The Influence of Class Participation and Course Project on Final Grades in the Context of Online Teaching

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Abstract

The research aimed to study the relationship between class participation, course project, and final grade in the context of online instruction. A correlational research design was selected to be used in the study. The students in the first year in the master's program of a new university compounded the respondents selected to be surveyed in the research. A systematic list of students' participation in the lectures, as well as their academic progress to gather secondary data, was used in the study. At the same time, the random cluster sample of the respondents (N=146) of the bachelor's degree level was used in the research.
The research study revealed a high positive correlation between class participation and final grade variables (r = .710), as well as between course project and final grade variables (r = .826. The study showed that the amount of variance of final grade levels explained by class participation is 50.1%, meanwhile, explained by course project points is 68.0%; the other variance may be described by other variables. This shows that class participation and course project points influence strongly the final grade of students' academic performance.

Keywords: Class participation, course project, final grade, online teaching

Introduction and literature review

Digital instruction tools are increasingly found in classrooms, yet too often, technology integration used by teachers replicates rather than transforms traditional teaching practices (Xhomara, 2021). In the blended context, students involve in active learning during activities and get individual information reflection outside the school. The students at university need to do pre and post-class activities to fully profit from blended teaching and learning. The scientific and methodological competencies were the two main competencies of teaching, and teachers that show a high level of scientific competency show a high level of methodological competency as well (Xhomara, 2016). Teachers must use practical approaches including teacher-student out-of-classroom interaction to help students lead their activities effectively

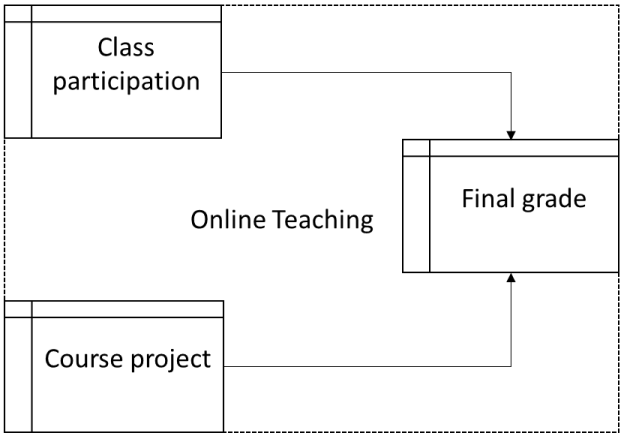
and stay on task. The academic progress of the students as well as the learning are affected by numerous variables including gender, age, lecturing, schooling, social status, residential area, the approach of instructions in schools, tuition trend, daily study hours, and accommodation of the students (Xhomara, 2018). The goal of the study is to inquire about the relationship between class participation, course project, and final grade in the environment of online instruction. The research questions are as follows: (1) is there a variance in the final grade score described by class participation in the context of online instruction? (2) is there a variance in the final grade score described by the course project in the environment of online instruction?

Conceptual framework

The theoretical framework of the research study is based on the review of existing works about online instruction through ERIC, and EBSCO, using the keywords "class participation", "course project", and "final grade". Figure1 shows the results of the review of the work and suggests the following relationship among three main variables: class participation, course project, and final grade of students' performance.

Figure 1

Conceptual framework



Literature review

Relationship between class participation and final grade of students

In a blended learning environment, students are too motivated to involve in out-of-classroom activities (Cui & Coleman, 2020); at the same time, Pérez-López & Ibarrondo-Dávila (2020), as well as Xhomara, Stošić & Tomczyk (2019) show that academic progress is directly related, in a positive and significant way to students' priorly interest in the course, the usefulness of the course, prior academic achievement, and applying material learned in practice. Individual backgrounds showed the important role in predicting the academic achievements of undergraduate students (Sothan, 2019; Bailey et al., 2020); and Santoveña-Casal (2019) showed that students who took part in a social media-based activity showed better academic performance than students who did not carry out any learning activity or who took part in a more traditional learning approach. Sikhwari, Dama, Gadisi & Matodzi (2020), indicated that

academic as well as social engagement of students at university is important for study commitment, progress, and dropping out preventing; meanwhile, leadership style, feelings of isolation and lack of future aspiration significantly impact teacher-student interaction, and academic performance of students in complex ways (Xhomara, 2018; Bek, 2017).

There is an important relationship between academic progress and the time that students take part and interacted with the online learning system, as well as prior knowledge, problem-based instruction, the comprehensive learning approach, and work assessment (Nieuwoudt, 2020; Fematt, et al. 2021; Xhomara, 2020); meanwhile, Delfino (2019) found out that behavioral, emotional as well as the cognitive participation were positively correlated to the academic achievements of the students. Academic self-efficacy, students' participation level, intrinsic and extrinsic motivational variables, as well as individual study work and lecturer support significantly predict the exam performance of the students (Sezer, Inel, Seçkin & Uluçinar, 2017; Galyon, Blondin, Yaw, Nalls & Williams, 2012; Bielinska-Kwapisz, 2015; Xhomara, 2020); meanwhile, Tran & Pham (2019) showed that organized learning positively impacts the relationship between students' participation and academic achievements at universities and colleges. Hence, based on previous works it is hypothesized that:

H # 1: Final grade of students has described by class participation.

Relationship between course project and final grade of students

Education students' performance and knowledge building improved significantly by the coursework and discussion methods used by lecturers (Westerveld & Barton, 2017; Williams & Siwatu, 2017; Xhomara, 2020); at the same time, Mei, Parkay & Pitre (2016) revealed that mean results in coursework and student ranking are positively related with academic progress. Mathuews & Pulcini (2017) found out that performance-based rewards impacted student progress, not necessarily the authenticity of student support; and Ward, Jacobs & Thompson (2016) indicate that a traditionally at-risk population suffered from lower university results as well as lower retention and lower completion rates. Online students had lower academic results but at the same time were importantly more likely to attend a formal than classroom-only environment (Shea & Bidjerano, 2019; Shea & Bidjerano, 2017); as well as there is a positive balance between students' projects and examinations scores (Frey, Fink, Cahill, McDaniel & Solomon, 2018; Yhnell et al. 2016), and the sum of students' study time impacts importantly academic achievements of them (Xhomara & Hasani, 2018).

Students' projects work performance was positively related to their involvement with the online teaching activities (Breckler, Teoh & Role, 2011; Graff, 2006); meanwhile, curriculum modules is more easily accessible in the computer-based approach than in conventional lectures instruction; (Liu & Xu, 2019: Boatman & Kramer, 2019). Self-efficacy in reading and writing and lectures attendance was positively related to student progress (Woodfield, Earl-Novell & Solomon, 2005; Prat-Sala & Redford, 2012; Xhomara, 2017); meanwhile, Juarez & Purper (2018), and Hassell, Hewakandamby & Yueh (2018) indicate different teaching methods within university work led to strong, positive learning results. Hence, based on the abovementioned research work it is hypothesized that:

H # 2: Final grade of students has been described by the course project.

Methodology

The Method

The quantitative method was the approach used in the study. A correlational research design was selected to be used. The students in the first year in the master's program of a new university compounded the respondents selected to be surveyed in the research.

The Sample and Data Collection

A systematic list of students' participation in the lectures, as well as their academic progress to gather secondary data, was used in the study. At the same time, the random cluster sample of the respondents (N=146) was used in the research. The breakdown of the group of respondents included 92 females (63 %) and 54 males (37 %). The random cluster sample of students was selected in the human sciences, economic sciences, and technological sciences of the university.

The Analysis

The Pearson correlation statistical output was used to investigate the relationship between class participation and final grade, as well as between course projects and final grades. The multivariate regression was used to test the ability of one control measure to predict the final grade by class participation and course project. Preliminary analyses were conducted in the research study that ensure any violation of the assumptions of the normality, linearity, multicollinearity, as well as the homoscedasticity.

Results and discussion

The Descriptive Statistics

Table 1

The frequencies of online teaching attendance

Online Teaching Attendance

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low level	25	17.1	17.1	17.1
	Medium level	56	38.4	38.4	55.5
	High level	65	44.5	44.5	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

As shown in descriptive output above, 17.1% of students are evidenced to have a low level of online teaching attendance; 38.4% of a medium level; and 44.5% of the respondents, have a high level of online teaching attendance. Therefore, the most of students (82.9%) are evidenced to have a medium and high level of online teaching attendance.

Table 2

The frequencies of class participation

Class Participation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low level	48	32.9	32.9	32.9
	Medium level	60	41.1	41.1	74.0
	High level	38	26.0	26.0	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 2, 32.9% of respondents are evidenced to have a low level of class participation score; 41.1% of respondents, have a medium level; and 26.0% of respondents, have a high level of class participation score. Therefore, the most of students (67.1%) are evidenced to have a medium and high level of class participation.

Table 3

The frequencies of the course project

Course Project

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low level	43	29.5	29.5	29.5
	Medium level	52	35.6	35.6	65.1
	High level	51	34.9	34.9	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

As shown in the above table, 29.5% of respondents are evidenced to have a low level of course project score; 35.6% of respondents, have a medium level; and 34.9% of respondents, have a high level of course project score. Therefore, the most of students (70.5%) are evidenced to have medium and high levels of course project scores.

Table 4

Frequencies of the final grade

Final Grade

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	FL (Failed level)	27	18.5	18.5	18.5
	VLL (Very low level)	14	9.6	9.6	28.1
	LL (Low level)	16	11.0	11.0	39.0
	LML (Lower medium level)	48	32.9	32.9	71.9
	UML (Upper medium level)	27	18.5	18.5	90.4
	HL (High level)	13	8.9	8.9	99.3
	VHL (Very high level)	1	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	146	100.0	100.0	

As shown in SPSS output above, 18.5% of respondents are evidenced to have failed; 20.6% of them are reported to have a very low or low level of the final grade; 51.4% of respondents are reported to have a lower or upper-medium level of the final grade, and 15.9% of respondents are reported to have a high or very high level of the final grade. Thus, the most of students (67.3%) are described to have a medium or high level of final grade.

Inferential analysis

H # 1

Table 5

Pearson correlation coefficient of the relationship between class participation and final grade variables

Correlations

		Final Grade	Class Participation
Pearson Correlation	Final Grade	1.000	.710
	Class Participation	.710	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Final Grade	.	.000
	Class Participation	.000	.
N	Final Grade	146	146
	Class Participation	146	146

As showed by correlation coefficient, there is a high positive correlation between class participation and final grade variables, r = .710, n = 146, p <.005, where increases in-class participation points were associated with increases in final grade values. Hence, class participation is associated highly with final grade of the students at the university level. Therefore, class participation is an important variable that indicate final grade of the students.

Table 6

The bivariate regression coefficient of the relationship between class participation and final grade variables

Model Summary

					Change Statistics				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.710[a]	.505	.501	1.12883	.505	146.671	1	144	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Class Participation

As shown in Table 6, the R2 value of the relationships between class participation and the final grade is 50.1%, F (1, 146.671), p < 0.005. This result indicates that 50.1% of the data fit the regression model. The model gets statistical significance (Sig. = 0.000; this means p < 0.0005).

Table 7

Beta standardized coefficients of the relationship between class participation and final grade variables

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	3.669	.254		14.451	.000			
	Class Participation	1.480	.122	.710	12.111	.000	.710	.710	.710

a. Dependent Variable: Final Grade

As shown in regression coefficient above, the Beta Standardized coefficient (.710) of class participation explains 71.0% of the variance in the final grade of students. So, class participation predicts strongly final grade of the students at the university level. Therefore, class participation is an important variable that should considered to support by faculty members to increase academic achievements of the students

The result was consistent with previously reported works (Galyon, Blondin, Yaw, Nalls, & Williams, 2012; Cui, & Coleman, 2020; Pérez-López, & Ibarrondo-Dávila, 2020; Bailey et al., 2020; Santoveña-Casal, 2019; Bek, 2017; Nieuwoudt, 2020; Fematt, et al., 2021; Delfino, 2019; Sezer, Inel, Seçkin, & Uluçinar, 2017; Sothan, 2019; Bielinska-Kwapisz, 2015; Tran, & Pham, 2019), which found out that class participation predicts the final grade. In conclusion hypothesis # 1: *The final grade of students described by class participation*, is supported.

H # 2

Table 8

The correlation coefficient of the relationship between course projects and final grade variables

Correlations

		Final Grade	Course Project
Pearson Correlation	Final Grade	1.000	.826
	Course Project	.826	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Final Grade	.	.000
	Course Project	.000	.
N	Final Grade	146	146
	Course Project	146	146

As showed by SPSS correlation outputs, there is a high positive correlation between course projects and final grade variables, $r = .826$, $n = 146$, $p < .005$, where increases in course projects were associated with increases in final grade values. Thus, course projects are associated highly with final grade of the students at the university level. Therefore, course project is an important variable that affects final grade of the students.

Table 9

The bivariate regression coefficient of the relationships between course project and final grade variables

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.826[a]	.682	.680	.90382	.682	309.418	1	144	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Course Project

As shown in Table 6, the R2 value of the relationships between course project and the final grade is 68.0%, F (1, 309.418), $p < 0.005$. This result indicates that 68% of the data fit the regression model, getting the statistical significance (Sig. = 0.000; this means $p < 0.0005$).

Table 10

Beta standardized coefficient of the relationship between course project and final grade variables

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	3.150	.206		15.287	.000			
	Course Project	1.644	.093	.826	17.590	.000	.826	.826	.826

a. Dependent Variable: Final Grade

As indicate above, the Beta Standardized coefficient (.826) of course project describes 82.6% of the variance in the final grade of students. Thus, course project predicts strongly final grade of the students at the university level. Therefore, course project is an important variable that should considered to apply by faculty members to support academic progress of the students. The result was consistent with previously reported works (Juarez, & Purper, 2018; Westerveld, & Barton, 2017; Frey, Fink, Cahill, McDaniel, & Solomon, 2018; Williams, & Siwatu, 2017; Mei, Parkay, & Pitre, 2016; Mathuews, & Pulcini, 2017; Shea, & Bidjerano, 2017; Shea, & Bidjerano, 2019; Yhnell et al., 2016; Boatman, & Kramer, 2019; Liu, Vivian Yuen Ting; Xu, Di., 2019; Prat-Sala, & Redford, 2012; Woodfield, Earl-Novell, & Solomon, 2005), which pointed out that middle term predicts final grade. In conclusion hypothesis # 2: *The final grade of students described by the course project*, is supported.

Conclusions

The study aimed to explore the relationship between class participation, course project, and final grade in the context of online teaching. The main assumption was that class participation as well as the course projects impact the final grade of students. The study found that the most of students (82.9%) have reached a medium and high level of online teaching attendance; meanwhile, 67.1% of them have achieved a medium and high level of class participation. It is found that the most of students (70.5%) have achieved a medium and high level of course project score; meanwhile, 67.3% of them have achieved a medium or high level of the final grade. The study revealed a high positive correlation between class participation and final grade ($r = .710$), where increases in-class participation results were associated with increases in final grade values. The R2 value of the relationships between class participation and final grade indicates that 50.1% of the data seemed to fit the regression model, getting statistical significance (Sig. = 0.000). Meanwhile, the Beta Standardized coefficient of class participation explains 71.0% of the variance in the final grade of students. This indicates that class participation points influence strongly the final grade of students.

It is found a high positive correlation between course project and final grade ($r = .826$), where increases in course project points were associated with increases in final grade results. The R2 value of the relationships between class participation and final grade indicates that 68% of the data looked to fit the regression model, getting statistical significance (Sig. = 0.000). Meanwhile, the Beta Standardized coefficient of class participation explains 82.6% of the variance in the final grade of students. This indicates that course project influence strongly the final grade of students. The results of this study have practical importance. The significant approaches should be designed to support students because it is revealed by this study that class participation and course projects impact the final grade of students. Overall, the findings of this study enhanced theoretical and practical understanding as class participation and course project are important variables that influence the final grade of students.

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