

THE PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS FROM THE ECONOMIC AREA ON THE NEW LEARNING METHODS IN THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

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Abstract

The competition that exists among the higher education institutions involves great efforts to adapt to the new requirements of the modern society. The educational offers must face the new challenges that require flexibility, rapidity, complexity and provide students both with specific habits and efficient work tools. Our research aimed at identifying the perception of students from the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (FEAA), which belongs to “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași, concerning the utility and degree of acceptance of the new e-learning methods. We try to analyze the degree of opposition in adopting them, the limits and motivations, the preference for a certain type of teaching-learning (usual, e-learning, mixed), as well as at finding out the way in which students perceive the assessment of their knowledge by using the new information technologies.

The research demonstrates that there are significant differences between what is required and what is expected on a theoretical level from the new educational systems as well as the way in which they are accepted and used by students in practice. The main identified barrier is the students’ reluctance towards the new learning methods due, in our opinion, to the human opposition to change on the one hand and on the other hand to the lack of information about its advantages.

We consider appropriate expanding research topic article to the other universities in the country in order to understand the impact of current e-learning as a whole, at national level.

Keywords: e-Learning, the knowledge technology, e-universities, students, communication, virtual, education

JEL Classification: A22, A23, O33

Introduction

Globalization and the information technologies have been favourable to the development of the higher education market. At present there is strong competition between the higher education institutions to provide quality information, attractive packages that are taught as the students have required. Through the internet-based learning and the creation of the “e-universities”, education and skills become more accessible to a global audience. Licenses,

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certificates and diplomas may be obtained outside the traditional educational institutions. More than ever, knowledge and learning become an “opportunity”.

In this world ruled by continuous change, the education must integrate and adapt its offers so as to meet the new generations, continuously updating its goals and resources to face the new challenges and, at the same time, to provide the education subjects with efficient habits and work tools.

This article seek to highlight the students’ perception on the usefulness and efficiency of e-learning technologies used in the largest and modern college of the University “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” from Iasi, which is FEAA. The reason is that new generations of students seem to be enthusiastic about everything is new, but not fully efficient in using the infrastructure, the technology and the virtual information. We believe that the human resources modelling is a more difficult and long-lasting process (here we have to deal with mentalities, work habits, opposition to changes and other factors that can stop this measure).

At present, the implementation of the Internet-based educational technologies, generally called *e-learning* is the main component both in teaching students and in the teachers’ permanent improvement.

1. The present knowledge stage in the field of e-learning

The improvement of the present teaching system at the academic level and not only must begin with *studying the student way of learning* and *understanding* the way in which they get what they are taught. One deficiency of the traditional learning system can be easily seen in the fact that many students are able to judge and reproduce a text, but, at the same time, they do not understand its subject in a way to be useful for them in solving a real problem. There are other negative points for the traditional education system (Jinga, 2003): space limitation; teacher-centred (speaker); limited and different presentation; precarious post-exposure communication; the study materials are available for small groups of students; static impact of the study content (field) upon the audience; personalized learning styles / stage learning (gradual) are not allowed; students’ difficult management of the syllabuses; the difficulty to involve students in active dialogues; static, impersonalized evaluation; difficulty to get results and manage them quickly and properly; the disabled people do not always have access to the study materials; high logistics costs (editing/publishing the study materials, space management, travels, etc).

The opportunity provided by e-learning is seen as a very useful, quick, interesting and accessible alternative. Some observers talk about “a revolution of the students” and the need for the “virtual teacher’s desk” and “the classroom without walls”. Everything is possible due to the information technology and already implemented by some universities (for example, the Phoenix University, USA). Students may use computers to fulfil their tasks within the standard programme, such as make a research project or inquiring on the current events.

In fact, what is e-learning and what does it incorporate? From a general point of view, e-learning is defined as a large set of applications and processes which include web-based learning, computer-assisted learning, virtual and digital classes (Faherty, 2002).

Specialists in the field, (Rossett, 2002), talk about 5 e-learning functions:

- *learning* - The new points of view about this concept involve a change in the way of thinking so that we could remember as much information as possible and use it if necessary in practice to solve some problems.
- *information support and coaching* - This aspect focuses upon the external resources which the student and not only searches if necessary. Thus, he can draw comparisons between the Blackboard and the WebCT as course delivery systems; he may install different courses; he may find different information about the most interesting subjects.
- *knowledge management* - This aspect considers the effort to collect documents, applications, lessons provided in such a way to facilitate their extended distribution and use. The knowledge management is necessary to maximize those „smart” aspects existing between people and organizations.
- *interaction and cooperation* - Even if the interaction in the course room / seminar room may be easily remembered due to the interactive situations, technology may be used for the same purpose in order to engage in talks and virtual interactions. They allow development and coaching one to one, on-line communities, the before and after lesson talks.
- *guiding and following* - By virtue of this function, students can appreciate themselves according to standards, can test their organizational skills related to the trend and to the immediate priorities. The teachers or managers can better note the students' or employees' skills as well as the way in which they implement their knowledge in different projects.

The advantages of using the virtual system are materialized in certain important aspects which make it attractive and easily accepted. Among them we mention (Rossett, 2002):

- Focus on the student;
- Real-time access to knowledge, from anywhere and anytime;
- No travel expenses nor interruption of the professional work;
- The participants cooperate and learn (to work) together;
- The material is personalized according to the student knowledge and previous experience;
- The possibility of permanent training;
- Many integrated learning systems have registration facilities, online payment, supervision of the student evolution, automatic testing;
- The possibility of using supplementary information sources during evaluation under this system;
- Saving time to go to faculty by replacing it with the quick accessing of the necessary information from anywhere and anytime, thus resulting in more free time for the student;
- The possibility to visualize the resumption of the aspects that were not understood;
- The possibility of use a flexible study timetable.

Taking into account the functions of learning, interacting and cooperation, in order to see what the currents of opinion are with reference to their efficient *online* use and implementation, we shall refer to the identified problems and the possibilities to solve them where it is necessary.

- It is said that students are less enthusiastic when doing something under the e-learning system than live. *Reality proves that, according to studies initiated by Wheeler in 1970 the percentage report is approximately equal for both systems.*
- Certain students can't learn on-line. Hence they will need a classical course book and the live explanations of their teacher.
- The huge information provided under the e-learning system divides the course content into small parts. What happens if the parts lose their importance or meaning? *In this situation the teacher's guidance is absolutely necessary to recommend combinations and make demonstrations according to the context.*
- Under the e-learning system there are short answers to certain problems and there is little time left for reflections. Many students follow the idea "give me the answer, I don't need the lesson". *In this case we could clearly say there is a problem because the Internet encourages the quick answers instead of the effort for the understanding of the subject. The compromise pattern would be virtual classes for online talks, yet it is important to check whether they are really used by teachers and students, so if they are really useful.*
- Are we compatible, culturally speaking, with the e-learning? *Some of us want the classical courses. The UAIC history has witnessed thousands of classical courses that are still taught under the same system still today. Technology may not be our strong point. We shall test this idea to confirm it or not.*
- Is the University ready for e-learning? *This aspect may be inferred from the degree of endowment with the necessary infrastructure, soft programmes (Blackboard, Portal, access to the virtual library, net) etc. We could also talk about teachers here too. Their challenge is to learn how to integrate the new information technologies into courses so that they get meaning and educational response. Most teachers (Giddens, A., 2006), consider the computer sent information as substitutes for the basic ones conveyed through traditional lessons.*
- Many people think that e-learning lacks consistency and is not credible or qualitative. Other shortcomings identified at the e-learning system refers to the fact that an online course might not be of high quality or that students feel extremely isolated or lack social interaction; there may be security problems or great IT investments.

Certain researchers state that people are not used to getting information by only one method. If we have the chance to visualize an interesting online lesson, we will like to read some books on the subject discussed there. If we are in a course room where the teacher talks about extraordinary issues, a few hours later we will be in front of a computer searching new information on the Internet. So, we could say that we prefer, as a type, a mixture of learning methods which could include:

- instructions in the course room and on-line;
- on-line information and access to training life;
- virtual simulations of a classically structured course;
- on-line training / course and e-learning activities.

The effects of this learning mixture, according to researchers (Rossett, 2002), can be materialized into some basic ideas. One would be that the mixture *intensifies the learning experience*. A less convenient aspect is that *the teacher's work increases dramatically* because it does not end when the students leave the virtual classroom. Observations show that teachers work ten times more for the on-line courses and for the answer to the students' questions and solicitations. However, the advantage is that *the teacher will feel less pressure to cover the whole syllabus during the course*, as long as the students have the opportunity to transfer the knowledge and to find the online course books. Research shows that there is less interaction between teacher and students, more work groups, more case studies and a style of directed learning (Sproule and Valsan, 2009, p.194). At the same time, the teacher's skills must extend and include *the e-trainer role or e-coach role*, to co-interest students, to train them and to prevent them from leaving the virtual classroom.

The mixture that lays great emphasis on the e-learning, against live activities in the course room, may generate inefficient communication as it is understood from the humanist approach proposed by A. Maslow, G. Allport and C. Rogers. It is based on *honesty, supportiveness, empathy, positive communication*. Without the possibility of interacting "face-to-face", none of these communication aspects can manifest, although they are very important for the individual. I could mention here *positive communication through non-verbal feed-back, supportive attitude and empathy*. All these are very important for the development of the student personality, trust and competition.

Empathy is one of the essential conditions of interpersonal communication, reflecting through the listener what the speaker feels, is an implicit knowledge process. Individual and social empathic knowledge shapes thinking processes and feelings that are similar with those of the partners, supposing *an understanding effect*. The empathic exchange is social, based on live experience and aims at achieving two goals which seem to contradict: *communication in itself and adjustment to the reality of the other person*.

E-learning does not allow for the nonverbal language. In certain cases we are not sure if there is somebody at the other end of the net or if he should be there. Nonverbal language is "the hidden dimension of communication". Albert Mehrabian (1969), pioneer of nonverbal language, found out in the 60s that the total message impact is due to words - 7% (verbal language), to the voice and its inflexions - 38% (para-verbal language) and 55% to non-verbal language, namely gestures and mimics. So, we know a lot from what surrounds us through the nonverbal and para-verbal. The reflection of those with whom we talk shows that we agree or disagree with them (Pease, 2004).

In the course or seminar room the teachers knows if the student is bored or interested in a certain idea depending on the nonverbal language shown by the body position and the face mimic. Moreover, students note the teacher's nonverbal language, the gestures that show what is important or not, the congruence between words, the tone and nonverbal language that make him credible. The course room allow total freedom of the trainer when he is teaching a lesson. He can create the best synergy between students by conveying certain information, can see them and feel if they are captivated and cooperate.

Despite all this, there is clear preference for training by means of the computer and the Internet, shown by the young generation. The flexibility and comfort of learning through Internet cannot be denied. Yet, we wonder if the new generations of students will be more than the networks of anonymous students known just by their username? Will practical

studies, focused on skills, undermine the importance of the abstract reasoning and learning “for the sake of learning”?

But what do the students from the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration really want? The study made on a representative sample could provide clear information in this respect.

2. The Research Methodology

The research began in order to set as a *main purpose* of this study to *identify the students’ perception from the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration (FEAA) within “University “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” Iasi of the on-line education.*

2.1 The Research Objectives

The research *objectives* subordinated to the purpose above-mentioned are:

O1: Informing about the present stage of the educational information technologies in Romania and abroad

O2: Knowing the degree in which the students from FEAA accept the new e-learning methods and are interested in using them in their learning activity throughout the academic studies;

O.2: Identifying the student perception of the advantages and disadvantages of learning on the basis of the existing platforms (portal, Blackboard, virtual library, etc).

O3: Testing the students’ opinions on the degree of understanding the subject taught or applied under the e-learning system.

O4: Understanding the relationship: students-socialization-online teamwork– expected outcomes.

O5: Identifying the students’ perception of the e-learning evaluation versus traditional evaluation.

O6: Testing the students’ perception of the necessary infrastructure for the e-learning available at the FEAA.

O7: Knowing the students’ expectations in relation to the use of different types of displaying the course information or applications (e-learning system, traditional, mixed, other).

2.2 Methods used

In this research were used various methods, in accordance with the established objective. These methods are:

- Documentary study based on bibliographical documentation from Romanian and foreign specialty sources;
- Theoretical analysis;

- Qualitative methods consisting in *observing* the way of understanding and implementing the e-Learning;
- Quantitative methods based on getting data by means of the *survey*, using the *questionnaire* as an instrument to collect data, applied to the FEAA students. Information analysis and synthesis using the SPSS 13.0 statistical programme as well as the Excel.

Theoretical documentation aimed at identifying and reviewing the *knowledge stage* in the field of knowledge society, on-line education and their level of implementation in the foreign and Romanian educational system.

2.3 The questionnaire design

The questionnaire was made according to the established objectives, including 31 questions, as follows: the first are filter-like, in order to get realistic and proper answers, closed questions with predetermined answers and open questions – about the ways of improving the teaching-evaluation activities during the courses. Starting from the literature in the construction of the questionnaire (Cătoiu, 1999, pp.11-27), we have used semantically differential scale and ranking method.

The pre-testing stage took place during 15-25 November 2010 and consisted of giving the questionnaire to 10 students from ECTS specialization, 2nd year. This stage was followed by introducing some changes related to the way of asking questions so that students should be understood by their respondents. On the following stage the final questionnaire was given to the whole sample of 266 students between 27th November and 8th December 2010 during the seminar classes.

The answers were codified and gathered in a data bank, being processed with the SPSS 13.0 programme. The images and diagrams from the article are worked in Microsoft Excel based on the data from the SPSS 13.0 processing. *The research area* includes five specializations from the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași.

2.4 Sample size

Sample size and sampling scheme were made in a scientific manner (Cătoiu, 1999, pp.79-81), this was composed of 266 students from the Trade, Tourism and Service Economy (ECTS) - 39%, Tourist and Hotel Management (MTH master) 14%, Marketing (MK) - 19%, Economic Informatics (IE) - 16% and Advanced Information Systems (SIA master) - 4%. We mention that 8% of the respondents did not specify their specialization. This research included the students mentioned specializations because they passed at least one test on the Blackboard during their studies. The respondents are aged between 19 and 24 (87% of them) and 25 and more (3% of them). 10% of the respondents did not specify their age.

As concerns their year of study, 68% of the questioned students are in the 2nd year of study, 13% in the 3rd year of study, 9% in the 1st year of master studies, 2% in the 2nd year of master studies, while 8% of them did not specify the year of study.

2.5 The research limits

This research has certain limits related to the way of making up the sample (students from only 5 FEAA specializations were included), the way of managing the questionnaire (in the seminar room, anonymous) and the way of making it up (multiple answer questions, 5 degrees of importance for every item).

3. The results of the study aimed the perception of the students from the economic area on the new methods of online learning

The study started from the supposition, based on the authors' observations, that students, at the age when they accept everything that is new so easily, the first to inform about the new technologies and those who "lose" most of their time on the Internet (they are often accused of not reading books, socialising only on the Internet etc) are the people who will adopt the most rapidly the new learning methods. Based on information as well, teachers were reproached to adapt with difficulty to the new Internet-based society and to be the first who desire the "status quo". This aspect was not an objective of this work.

The study was made based on the methodology described in the first part of the article. The chosen sample consisting of 266 students allowed the testing of hypotheses aiming at the research issues by means of the 31 questions included in the questionnaire.

The results after processing the information from the inquiry based on the questionnaire lead to the confirmation or invalidation of hypotheses and emphasis of the general conclusions concerning the degree of acceptance and use of the new on-line learning methods.

The first hypothesis of the study was: "*Students are interested in the new e-learning technologies and accept them easily*", having a starting point the young people's attraction towards everything that is new and especially towards the Internet. The degree of student interest in the new e-learning technologies is seen in the number of those who attended online courses or technologies, namely 50% of the respondents (figure no. 1).

Also, figure no. 2 shows that students are familiar with certain technologies e-learning, like Blackboard that they use 64% for information and testing. Virtual courses attending were made for learning foreign language (11%) and informatics programming languages (12%).

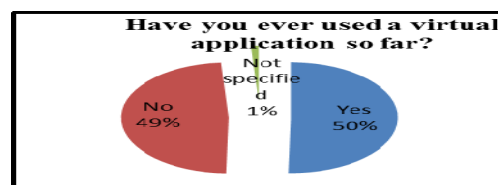


Figure no. 1: Use the e-learning applications

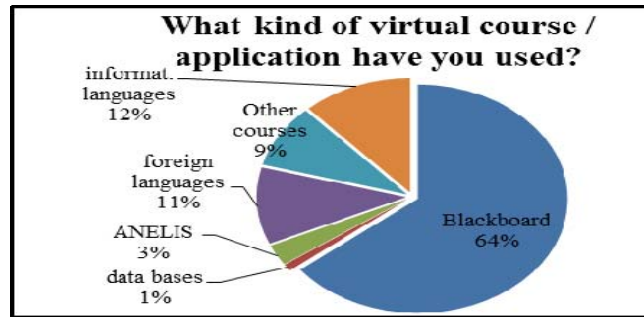


Figure no. 2: Types of virtual courses attended by students

The students' intention to participate in future in online courses is shown in figure no. 3. Most of them are interested in tourism courses (29%), 26% for foreign languages, 12% for computer studies (learning programming languages), 14% other courses (of specialization).

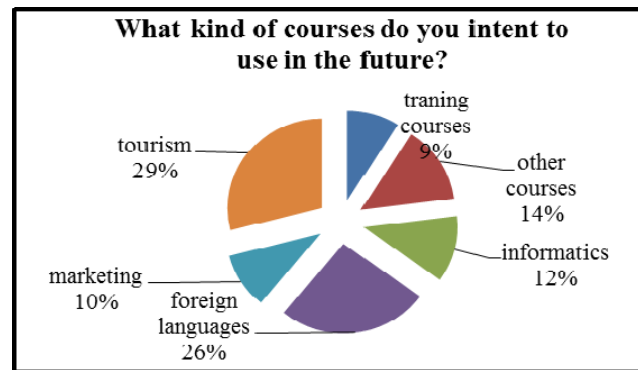


Figure no. 3: Students' option for virtual courses under online system

The interest for e-learning and the fact that students understand what this method of learning involves results from the definitions determined by the statement "In your opinion, e-learning means...": "on-line, virtual education" - 44% of respondents, "Internet" - 28%, "virtual" - 17%. Moreover, other attributes such as electronic, individual, European quality, distance, comfortable - 1% of the total is emphasized (figure no. 4).

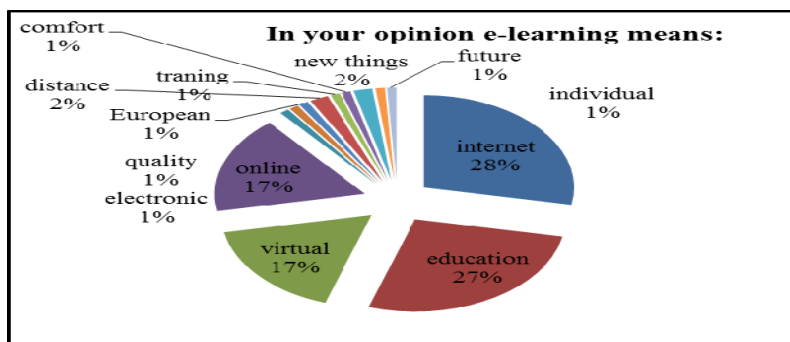


Figure no. 4: Definitions of e- learning in students opinion

By analysing these values, we can state that most students are interested in the e-learning technologies and accept them easily, yet there is still 42-49% who weren't captured. *In conclusion, this hypothesis confirms partially.*

The second hypothesis, "The FEAA students make use of e-learning technologies during their learning process" was tested through 8 questions in the questionnaire and the answers provided the following information: 51% of the interviewed students have already used a virtual application (figure no. 1). We can see that 64% of them have used the blackboard and 12% the programming languages (figure no. 2.)

As we can see from the figure no. 5, the daily time spent on virtual courses is in average 33 minute, while on applications such as: "virtual worlds" - 31 minutes; forums – 39 minutes; blogs – 28 minutes, other (socialization networks) – 92 minutes. For the FEAA portal students spend in average 65 minutes every day, while for the Blackboard learning platform – only 26 minutes. The FEAA portal is being used by all the students, as they are the main means of communication between teachers and themselves (evaluations, information about the timetables, graduation papers etc).

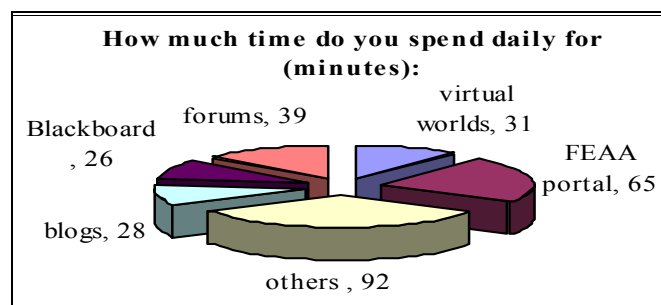


Figure no. 5: The time spent by students using virtual applications

In order to identify the degree in which students appeal to *online information sources* for their learning activities, the answers to question 14 have been processed (figure no. 6). It can be seen that, using semantically differential scale and integrating the values in the range 1 to 5, the most used sources of information by the FEAA students are those on the Internet, with an average score of 3.60, followed by the books studied in the library (2.98), magazines and specialized books (an average of 2.34) and other sources – with an average score of 1.79 (course books are mentioned here).

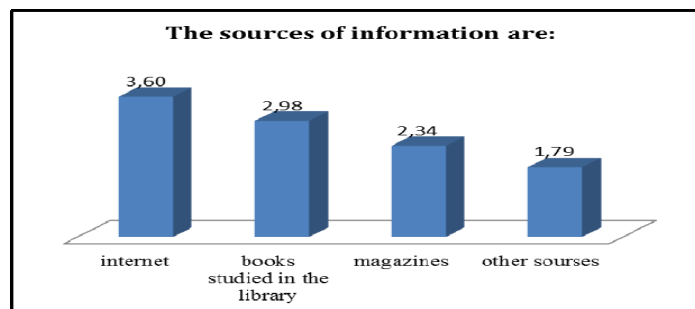


Figure no. 6: Information sources used by students in the learning activities from the faculty

In figure no. 7 it can be seen the preference for learning courses under different systems is the subject of question number 15, and the answers show that students prefer most the notes taken down during the course and the seminar, this option getting 4.42 on a semantically differential scale, from 1 to 5, while on the second place the FEAA portal is mentioned with a score of 3.76 on the preference scale, followed by other methods and the blackboard – with an average of 2.76.

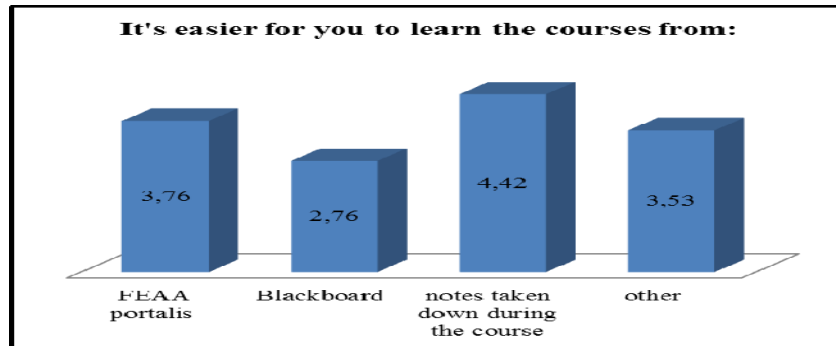


Figure no. 7: Students' perceptions of the easiest way of learning courses

The hypothesis about using the online learning sources was also tested by question 18, showing the degree in which students credit the information obtained from different sources, including under the on-line system, as can be seen from figure no. 8. The results (figure no. 8) show that the accessing of virtual links has approximately the same degree of importance as the supplementary information required directly from the teacher (with average scores of 3.79 and 3.94 on a scale from 1 to 5) or obtained from the specialty books (3.76 points) for getting complete information about the interest subjects.

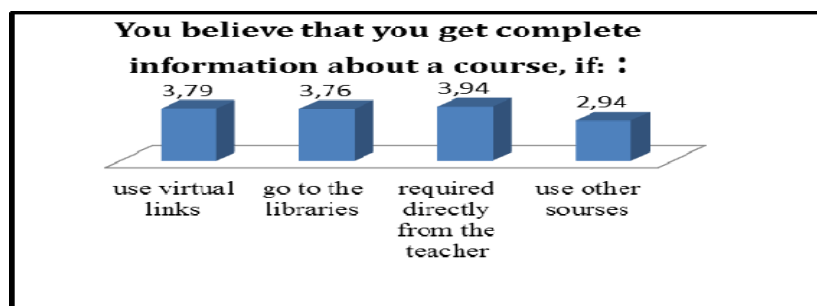


Figure no. 8: Students' perception of the ways of getting complete information on the subject taught at faculty

Considering all these aspects, the hypothesis according to which *the FEAA students use the new e-learning technologies in their learning process* is confirmed. Yet, we have to mention the fact that they still prefer the notes from courses and use the Internet especially for making projects than for acquiring knowledge on the themes discussed during the courses.

The third hypothesis is: *students do not understand the lack of direct communication with the teacher and their mates as a problem of the e-learning courses and applications*. It was advanced starting from the theoretical studies that show the lack of this direct communication as a major disadvantage of learning through Internet.

This testing used three questions which provided the necessary information within the study. Thus, from the very beginning, there was a question aiming at showing the real reason why students chose the full-time courses educational type. The answers proved that (figure no. 9) 19% of respondents refer to the direct communication with the teacher, 23% want to socialize with other students, while 22% of them are interested in the student life, in the formal meaning of the word (entertainment, a certain way of spending the free time).

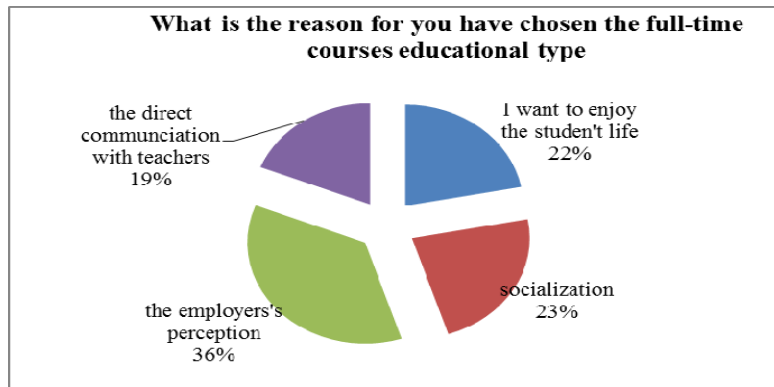


Figure no. 9: The reasons why students prefer the full- time courses

A question concerning the students' perception about the existence or not of direct communication in the case of a virtual course both with the teacher and the mates was introduced for the same hypothesis. The processing of the obtained answers (figure no. 10)

shows that a virtual application supposes active cooperation to a great extent (an average score of 3.45 on the semantically differential scale from 1 to 5) but, at the same time, leads to detachment in the student-teacher relationship (a 3.66 score) and isolation from other mates (an average score of 3.42).

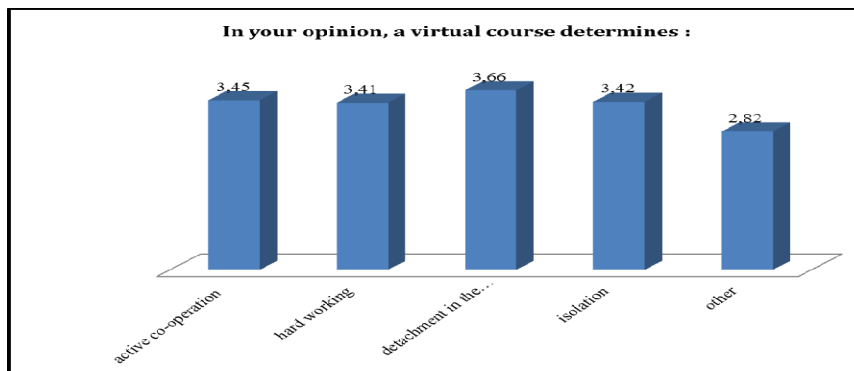


Figure no. 10: The EBAF students' perception of the cooperation between teachers and mates within a virtual course

The answers to another question, that about what students think would lack if all the courses were taught under the e-learning system, are shown in figure no. 11. Students emphasize the fact that their relations with the mates, the teachers' direct explanations, as well as the feeling of belonging to the group are the most important negative effects they would experience if they learnt only online.

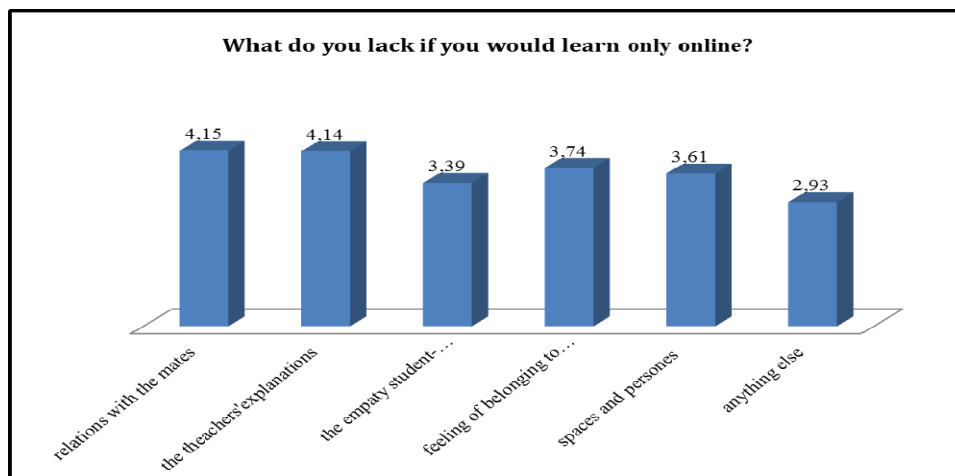


Figure no. 11: The perception of the importance of direct verbal and non-verbal communication

As a consequence, the third hypothesis, namely “the students do not perceive the inexistence of direct communication with the teacher and the mates as a problem in the case of courses and applications taught under the e-learning system” does not confirm.

The fourth hypothesis is based on the idea that students prefer to communicate “face to face” and to meet in order to work together at fulfilling the team tasks. The results obtained by processing the answers provided by the FEAA students show that they prefer to communicate especially “face to face” (a 4 score on a scale from 1 to 5) and on-line (a 3.40 score), the phone communication being on the third place (a 3.04 score). Furthermore, the team work results are appreciated as better when students meet to work together.

Thus, the fourth hypothesis is completely confirmed due to the fact that students prefer and continue to appreciate direct communication as the most fruitful one.

In the fifth hypothesis, students want a mixture of educational systems: traditional and e-learning; it was checked through three items from the questionnaire.

The first item aimed at identifying the reasons why students would prefer e-learning to classical courses. The answers classify the advantages of online courses as follows: “the possibility to resume the aspects that were not understood” (a 3.59 score on a scale from 1 to 5), followed by “the possibility to access them from any location” (a 3.46 score), the flexibility of the timetable (average score – 3.42) and time saving for going to the faculty (average score of 3.29).

As concerns the preference for the educational systems, the answers to another question are relevant in this respect (figure no. 12): 40% of all the respondents would like the future

courses to be loaded on the portal and taught in the course room; 25% would like them to be taught directly in the course room, while 24% want them to be loaded only on the FEAA portal and in all the three ways – 4% of the students (on the FEAA portal, right in the course room and on the Blackboard).

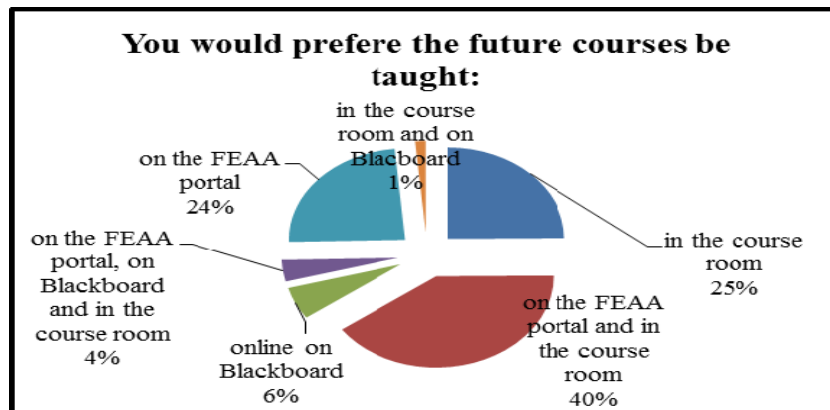


Figure no. 12: The student’s preference for the educational systems

As concerns the students’ understanding of the virtual explanations (figure no. 13), the answers proved that: the explanations were not enough (an average score of 3.10 on a scale from 1 to 5). Moreover, the virtual courses were taken for useful for a better understanding of the subject matters to an average extent (3.10 points), but the results in the exams were better (an average score of 3.38).

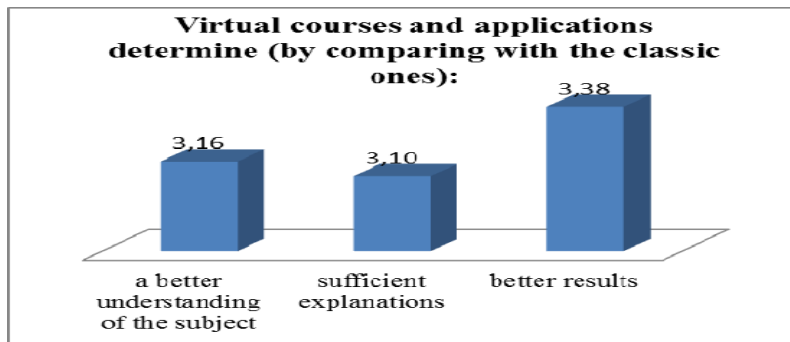


Figure no. 13: Students’ perception of learning and the results under the virtual system compared to the classical system

As a consequence, we note that students prefer a mixture of the learning systems (classical and Internet-based).

Testing the preference for the e-learning evaluation, appreciated by students as more objective and simpler than the classical one, was the subject of the sixth hypothesis and the answers confirmed it (figure no. 14). The respondents think that the evaluation of their knowledge is more objective under the e-learning system (a 3.55 average score on a scale from 1 to 5) and simpler (a 3.26 score), even though, in their opinion, it reflects to a small extent the real level of their knowledge (a 2.85 average score). The FEAA infrastructure

required for e-learning is appreciated by the questioned students to be at an acceptable level, surpassing the medium level, on a scale from 1 to 5 (figure no. 15). All these data confirm totally hypothesis 6, the students prefer virtual evaluation system because they consider it more objective than classical. Also, they consider that FEAA infrastructure helps them in information and evaluation.

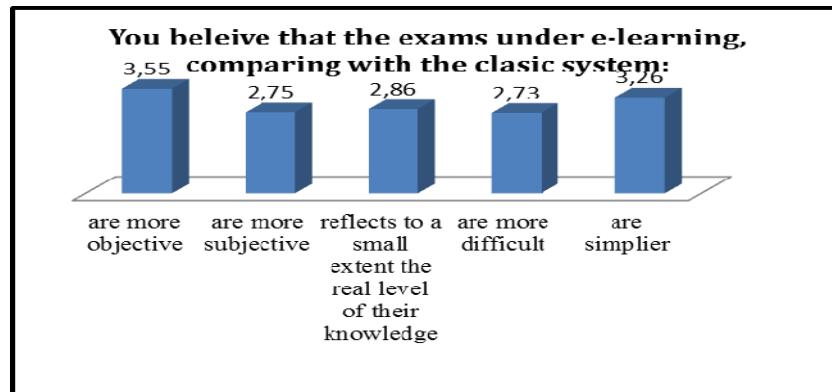


Figure no. 14: Students' perception of the evaluation under the e-learning system versus the classical system

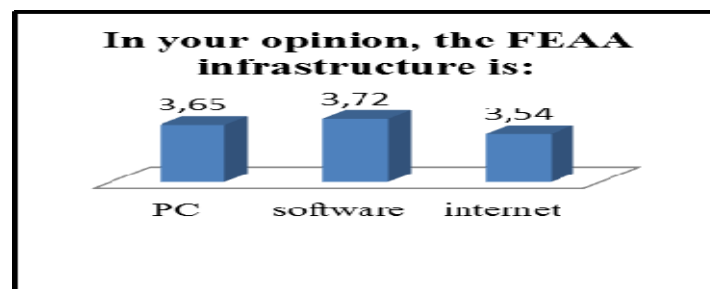


Figure no. 15: Students' perceptions of the EBAF infrastructure

Conclusions

The study made shows the changes in education in the latest years, as a consequence of globalization and the explosion of information technologies, especially the Internet. The learning methods based on them are numerous and permanently developing, but we dare to state that they are in a period of great research.

The research done among the FEAA students from "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași proves that they are not well enough informed on the Internet learning methods and, moreover, do not pertain to them easily. The reasons are: the lack of direct contact with the teachers and the other students, the teacher's explanations when they do not understand certain aspects, the feeling of belonging to a certain group but also some sentimentalism towards the way in which they understand the student life outside the courses. Furthermore,

a certain perception of employers according to which the full-time education confers greater credibility is, most of the times, the reason why students prefer the full-time education and, as a consequence, the classical education. Besides that, when they have to do team tasks, students prefer to meet “face to face” and work together, the results being understood as the most fruitful ones. They spend much time on the Internet and, in most cases, for activities that do not belong to the learning process, but to socialization and entertainment.

The e-learning evaluation system is considered, on the other hand, more objective than the classical one, due to giving up the inherent subjectivism of an oral evaluation or of the written papers where students must refer to certain established themes. They consider that the multiple-choice tests (the most used for the modern evaluation), checked by computers, are more objective, even if they do not show the real level of the students’ knowledge, according to the results of the study (the answers cannot be accompanied by explanations which could help students express their creativity or originality).

The main conclusion that can be drawn from the research is that students want a mixed system, a combination between the new learning methods based on the Internet and the classical method which involves communication face to face with the teachers and the other students. They want to use the computer and the Internet for evaluation, for teaching (rather complementary, the course books for the courses taught at faculty and the virtual ones must be loaded on the Internet). They are interested in attending virtual courses to learn especially foreign languages, programming languages or short-time limited specializations which are, most times, different from the core specialization (make-up, trainer etc).

We intend to continue the research conducted by the extension in other universities for comparability of data obtained and to be able to generalize the data regarding student’s perceptions on the new learning methods and the degree of adaptation to the knowledge society.

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