Research Article

COPING WITH THE EDUCATIONAL DISRUPTION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC BY UNIVERSITY LECTURERS IN THAILAND

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about a major change in people's lifestyles, and also a huge transformation in the way organizations operated amidst compulsory lockdowns. The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to investigate the university lecturers' experiences in coping with the educational disruption as they suddenly transitioned from Face-to-Face (F2F) classes to Online Teaching (OT) during the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand. Ten university lecturers in Thailand from seven different universities and seven faculties participated in 45-minute in-depth structured interviews via Line video calls. Despite the sudden inevitable shift to a new way of working, the participants were intrinsically motivated to make the necessary changes and adjustments, exhausting a lot of effort, time, and thought to ensure online education work for students. The effectiveness was not solely dependent on the lecturers, but also on the cooperation of students, which was reported to be lacking. Although the initial responses to online teaching were more of a shock, the two years of the new way of working actually transformed the attitude of some participants. Up to 40% of them were so satisfied with their new online teaching experience that they were willing to take up permanent online teaching positions. The varying amounts of time taken to adapt to the new way of working, and the satisfaction received were influenced by a couple of factors such as the training and support provided, the previous exposure to digital usage, and their previous familiarity with the platforms. Internet connectivity issues were a major frustration, while cheating and unresponsive students added to the existing frustrations that could not be remedied. It was no wonder why 50% of the participants wanted to move back to F2F teaching as they could eradicate those problems.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, Educational Disruption, Online Teaching, University

Introduction

The declaration of the COVID-19 outbreak as a global pandemic in March 2020 by the World Health Organization resulted in a significant disruption in the operation of almost every organization in the world, with some facing more disruptions than others (Sahoo et al., 2021; Samuel & Khan, 2020). One industry that suffered

from a tremendous disruption was the education industry, with almost 360-degree changes in its operations. Global governmental policies for complete lockdowns involved a total shutdown of all educational institutions (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020), which led to the sudden emergency migration from the preferred traditional F2F to OT, or also known as *emergency remote teaching* (ERT); a forced change that everyone had to comply with to ensure continued student learning (Ali et al., 2021; Kaqinari et al., 2021; Lambie & Law, 2020). Thailand's lockdown began in March 2020 and all educational institutions were shut down and classes moved online with employees working from home (Tuaycharoen, 2021), causing a devastating impact on Thailand's education system (Nuankaew & Nuankaew, 2021). The swift and sudden migration was a tremendous challenge for both students and faculty as they had to suddenly adapt to the new online learning platform. The techniques that worked in F2F classrooms were no longer viable, and the lecturers had to revise and recreate new ones to fit online instruction (Dlamini & Ndzinisa, 2020; Kaqinari et al., 2021). The purpose of this study was to investigate the university lecturers' experiences as they coped with the sudden transition from F2F classes to OT during the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand. As a recent occurrence that spans more than two years, the findings of this study would add to the scant literature available on the topic (Martin et al., 2020), particularly from Thailand. Those who stand to benefit from this study are university leaders, researchers, academicians, educational policymakers, and university lecturers.

Literature Review

Online Education, also referred to as Digital Learning, Distance Learning, E-learning, Emergency remote teaching, Online Learning, and Virtual Learning, has allowed universities to provide continual, borderless learning services to students through the utilization of computers/tablets/ smartphones throughout the pandemic at different time zones and throughout the world (Shanmugam et al., 2019). Educational technology used in universities included the use of tools and applications (Kaqinari et al., 2021) such as Blackboard Collaborate (BBC), Adobe Connect, Microsoft Teams (MS teams), Moodle, and Zoom in Higher Education (Gonzalez et al., 2021; Lambie & Law, 2020) and the lecturers' educational technology usage was highly influenced by each university's level of digitalization (Kaqinari et al., 2021). One major challenge in the switch to online education was the ability to provide proper digital technology for "teaching and learning because of the costs involved" (Nuankaew & Nuankaew, 2021, p. 97). The sudden move to online learning, has created a future of online education providing a world-class education that would be available to anyone, at any time, and in every geographic location as long as there is internet connectivity (Tuaycharoen, 2021).

Lectures' Experiences with Online Teaching (OT)

Lecturers experienced multiple challenges in the sudden transformation to OT professionally, personally, and socially (Joseph et al., 2020). The additional burden was piled on top of the already overwhelming existing requirements of teaching, research, and other services (Houlden & Veletsianos, 2020; Rapanta et al., 2020). The existing load of their professional responsibilities, coupled with the new transition resulted in high psychological distress levels, resulting in stress (61.1%), anxiety (51.6%), and depression (37.3%),

all contributing to a negative impact on job satisfaction (Ali et al., 2021). Extra time, effort, and skills were needed in the transition to a very different mode of classroom delivery (Protsiv & Atkins, 2016). This extra work included but was not limited to preparing "various ways to maintain the students' attention, interest, and motivation in virtual classes. For example, by providing teaching slides, audio, record video, web-conferencing tool, and simulations; this would ensure student's understanding and interpretation on the subject matters" (Das & Meredith, 2021; Martin et al., 2021, as cited in Salleh & Azman, 2020, p. 26). Aside from finding creative ways of reaching out to students, lecturers also had to communicate with students through their preferred mode of communication on social media platforms. Some devoted lecturers also had to use more time to try to make their online classes functional and as interesting as possible as they embarked on a new teaching environment (Martin et al., 2019). Female lecturers experienced more difficulties with "more work-family conflicts; more family demands and challenges, and less satisfaction" (Naz et al., 2021, p. 85). The lecturers' adaptation to and use of educational technology were also highly dependent on their different attitudes, perception, and self-efficacy levels. While it was a new and overwhelming challenge for some, it was not a big hurdle for others (Kaqinari et al., 2021). Other concerns were the difficulties in knowledge transfer as students were not responding and answering questions during online classes (Vanhorn et al., 2008).

Students' Experiences with Online Learning

As a necessary response to the pandemic, students accepted the imposition of online learning, but missed the social life on campus and the engagement in the classroom (Bryson & Andres, 2020). Suffering from psychological distress such as stress, anxiety, and depression from the pandemic (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020; Cole et al., 2019), they were also highly challenged in balancing their studies and life as they studied from home (Dlamini & Ndzinisa, 2020). Although reluctant to turn on their microphones and cameras, they felt comfortable using the chat functionality (Gonzalez et al., 2021). The autonomy that came with e-learning affected their learning efficiency and study habits (Gonzalez et al., 2020) and other downsides of online learning included increased workloads, difficulties in focusing in class, and lower levels of study performance (Aristovnik et al., 2020; Tejedor et al., 2021). Students who lived alone had an easier time focusing compared to those living with family and friends, as they encountered disturbances, especially when sharing the workspace with others around them. Students only contacted friends they knew prior to the pandemic and had difficulties not only in establishing new connections but also in project collaborations with strangers. They also showed a preference for live digital lecturers over recorded ones and reported high interactions using Zoom (Gonzalez et al., 2021).

Working From Home (WFH)

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, almost every institution, let it be private, semi-private, or government, was allowing its employees to work from home (WFH) in order to meet its targeted goals and to keep the action going (Anomsari et al., 2021; Sahoo et al., 2021). Working from home, also popularly known as working remotely, or telecommuting work, is defined as "allowing employees to do all or some of their work

from home, using advanced telecommunications technology and internet tools to send work electronically from home to the office, and vice versa" (Kinicki, 2021, p. 63). The WFH context is only appropriate in some types of industries and classes of employees and is not meant for everyone and the industry (Samuel & Khan, 2020). The number of WFH employees almost doubled during the lockdown (from 39% to 87%) and the fact that 68% had a preference to continue doing so in the future, projected the realities of a future trend. The new WFH methodology increased in acceptance and appreciation with the passing of time (Sahoo et al., 2021). Achieving a work-life balance was "not easy" for 54%, while 17% said it was very difficult, and only 29% mentioned that it was easy. Other WFH challenges included the physical workplace, communication, distractions at home, and internet connectivity problems. Benefits included flexible work schedules, eliminating the daily commute, increased responsibility in meeting deadlines without co-worker reminders, and being able to work from anywhere in the world (Samuel & Khan, 2020). In a conducted research study, two-thirds of the participants felt that there was no slack in their performance and that they had also experienced a reduction in their expenses. Employee and employer cost savings from this new working methodology has created a distinct interest and a future trend in almost every Industry. WFH not only kept the economy in pace, but the society also benefited socially and economically with lower pollution levels, less traffic, and opened job opportunities for the disabled. However, WFH also has its downsides such as feelings of isolation and disorientation, communication issues, and difficulties in monitoring employee performance. Real estate firms and construction companies were in trouble as companies stopped leasing office space and the slowdown in business resulted in less demand for construction workers, which led to massive unemployment (Sahoo et al., 2021). WFH challenges included time management, miscommunication (Samuel & Khan, 2020), with the need for high levels of self-discipline (Anomsari et al., 2021).

Objectives and Research Questions

The COVID-19 pandemic created a necessity for an immediate disruption in almost every industry, including the education industry. In order to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and implement a social distancing protocol, educators were compelled to suddenly switch to OT at all levels. The objective of this study was to investigate the university lecturers' experiences and how they coped as they suddenly transitioned from F2F classes to OT during the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand. Three main research questions that guided the study included:

1. To explore the participants' experiences with the new working protocol of teaching online.

2. To find out how the participants coped with the new online teaching experience.

3. To find out the extent to which the new working protocol was successful and accepted by the participants.

Research Methodology

As a relatively new phenomenon, the phenomenology methodology was selected for this qualitative study which seeks to "investigate the various reactions to, or perceptions of, a particular phenomenon" as

similarly experienced by a group of people (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2019, p. 338). The phenomenon under study was the sudden transition that university lecturers in Thailand had to experience from F2F classes to OT within a few weeks' time. Purposive sampling was employed in the selection of the ten university lecturers who were teaching online during the pandemic in Thailand. In order to gain a variety of perspectives, the researcher invited participants from different universities and faculties to participate, and with efforts to ensure gender equality, an equal number of males (five) and females (five) were engaged in the study. As this study was a qualitative one, interviews were conducted using structured interview questions to ensure the validity and consistency of the study. As this study was a qualitative one, interviews were conducted using structured interview questions to ensure the validity and consistency of the study. The interview protocol included a total of three parts and ten questions: (1) The New Working Protocol (4 questions); (2) Coping with the New Working Teaching Experience (3 questions); and (3) Feedback on the New Way of Working (3 questions). Since the pandemic did not facilitate F2F interviews, in-depth interviews using a standardized, open-ended, and structured interview protocol were conducted through Line video calls for a period of 45 to 60 minutes in the month of February 2022. Invitations to participate were sent through social media and once the participants agreed to participate, an appointment was made for the line video call interview. They were also sent an e-survey to complete to collect the fundamental demographic information. The ten participants represented two main nationalities: Thai (80%) and American (20%) from seven different universities and seven faculties. Their demographic information are outlined in Table 1 (gender, age range, education, and the number of years of OT), and a further elaboration of their profiles in terms of positions, universities, faculties, and programs in Table 2. The collected data was analyzed using thematic analysis whereby the codes were created from the interviews, and then clustered into themes based on their commonalities.

Table 1 Participants' Demographics

Participant	Gender		Age Range				Education		Online Teaching Experience		
	Male	Female	31-40	41-50	51-60	Above 60	Master	Doctorate	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years
P1	1				1		1				1
P2		1	1				1			1	
P3		1	1					1			1
P4		1			1		1		1		
P5	1					1	1			1	
P6	1					1		1	1		
P7	1				1		1			1	
P8	1			1			1		1		
P9		1	1				1		1		
P10		1		1				1		1	
Total (n)	5	5	2	3	3	2	7	3	4	4	2
Percent (%)	50	50	20	30	30	20	70	30	40	40	20

Table 2 Participants' Profile

Participant	Position	University	Faculty
P1	Adjunct Lecturer	King Mongkut University of Technology	Arts
P2	Associate Dean	Dusit Thani College	Culinary Art and Hotel Management
P3	Assistant Professor	Silpakorn University	Information Community and Technology
P4	Special lecturer	Chulalongkorn University	Business Administration
P5	Lecturer	Huachiew Chalermprakiet University	Business Administration
P6	Senior Lecturer	Asia-Pacific International University	Business Administration
P7	Lecturer	Huachiew Chalermprakiet University	Communication Arts
P8	Lecturer	Stamford International University	Airlines Business Management
P9	Lecturer	Stamford International University	Communication Arts & Design
P10	Lecturer	Chulalongkorn University	Education

Results

The results of the study are reported under four major themes with subthemes, and the summary of the Themes is found in Table 3: (a) Theme 1: The New Working Protocol; (b) Theme 2: Coping with the New Way of Working, and (c) Theme 3: Thoughts on the New Way of Working.

Table 3 Summary of Themes

Theme	Description
Theme 1: The New Working Protocol	1. Different OT platforms for teaching, assignments, and communication. 2. Some were satisfied with OT Platforms while others were not. 3. Initial reactions: "Shocked, painful, confusing, challenging, difficult, pressured, unprepared, new, and uncomfortable". 4. The adjustments to OT were between two weeks to 1 ½ years. 5. Training through videos, guest speakers, online, on-site, and/hybrid training.
Theme 2: Coping with the New Way of Working	Transitions, challenges, and adjustments made to adapt to OT.
Theme 3: Thoughts on the New Way of Working	1. 60% felt Online Classes were effective. 2. 40% were for a permanent online teaching position. 3. Pros and Cons of Online Teaching

Theme 1: The New Working Protocol

The new working protocol for university lecturers was the sudden migration to OT using educational technology encompassing a variety of digital tools and applications. While a few started teaching at the university, they had to eventually WFH due to government-imposed lockdowns and university policies. The adjectives used to describe the lecturers' initial reactions to their sudden transition to OT were plentiful: "Shocked, painful, confusing, challenging, difficult, pressured, unprepared, new, and uncomfortable".

Theme 1.1 New Course Delivery Platforms. The majority of the participants used more than one platform to accommodate the delivery of their courses. Blackboard Collaborate (BBC), Microsoft Teams (MS Teams), and Zoom were the popular lecture platforms used for lesson deliveries, and other less-used platforms included Chula Zoom and Google Classroom. While several lecturers used a combination of platforms, a few just stuck to one or two. Moodle was widely used for assignments, while Facebook, Line, and WeChat applications were used for announcements and communication. Facebook was used by P3 to "make announcements, collect all the assignments, posting PowerPoint slides and video clips", and MS Teams was used by one university when a course was co-taught by a few lecturers to maintain the uniformity of the platform used for teaching.

Theme 1.2 Satisfaction with New Online Delivery Platforms. More than half the participants were happy with the platforms that they were using. Being given the autonomy to choose a preferred teaching platform and the university's subscription to using Zoom significantly contributed to this satisfaction. Teaching online for the past two years enabled some lecturers to gradually adjust to the platforms while others still had a difficult time adapting and were dissatisfied with teaching online. The only limitation and weakness of BBC compared to Zoom was the inability to see all the students' faces on BBC (P8). The preference for Zoom over BBC was supported by P10, who mentioned that "I'm very happy with Zoom as BBC was insufficient in delivering certain practical courses such as experiential or programming". On the other hand, P9 who was using only BBC, stated that the only problem was the internet reconnection problem, particularly with Chinese and Vietnamese students.

Theme 1.3 Training and Support. Universities provided lecturers training in the form of videos, guest speakers, online, on-site, and/or hybrid training sessions. Most participants were satisfied that the training enabled them to teach online while one participant (9) said that the training was inadequate. Two participants who had prior knowledge did not need any training as they were already acquainted with OT prior to the pandemic. And interestingly enough, Participant 3, a Computer Science expert, did not receive training but was instead "training others how to use it". Although the training was provided, P4 did not attend it but "just tried to figure it out, and asked for IT assistance when needed". As a foreign lecturer in a Thai university, P5 did not receive any training because it was in Thai and no English training sessions were provided. In fact, he mentioned that "all the foreign teachers had to learn it by themselves".

Theme 2: Coping with the New Working Teaching Experience

This section is divided into three subthemes: (1) Theme 2.1 The Changes Made to Adapt to The Transition; (2) Theme 2.2 The Challenges of Online Teaching; (3) Theme 3.3 Adjustments to Online Teaching.

Theme 2.1 The Changes Made to Adapt to The Transition. The changes that the participants had to make to adapt to the transition were different. For instance, P1 had to create class activities to adapt to fit the online course, while P2 had to learn how to create groups in the Line application for communication purposes. Additional preparation time was also required to create new techniques to help students understand difficult concepts. With an outdated laptop, P3 had to purchase a new MacBook to facilitate online class deliveries from her own pocket. She also mentioned that she had to "shrink the material while maintaining the essence as the content delivered online would be different from F2F classes". P4 was no longer capable of taking advantage of revising lecture slides while driving to the university in Bangkok's notorious traffic, as no travel was needed. She also mentioned that she had to "download materials to the platform that required more structure, hence, much more preparation than F2F classes". P5 said that he had "to accept the reality that the students were no longer in class and that there were limitations to OT and I tried to make the most out of it". He also mentioned that he had to "self-learn how to use MS teams with lots of experimentation and obtaining validation from the students by asking them questions". Not having students in class and not being able to see them when teaching online was difficult. It was "overwhelming and it took time getting used to it, aside from having to learn how to deal with technology" (P6).

P7, like the others, had to spend more time in preparing new OT material. For example, he had to "rethink how to make PowerPoint slides more attractive" while P8 "changed the normal group exercises and assignments to online individual ones". Teaching a language course online was no joke for P9 who devoted "a lot of time to preparing audio recordings for students" and the class activities were not very successful as "students had to reconnect numerous times, and serious students were upset with those who did not join or care during randomized breakout group discussions". So, she eventually had to resort to asking students individually and added Kahoot games. The perception and attitude towards students changed for P10, who said that "sometimes the students are not bad. They might not have the funds to buy a device to study online or those who had gone back home to their provinces in very rural areas such as paddy fields might have very unstable internet connectivity". The internet connectivity issues required adjustments on the part of the participant in calculating more time for internet issues.

Theme 2.2 The Challenges of Online Teaching. Learning to use the new online platforms for teaching was a tremendous challenge for many lecturers, particularly those who were not adept at technology. P10 experienced "internet and technical problems and when I used Zoom to teach, I didn't know how to share the screen and the sound of the video clip when it didn't work". She also mentioned that "I don't like to be in front of the camera" and that "self-motivation" to make things work was also a personal challenge in this new transition. Battling with online cheating was very difficult to resolve". P6 changed his examinations to "open book exams with only essay questions because I can't see what's going on and I can't monitor them". On the other hand, P9 thought differently, and changed her examinations to multiple choices with the attempt

"to control cheating". Aside from the pressures of the switch to OT, P4 mentioned that she was "facing my own pressure". The switch from F2F to OT also required a revision of lessons by all the lecturers, and some courses were more difficult and challenging to teach than others as the lecturer needed to monitor progress, provide feedback, and correct the students' work. An excellent example was P3, who was teaching software engineering that required students to compose software programs. The switch to online classes took the participant "a longer time to work with the students", and she was suffering from exhaustion.

Internet malfunctioning was an ongoing problem for online classes and the longer the class session, the more frustrating it was for both lecturers and students. P6 described this very well, "they cannot hear me when they have really poor connections. They will come in and out of the classroom. There are no internet connectivity problems at the university but the problems were in China, Myanmar, Laos, and in Vietnam, as the governments kept shutting things down". This sentiment was also shared by P6 who said that "not all the students were connected as they turned off their cameras and I don't know what they are doing in class. When they are in class, I would be able to see their facial expressions as a sign of understanding. And that doesn't exist in online classes". As for P9, who taught a language class, "testing time was a big challenge due to the bad connection on the students' end".

Keeping students focused online was a big challenge, particularly class sessions that were longer. For instance, P7 was trying to figure out how to teach a class that lasted for four hours, while P5 had to teach classes that were three hours per session. He needed to be "creative in being able to teach facing the screen instead of students", and "the absence of the physical absence of the students in the classroom was something I had never experienced in my entire life". P7 said that "I'm trying to find ways not to bore them as they study seven subjects, and their schedule is filled up in the mornings and afternoons. But I can't keep them excited all the time". Students coming in late to class was one thing, but it became a problem when "someone comes in 20 minutes later to breakout groups" (P6). Moreover, the students' "level of patience was limited as they get easily distracted when studying online" (P5). Assignment submissions were another challenge to deal with. It was easier to "make difficult students submit assignments in class compared to online classes as it was virtually impossible". Delivery classes with theoretical content were easier to deliver than the ones that were practical with the necessary hands-on aspect. Teaching accounting and language courses online was tough (P2 & P10).

Theme 2.3 Adjustments to Online Teaching. The time that each participant took in getting adjusted to teaching online varied from as fast as two weeks to as long as one and a half years, and one participant still has not adjusted to it. For instance, P1 who took six months to adapt, related that after that shocking and transition period, "I felt that I like, enjoy, and feel comfortable with OT. Moreover, it's very convenient because I don't have to travel. I engage, and interact with students, but I don't know how students feel". P8 shared that "I enjoy it now. I felt uncomfortable at first as the students were so silent that I was worried, and unsure if the students could hear me but that died away after two weeks, and I just concentrated on doing my job". Teaching over 200 students is no joke, and that was why P7 started off OT with worries but after one year of practice, he actually enjoyed it, stating "the benefits of convenience, better time management, a 50% reduction

in traveling expenses, better mental health without having to fight with traffic, and time saved by WFH with OT". Two participants said that they hated teaching the hybrid mode and would prefer teaching online instead. P4 stated that although she felt very comfortable and was getting used to it, it was also "dependent on the course and other factors. If the lessons were well-prepared in advance, then teaching online would be a comfortable experience". The one and only participant (5) who expressed the continued discomforts of OT shared that "I'm the type who likes face-to-face and feel uncomfortable and inconvenient teaching online. Moreover, my eyes are restricted to not just one, but two computer screens when I teach for three hours". Moreover, the added issues of internet connectivity issues on both the lecturers' and students' sides, had increased the complexities of OT for him, making it difficult for him to adjust.

Theme 3: Thoughts on the New Way of Working

This theme addresses the perception of the effectiveness of OT, the pros and cons of OT, and the participants' thoughts on the potential move to a permanent Online Teaching position.

Theme 3.1 The Effectiveness of Online Teaching. More than half of the participants (60%) were in agreement that their classes were effective. A participant (P1) verified the effective class delivery through a survey administered to students while another (P8) said that a student mentioned that he was able to apply the knowledge acquired from the online course while working during his internship. One very dedicated educator (P7) said that "No matter how we are required to teach, we as educators need to make it effective and find a way to make it work". Online language classes were ineffective, but the participant said that it was "better than teaching it as a hybrid class" (P9). Participants teaching courses with practical aspects agreed that the online classes were ineffective. Cheating was one factor that decreased the effectiveness of online classes (P5) despite the higher scores they were able to achieve, as the students were able to "copy and everything was available online". P3 shared that "it's up to the teacher to boost up the students the best they can" while P4 stated that the effectiveness was mutual as the "standard of delivery depends not only on the lecturers but also on the students. If the students do not attend classes or pay attention, then, it would be ineffective".

Theme 3.2 The Pros and Cons of Online Teaching

Theme 3.2.1 The Pros of Online Teaching. The majority of the participants unanimously agreed that OT was convenient as they saved a lot of time from traveling, particularly if they were living in the traffic-infested city of Bangkok, as they could wake up later, which gave them more time for personal matters and lesson preparations. Aside from saving hours on the road, it was also more cost-effective. P7 mentioned that he was able to "save about 50% of my expenses and my physical health increased tremendously as I was able to get more sleep. My mental health also improved with less stress on the road". Being able to teach from anywhere was also another advantage, as well as acquiring new knowledge in using new technology that was required in OT. P8 was happy to be able to multitask as he was able to search for answers or new knowledge to share with the students while teaching, something that would be difficult to do in F2F classes. P3 was successful in assigning group discussions and felt that they were more effective than in-class discussions as students were more efficient and focused in getting to the point in their online break-up groups. P6, too, felt that break-up groups were an excellent tool as the students would be by themselves, instead of in a loud and

noisy classroom. The lecturer was able to check on and give feedback to each individual group over the video call.

Theme 3.4.2 The Cons of Online Teaching. Despite the pros of OT, the cons, however, seemed to outweigh them. Weak internet connectivity in entering the classes and during the sessions was disrupting and frustrating for both lecturers and students. P7 stated that it "destroyed the climate of learning" and while some countries had "poor internet connections and it was very difficult to see and hear them" (P6), those living in other Thai provinces had poor connections as well (P7). Going online meant more work and preparation for lecturers such as more slides with more visuals, and videos. Not knowing how to use the platform reduces the effectiveness of the lesson delivery so lecturers need to "master the platform" (P1). Cheating in examinations was another big problem and P4 shared the reality that cheating was evident everywhere in the world with online learning. The lack of "human interaction and not being able to hear them clearly" was a problem for P8. P6 shared this frustration: "I lose control of what they are doing as I cannot react and respond to the students when I do not have access to their facial expressions". Lecturers experienced a "reduction in communication and socialization skills" while the students "were not able to learn things that were required in F2F classes" (P10). P4 resorted to asking students to check their understanding and if they were still around as the students were quiet on their end. Students were said to have lost interest in their education with online learning (P3) and this was supported by P5, who said that: The attention span of students is lowered and they are bored. They are looking at their phones instead, and it is very irritating when you can't see them and they make excuses for not being around like needing to use the restroom. I also lose focus when the students move or do something else when I am teaching".

Theme 3.3 The Move to A Permanent Online Teaching Position. Five out of the ten participants said that they were not interested in being a full-time online teacher if they were given the future opportunity to do so. The rationale behind their decision was plentiful. The participants preferred the F2F classes and liked the fact that they could meet students and interact with them. P9 stated that "students could learn better in face-to-face classes as they provided a better learning environment" and the students needed to enhance their "interpersonal interaction skills" (P4). Although P3 was fine with OT during the pandemic, she stated that: We need to go back to the regular teaching way. The students face a lot of difficulties, especially the younger ones, and the students couldn't cope with the concentration online. And the quality of the phone affects learning and the students don't understand".

The two years of OT experience was appealing to the other four participants who would accept a permanent online position. P1 stated, "yes, definitely 100% as I do not want to travel as it would be a waste of time (two hours) and expenses (600 baht)" while a very enthusiastic P2 said that she wanted to teach online "forever" and as we are moving forward into the digital age, teaching online would mean advancement in the field of education. P7, who was futuristic, mentioned that teaching online would be "great and wonderful" as it would allow him to teach past his retirement age, that there would be "more benefits than costs", and as long as the class sizes were not too big. One participant (10) who taught both theory and practical courses,

stated that she would not mind teaching online for her theory courses but the practical ones needed to be delivered in F2F classes.

Discussion

The unexpected sudden transition to OT (Scherer et al., 2021) that the participants were thrown into at the last minute was received very differently by each participant but after almost two years of the compulsory OT during the prolonged pandemic, about 40% of the participants were so positive with the experience that they were willing to move completely online if given the opportunity to do so. This decision was an indication that these participants were able to adapt well and felt comfortable with the new work transition with time (Sahoo et al., 2021). Humans also learn more quickly when they are placed in a crisis, and this experience during the pandemic is a good example. Moreover, they also realized the huge benefits that came with teaching online when working from home; the time saved from traveling and stress from being stuck in traffic, as well as the money they saved from traveling (Sahoo et al., 2021). However, up to 50% still stated their preference to move back to F2F classes and participants who were over 60 years of age preferred to teach F2F. It was not surprising that F2F sessions were preferred for practical hands-on sessions. The participants who wanted to return to the classroom setting definitely wanted to engage in human interaction with their students, as they felt more comfortable facing their students when teaching. By moving back to F2F classes, many issues could be resolved such as cheating, students' attention, and the internet connectivity problems they experienced on a continuous basis for the past two years. While universities and lectures were busy adjusting to the new norm, opportunities arose for contract cheating providers who provided students with $50 COVID-19 discounts that allowed "commercial online tutors to take their online exams or real-time assistance from 'pros' while sitting examinations" (Hill et al., 2021, p. 1). The internet connectivity that was a humongous problem for participants teaching in Thailand, was not unusual, as "there are still problems within some sectors of society in some countries and even in parts of developed countries having access to this resource" (Lambie & Law, 2020, p. 275).

The OT experience was different for each lecturer; some found it easier than others (Kaqinari et al., 2021). The satisfaction and dissatisfaction that the participants received from OT and the adjustment time needed to e-teaching were affected by multiple factors, such as the teaching platform options, the amount of training and support given by the university, each individual participants' learning pace, adaptability, previous exposure to digital teaching, type of course, attitude, perception, self-efficacy, and at times, their age; the younger, the more digitally inclined and earlier to adapt to e-teaching as compared to those who were older (Kaqinari et al., 2021). There is a positive correlation of satisfaction to the mentioned multiple factors. The information gathered on the training and support received serve as invaluable reminders for the Training, IT departments, and the University's management to provide the necessary training and support to make e-teaching an easier and more pleasant task for lecturers during difficult times while not neglecting the students too.

The participants tried their very best to deliver their classes online, and although more than half (60%) felt that they had been effective, it also meant that the other 40% felt differently. The effectiveness of online delivery lies not only from the lecturers' side but also requires the students' cooperation in making the online class a successful one. Lessons can be well-prepared and delivered, but if the students are not paying attention (Aristovnik et al., 2020; Tejedor et al., 2021), then, it would be considered ineffective. This is said to be typical of technology-mediated learning that requires more self-discipline on the part of students (Panigrahi et al., 2018, as cited in Bryson & Andres, 2020). Although the methodology varied in the adaptation to OT, all the participants had something in common, in that they spent a lot of time, effort, and creativity to make e-teaching successful and effective (Moessenlechner et al., 2021), which could not be achieved overnight. It took time and experimentation, and the lecturers experienced frustration in the process as it was an additional burden on top of their existing workload (Aristovnik et al., 2020; Tejedor et al., 2021). This aligns with the emergence of new teaching approaches, new ways of facilitating learning outcomes, which may be exciting opportunities for some, but challenging for many (Bryson & Andres, 2020). The participants faced similar challenges, such as internet connectivity, cheating, keeping students focused, the frustrations of not seeing students and knowing if they were actually present, and understanding the lessons, particularly when they were quiet on the other end, and not responding. Turning off cameras and being silent on the other side of the screen was not only experienced in Thailand, but also in other countries (Gonzalez et al., 2021). Student-lecturer communication is necessary not only to facilitate but to also support the learning process (Bryson & Andres, 2020). Getting the students' attention in class was a normal challenge, and having to do that online was another significant challenge on a much different level (Bryson & Andres, 2020). There was also little that the participants could do to "force" students to submit assignments. It was also frustrating for lecturers when students were not answering questions and they could not do anything about it (Vanhorn et al., 2008). According to Nga and Huong (2022), "the 'new normal' of learning from homes, spending hours staring at screens, and struggling with piles of online tasks has somehow demotivated students to continue learning" (p. 22). Participants who had to teach content that needed the practical aspect, and language classes were experiencing a much more difficult time compared to the others who delivered theoretical courses.

Conclusion and Recommendations for Further Study

Being pushed into a situation without any prior preparation (Moessenlechner et al., 2021) but trying to maneuver as much as possible into the sudden new unknown as demonstrated by a flip in the operations of the workplace, by university lecturers is truly commendable. Being able to cope and adapt to new working protocols takes time, and it takes even more time for perfection to take place, which may or may never happen in reality. Each individual was able to confront this accomplishment at different levels as the learning curve for each individual level is different. This experience has brought them forward into a completely new teaching experience, which would not have been possible had it not been for the pandemic and forced OT (Küçükler, 2021). These upgraded skills are invaluable as they enter into the new digital era at universities where OT becomes "an opportunity for purposeful digitalization of university teaching" (Kaqinari et al., 2021, p. 10) and

particularly so as they adapt with the entire world to the new normal way of working (Sahoo et al., 2021). Moreover, this new move has been a positive experience that will definitely have an impact on classes in the future (Porter et al., 2020). Striving to make e-learning work was an intrinsic motivation that kept the participants going despite the external factors and challenges that made life difficult for them. Exploring the experiences of the ten participants as they went through this inevitable change was truly insightful and many lessons were learnt in the process. Recommendations for further study include a replication of this study on K-12 schools, and other industries that were vastly affected in the way they operate. Another recommendation is to conduct a follow-up study a year or two after the pandemic with the same participants to investigate what new changes may have been made.

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