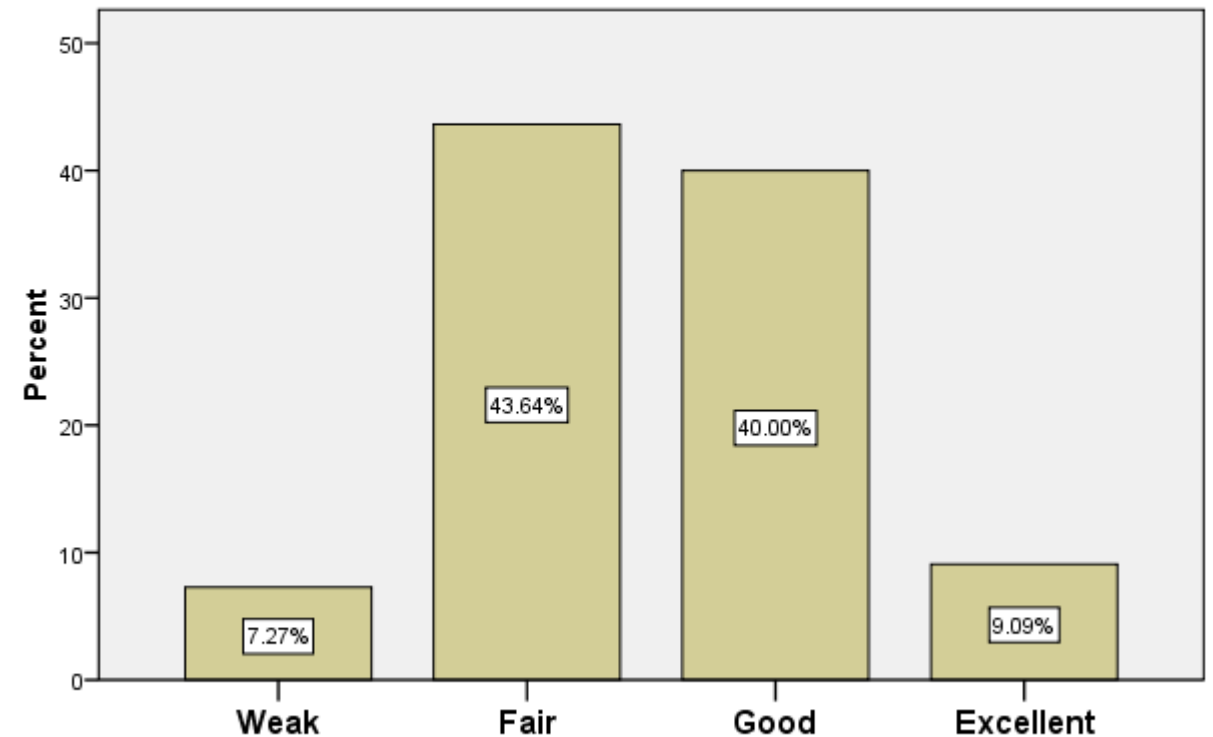
The most commonly used online platforms were MS Teams and ZOOM. This indicates that these tools are technically stable and seemed suitable for the various online tasks.

$Platforms Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Online Platforms Used[a]	Zoom	34	33.3%	61.8%
	Teams	38	37.3%	69.1%
	Skype	2	2.0%	3.6%
	Moodle	11	10.8%	20.0%
	WhatsApp	10	9.8%	18.2%
	Google_H	7	6.9%	12.7%
Total		102	100.0%	185.5%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Most frequently used online platforms
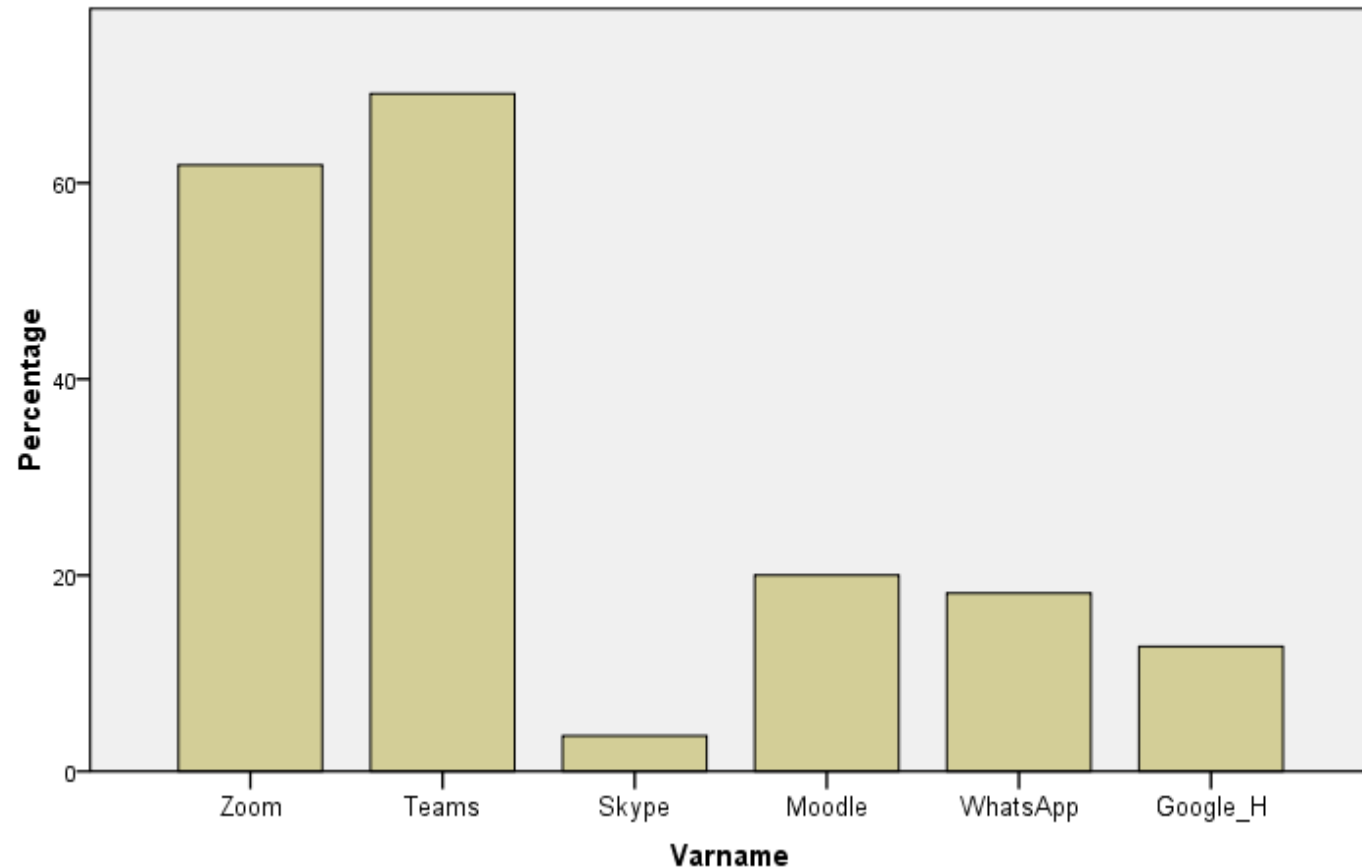
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The aim of this question is to examine the level of involvement and support beyond scheduled teaching sessions. Participants reported that FSEDU professors were almost always available(Mean=4.27; Median=5) to provide feedback and support.

Availability of Professors

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rarely	2	3.6	3.6	3.6
	2	2	3.6	3.6	7.3
	3	7	12.7	12.7	20.0
	4	12	21.8	21.8	41.8
	Always	32	58.2	58.2	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Availability of Professors
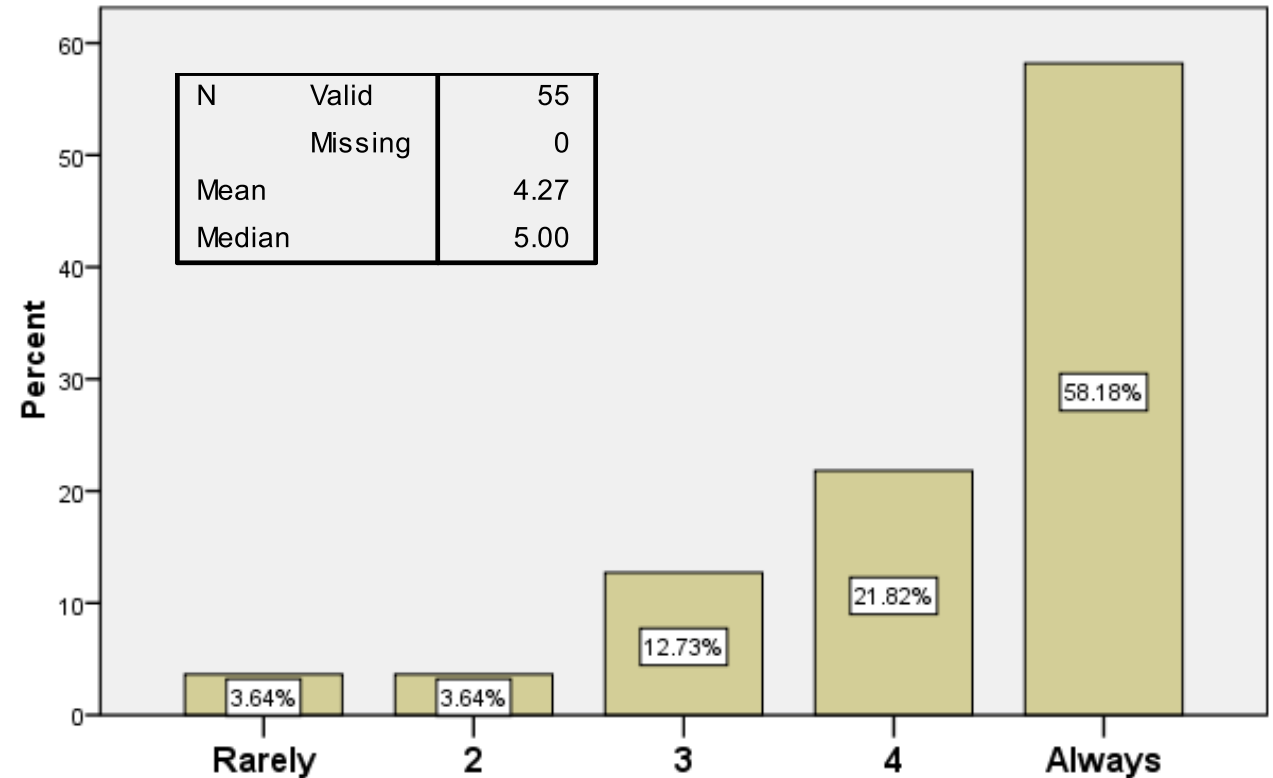
N	Valid	55
	Missing	0
Mean		4.27
Median		5.00

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During the current semester, not only the faculty members were available online, the administrative team of FSEDU assumed its role and provided help and support for students and faculty members. Participants reported that FSEDU administrative team was almost always available(Mean=4.22; Median=5) to provide help and support.

Availiability of Administrative Team@FSEDU

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	4	7.3	7.3	7.3
	3	11	20.0	20.0	27.3
	4	9	16.4	16.4	43.6
	Always	31	56.4	56.4	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Availiability of Administrative Team@FSEDU
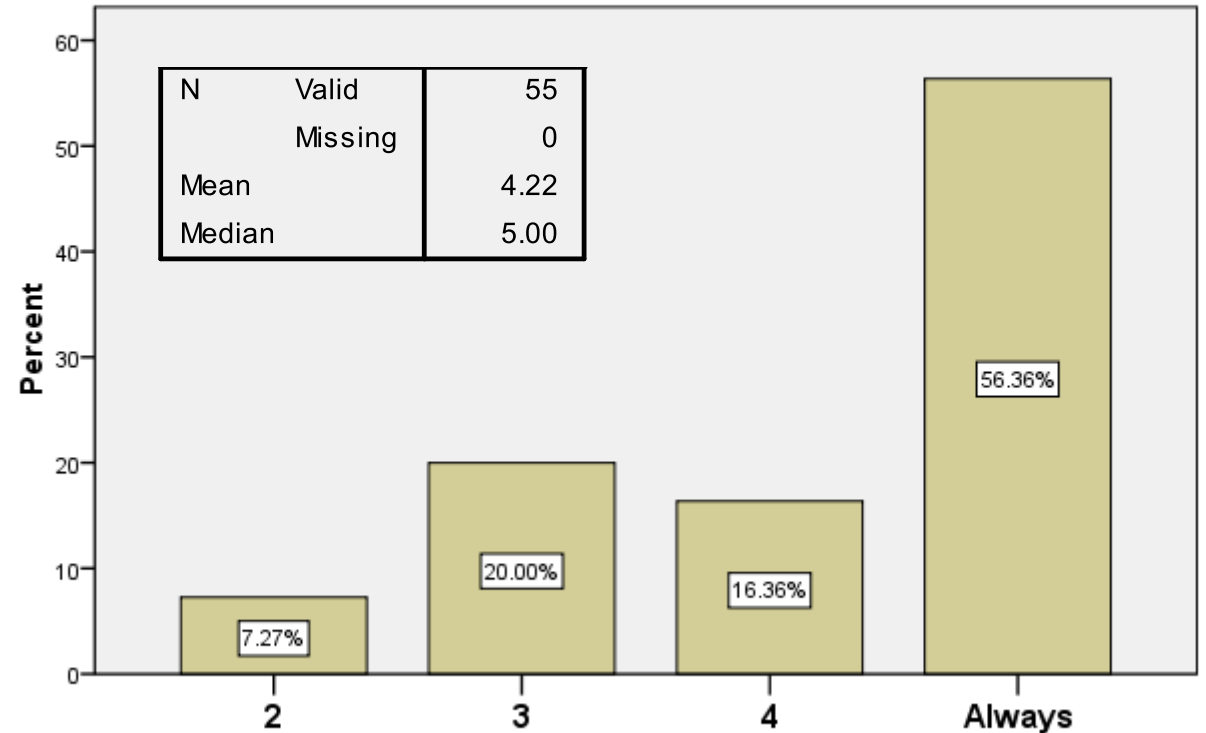
| N	Valid	55
	Missing	0
Mean		4.22
Median		5.00

56.36%

20.00%

16.36%

7.27%

Online assessment continues to be a controversy issue among various educational stakeholders. Nevertheless, the data showed that most students prefer projects and/or other types of homework(assigned work that is done offline) over other modes of assessment.

$Assessments Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
$Assessments[a]	Closed-ended online tests	8	10.7%	14.5%
	Open-ended online tests	10	13.3%	18.2%
	Projects	23	30.7%	41.8%
	Homework	34	45.3%	61.8%
Total		75	100.0%	136.4%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Preferred mode of assessment
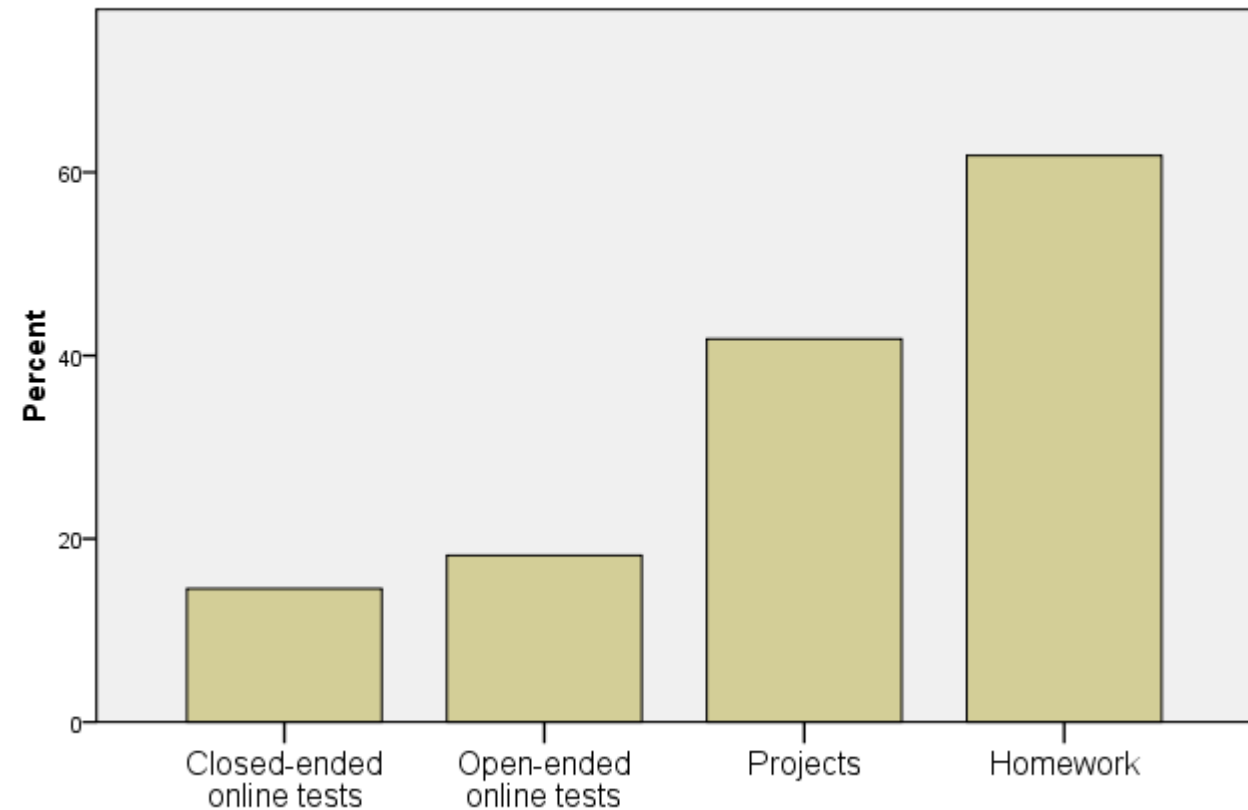
When asked about their satisfaction with online learning in general, most **students** reported that they were satisfied(with 5 = very satisfied, the Mean was 3.47 and the Median was 4). Data showed that around 16% of students seemed to be not satisfied with their online journey.

N	Valid	55
	Missing	0
Mean		3.47
Median		4.00

Satisfaction with Online Learning

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	9	16.4	16.4	16.4
	3	18	32.7	32.7	49.1
	4	21	38.2	38.2	87.3
	Very Satisfied	7	12.7	12.7	100.0
	Total	55	100.0	100.0	

Satisfaction with Online Learning
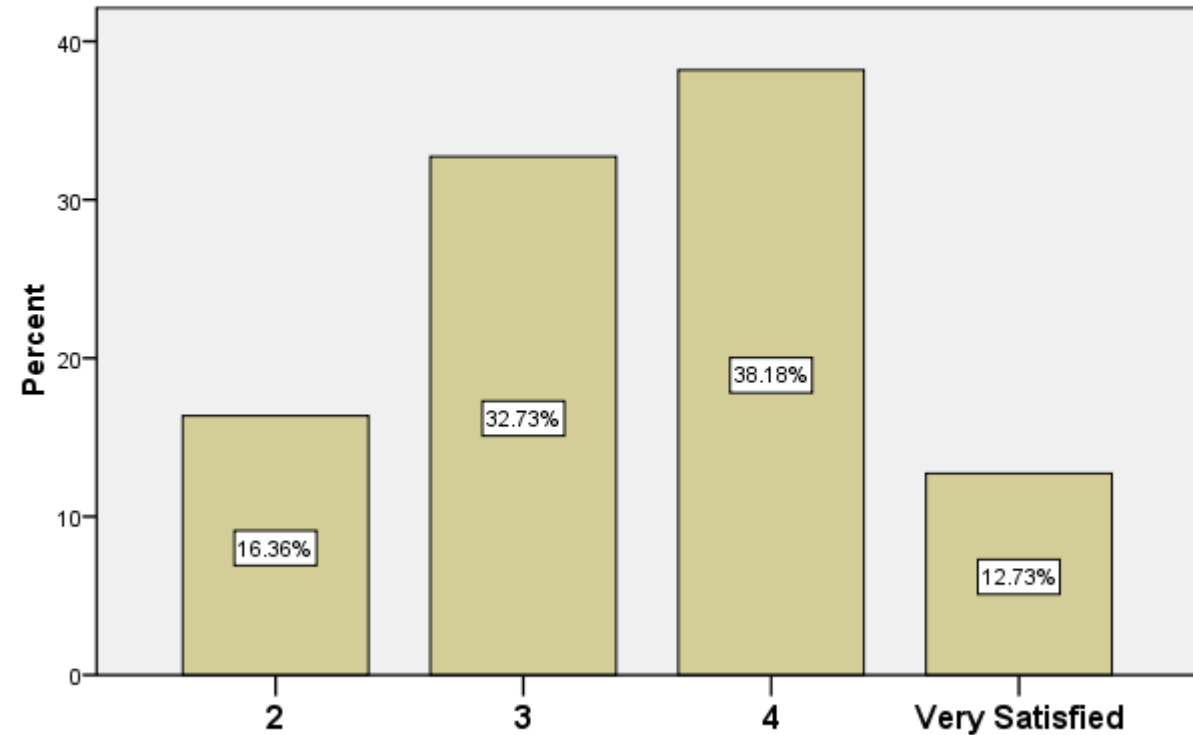
Among the various responses received, the following two main categories emerged from the examined students' data:

1. **Interactive Lecturing** (Lecture + Discussions)

2. **Flipped Learning** (videos, presentations, articles, or documents that are sent before the session time and then explained and discussed during the online session time)

Among the various responses received, the following two main categories emerged from the examined students' data:

1.   **No suggestions; Thank you.**

2.   **Shorter online sessions; more sessions per week.**

Conclusion

Online learning can be an effective way of learning especially during the times of crisis; and we think it is here to stay even after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is anticipated that higher-education institutions will continue to use online learning for coaching, hosting webinars, and providing blended learning...

Although the humanistic face-to-face approach to learning is indispensable, a humanistic remote approach can still work by addressing the needs of the various stakeholders. As such, our students might benefit from professional development opportunities that cover crisis-related topics such as: *self-motivation, autonomy, online communication* and *self-regulated learning.*