



Impacts of online learning on Thai high school students' self-esteem

¹Thasorn Jivacharoen, ²Nicha Techawatcharathap, ³Tanawadee Amornthan

High school student in Sarasas Ektra School, Bangkok, Thailand

***Corresponding Author:**

Thasorn Jivacharoen

High school student in Sarasas Ektra School, Bangkok, Thailand.

Type of Publication: Original Research Paper

Conflicts of Interest: Nil

Abstract

Because of the COVID-19 issue, students all across the world are migrating to online learning. Despite the fact that vaccination is available, many educational institutions opt to conduct their classes online rather than on campus. The transition to online learning is focused on negative self-perception, social media use, and self-care time. A structured questionnaire via Google form was conducted to observe a respondent's opinion regarding the effect of online learning on self-esteem and mental condition.

Online learning is unquestionably more flexible than attending traditional classrooms since it allows students to have the liberty to be more self-directed, nonetheless, major drawbacks have been identified. Students would initially struggle to adjust to online learning without teachers present since self-efficacy, time management, and self-regulation were required. Stress and pressure in online classes contribute to students feeling inferior when compared to classmates and causing them to feel dull, thus, recedes academic self-esteem. Besides, online learning increases screen timing resulting in unhealthy effects mentally and physically. Regardless, while students try to use social media as a source of relaxation, it's conceivable that their stress levels have grown as a result of online learning, causing them to seek out a safe place to rest. Furthermore, students' emotions of isolation are more prevalent in online classes in which loneliness perceptions tend to have a negative impact on students. According to the survey, 79% of respondents agree that e-learning has negatively impacted not only on their professional performances but also on their self-esteem.

Keywords: Academic self-confidence, COVID-19, Mental condition, Online learning, Self-efficacy, Student's life

INTRODUCTION

Student all over the world is switching to online learning because of the COVID-19 situation. Despite the fact that there is a vaccination, many educational institutions prefer to do their teaching online rather than on-site. Some researchers have examined the impact of online learning on mental health, but none have looked into the behaviors and attitudinal changes that have a direct impact on mental health. The focus of the adjustment from online learning is on negative self-perception, social media use, and time spent on self-care. The stress created by the pressures of online learning is most likely one of the causes causing learners to lose confidence. Online classes follow a

rigorous schedule and are time-constrained, as each topic is often given less time each week. Besides, online learning and assignments lead to more screen time, which has negative mental and physical consequences. Stress in online learning environments is likely to lower academic self-confidence since most students feel inadequate when comparing themselves to peers, which lowers their self-esteem^[1]. Students whose academic performance was poor or who were unfamiliar with the online learning method were more likely to suffer from depression, burnout syndrome, anxiety, and physical symptoms. Moreover, students utilize more social media after moving to online study,

according to the survey results. It's been thought for a long time that social media and mental health are linked ^[2]. Several studies have connected social media usage to suicidality, loneliness, and a lack of empathy. In any case, while teenagers try to use social media as a source of relaxation and comfort, ^[3]. Therefore, it's conceivable that their stress levels have risen as a result of their online study, causing them to seek out a haven to relax or cope with the sense of being left out; lonely. Given the online learning situation social media is even more accessible during the classes because students can just open another tab or window while still in the class. Generally, Beutel M., 2017's findings support the notion that loneliness is linked to poor mental health (depression, anxiety) and increased suicidal thoughts. Loneliness was shown to be strongly connected to anxiety, panic attacks, and suicidality, with suicidal ideation rising from 6% to 42% ^[4]. The objective of this research is to investigate the impacts of online learning on Thai high school students' mental conditions, through the changes of perception toward self and changes in habits that affect the mental health condition.

1. Methodology

The research's purpose is to determine Thai high schoolers' psychological state while studying online throughout times of crisis during the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Findings

In the primary data, the psychological effect of online learning was compiled using the online survey questionnaires. Quantitative aspects were taken into account, the responses of large numbers of sample groups with over 200 respondents were used. The population examined are students in grades seven to twelve, as well as those in higher education, who were studying in Bangkok, Thailand. The surveys were conducted using a structured questionnaire method through Google form. Respondents' personal information, names, and academic institutions were kept anonymous. The questions were made to observe a respondent's opinion regarding the effect of online learning on self-esteem and mental condition. The answers were analyzed and collected in percentage form through bar graphs, and pie charts.

Then the findings were analyzed in statistics.

The research is based on both primary and secondary data sources. The answers were determined and evaluated with a secondary source to gain background information and to gather the information that cannot be reached directly from the primary sources.

The secondary sources used are search engines, reports, scholarly articles, research papers, and other academic publications. The sources were scanned and verified by the author's history, author's credibility, peer-reviewed, and encyclopedias. In which use as additional data, background knowledge, and clarification of thesis statements.

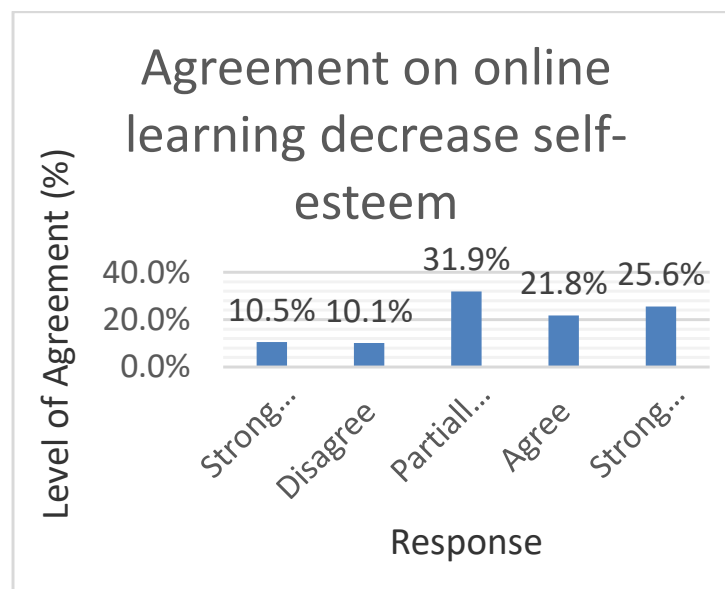
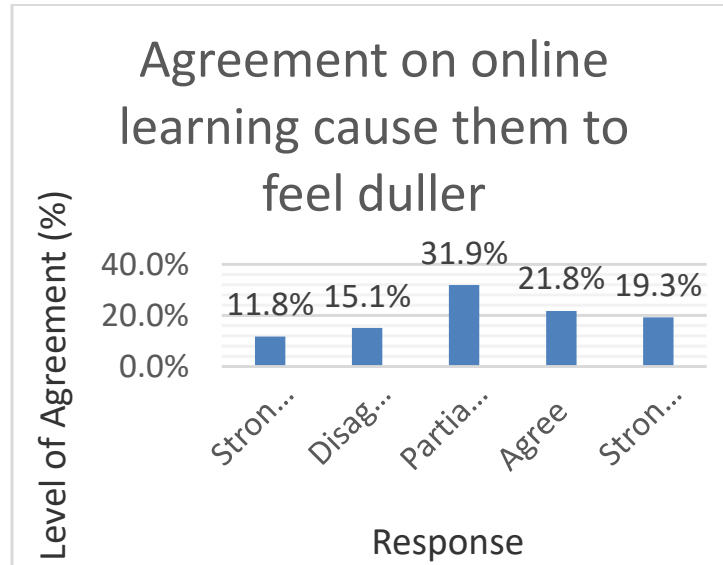
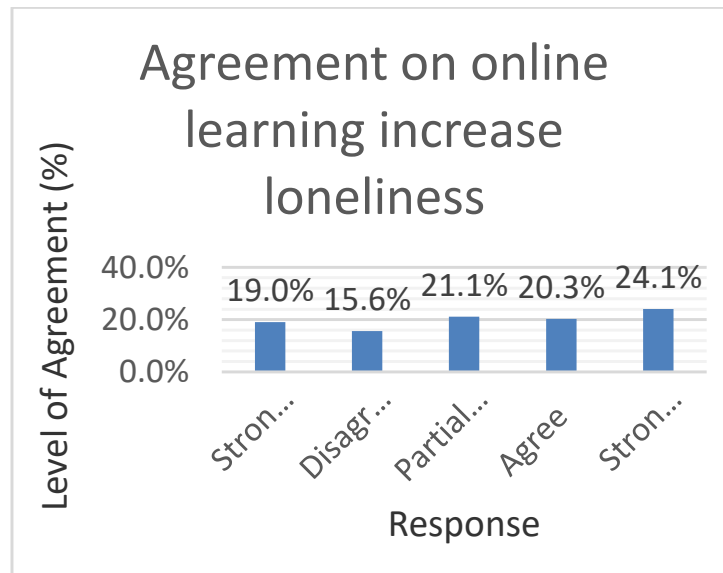


Figure 1: Bar chart displays percentages of interviewees agreement on online learning decrease self-esteem

Majority of the respondents (79%) supported that online learning decreases students' self-esteem which could be inferred that it pessimistically contributes to the students' mental condition.

**Figure 2: Bar chart displaying percentages of interviewees agreement on online learning cause them to feel duller**

Most respondents (73%) agree that online classes influence them to feel duller compared to face-to-face classes which indicates that learning online could reduce students' confidence in academic aspects.

**Figure 3: Bar chart displays percentages of interviewees agreement on online learning increase loneliness**

The result of the survey conducted spot that more than 60% (65.5 to be precise) of high school students feel more isolated and lonelier when switching to online learning. A quarter said they totally agree that it is in fact lonelier, while 20.3 and 24.1 percent agree and partially agree, respectively.

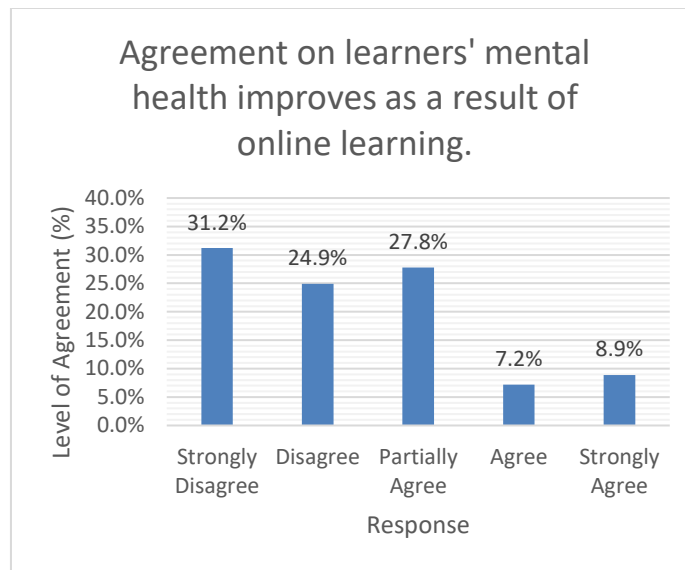


Figure 4: Bar chart displays percentages of interviewees agreement on online learning increase time spend on social media

As expected, more than 80 percent have higher addiction to social media after a change to online learning. Interestingly almost 40 percent entirely agree that they use social media more often.

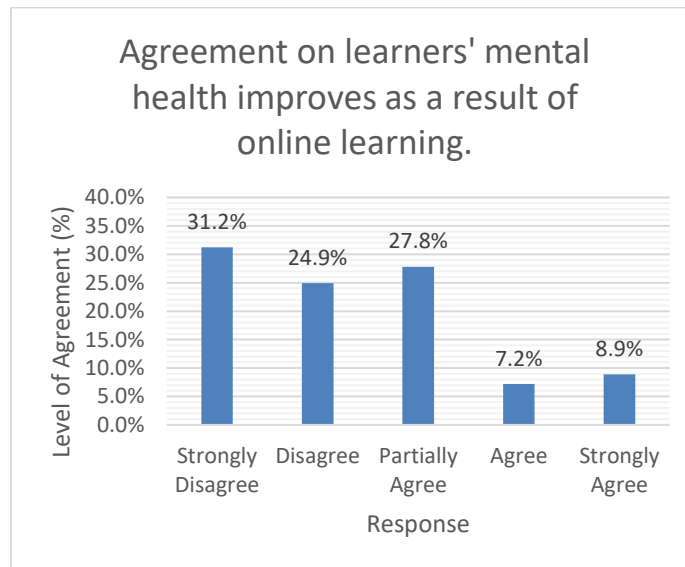


Figure 5: Bar chart displays percentages of interviewees agreement on online learning improves learners mental conditions

Regarding the chart, merely 8.9% agreed that online sessions are effective and improved their mental conditions while 31.2% strongly contradicted with the statement.

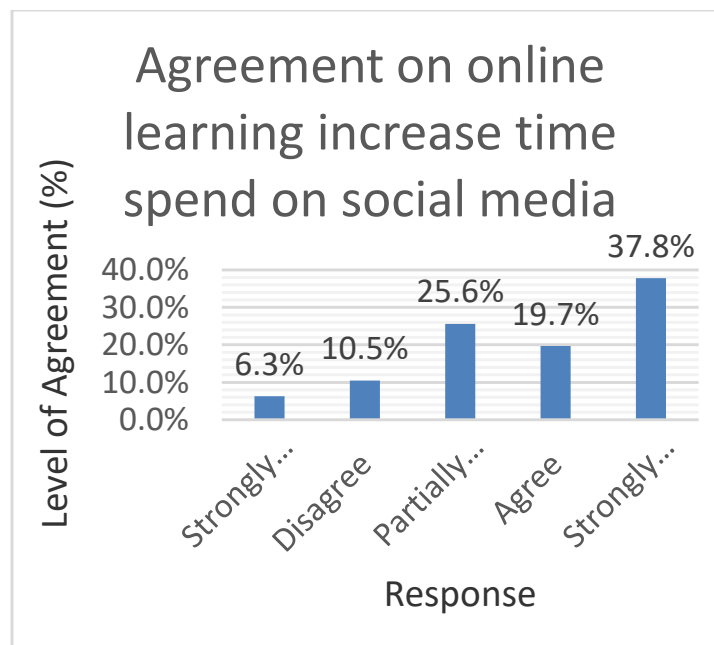


Figure 6: Bar chart displays percentages of interviewees agreement on online learning provides learners leisure time

According to figure 6, 33.6% of interviewees positively agreed that online learning provides more leisure time than taking offline classes. 19.3% of interviewees also agree and partially agree with the statement, on the contrary, 16% of the interviewees strongly opposed.

3. Discussion

When learning through an online platform is surely more flexible than taking traditional classes since it provides more free time as well as liberty to learners to be more independent ^[5]. For instance, reducing travel time from a particular place to place and supporting the consolation of studying at their own residences ^[5]. Therefore, the amount of time spent with their relatives and family was to be increased which coordinates to the interviewees' agreement. As 33.6% of respondents thoroughly accepted that they have more leisure time for self-care and do things they are willing to accomplish if they were free at the time when studying through an online program. Some were doing exercises regularly, doing their hobbies and interests such as playing musical instruments, drawing, and more ^[6]. On the other hand, 16% of the respondents said that learning online did not provide time due to the circumstances they are in, for instance taking care of their siblings and doing house chores ^[6]. These circumstances can drastically affect their concentration on their studies, managing the time sufficiently, and then failing to come upon the deadlines. Whereas being under tension from many factors such as the pressure from educators to hurry

submitting the assignments on time. Initially, students would struggle adapting to online learning with no instructors there with them. This could impact their work performance severely along with their mental ^[7] since majorly when learning through online platforms it consists of skills such as self-efficacy, time management, self-regulation, and experiences of learning online classes ^[8].

From the survey, it could be inferred that online classes have numerous factors that affect students' mental condition pessimistically since it reduces students' confidence in academic aspects or causes them to feel dull. The possible factors leading students to recede their confidence is probably stress caused by the pressure conditions of online learning ^[9]. Online classes have a strict schedule and are time constraint since it usually provides less time for each subject per week. While the number of contents remains, the teaching has become more intense so this then causes an overload of information and makes the students who could not manage feel dull ^[10]. Despite the stressful online classes' condition, heavier workload including online lectures, homework and other work assignments are assigned on top of that. Due to the fact that sometimes the contents could not fit in the given

time, teachers seem to be adding much more homework to make up for that. Online learning and assignments increase screen timing which have unhealthy effects mentally and physically, for instance, worsening vision, headaches and sore back ^[10]. Those physical effects also disturb concentration on learning and even emphasizes the stress caused by the confusion they have had in the class. Being unable to manage the tasks in time contributes to late submission and results in student's disappointment in their ability ^[11]. Stress can also be caused by other factors including technical problems with the learning devices, context and poor communications ^[9].

Stress in online learning conditions probably lead to reduction of academic self-confidence since most students feel inferiority from comparing themselves to classmates and this negatively impacts their self-esteem ^[1]. Academic self-confidence, perception of themselves and their own ability, play a significant role in studying performance because it is a motivation bringing them to progression in academic aspects ^[12]. During online classes, teachers sometimes encourage the students to compete to answer a question or to discuss some topics to check their participation and give scores. This could be pressuring since it allows the student to know other students' performance and influence them to compete and compare themselves to other classmates resulting in some students feeling inadequate and pressured ^[1]. Low academic self-confidence could recede their self-esteem in which poor self-esteem could cause depression, anxiety and even worsen their study performance ^[13]. It surely will deteriorate students' mental condition in the long term.

Students and colleagues are expressing their opinions on taking online classes, which are impacting them negatively in both physical and mental manners ^[14]. Students whose academic performance are lacking or not fully intimated with the learning style of the online learning session were to face the increasing rate of depression, burnout syndrome, anxiety, and somatic symptoms ^[7]. The transition of education results in the decrease of achievement in academic performance as stated before students require skills such as time management and self-regulation ^[15]. Students who are lacking these skills are likely to face depression and anxiety due to their insufficient ability to regulate and organize their studies since there is no supervisor with them. This study supports the result in figure 4 which

had 31.2% of respondents responding that online context classes are inefficient and pessimistically impacted their mental conditions.

From the survey outcome that students use more social media after switching to online learning. It has long been assumed that social media and mental health are consistent. Suicidality, loneliness, and low empathy have all been linked to social media use in several research. The study by Reilly M., Dogra N., and Whiteman N. found that adolescents saw social media as a threat to their mental health, with three main ideas emerging, such as causing anxiety, a channel for cyberbullying, and a form of "addiction" ^[12]. Moreover, according to research done by Berryman C., Ferguson C., and Negy C., while social media may not directly damage mental health, it does so indirectly through its use. Vaguebooking is taken into consideration, General mental health issues, suicidal thoughts, loneliness, social anxiety, and diminished empathy appear to be consequences of publishing vague but alarming-looking postings to seek attention ^[16]. Social media use was not found to be a predictor of poor mental health functioning. However, vaguebooking was linked to suicidal thoughts, suggesting that this tendency might be an indication of deeper problems ^[16]. Although, some studies still shown no indication of harm and even suggest that social media use may be helpful for some people. Regardless, as teens attempt to utilize social media as a source of relaxation and comfort ^[3], it is possible that the usage of online learning has increased their stress levels, prompting them to seek out a secure place to find calm or to cope with the feeling of being left out; lonely.

Since students' feelings of loneliness from peers and instructors are happening more in the online class. In addition, the perceptions of loneliness appear to give its negative outcomes on students' learning experiences ^[17]. The loneliness worsening effect from online learning is identified by studying the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2015 between school computer usage time (the independent variable) and contentment with peer relationships (the dependent variable) among elementary and middle school children ^[18]. Overall, the findings by Beutel M., 2017 promote the idea that loneliness is associated with poor mental health (depression, anxiety), as well as increased suicide ideation. Loneliness was substantially linked to

anxiety, panic attacks, and suicidality; suicidal ideation increased drastically from 6% to 42% [4]. As we took into account demographic characteristics and other kinds of emotional pain, loneliness remained a strong predictor of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. Nonetheless, there was no indication that mental health issues worsened loneliness over time, however, loneliness has been linked to increased anxiety, stress, despair, and overall mental health. Furthermore, loneliness predicted a higher likelihood of eating disorders [19]. According to Stephen J. Macdonald's quantitative study, the link between loneliness and disability is due to structural barriers that prevent disabled individuals from participating in entertainment outside of the house, social engagement, or work [20]. Moreover, in a review paper, those who report feeling lonely regularly had a higher risk of cardiovascular disease and faster aging, as well as being more prone to develop psychotic symptoms, depression, and cognitive impairment [21].

The impacts of online learning on the mental health of Thai high school students were investigated in this study, thus students must be aware of the impacts when learning through online platforms. The survey resulted that online learning has detrimentally influenced the majority of students negatively in various aspects. Throughout online learning sessions, 79% of respondents strongly agree that their self-esteem and mental condition were to be diminished. By becoming more duller, isolated, addicted to the use of social media, along with physical damages. The effects were pointed out by respondents who have directly experienced that their mental states and academic performances were adversely affected, therefore methods of preventing the source of the impacts for further investigation are recommended.

4. Conclusion

The impacts of online learning on the self-esteem of Thai high school students were investigated in this study, thus students must be aware of the impacts when learning through online platforms. The survey resulted that online learning has detrimentally influenced the majority of students negatively in various aspects. Throughout online learning sessions, 79% of respondents strongly agree that their self-esteem and mental condition were to be diminished. By becoming more dull, isolated, addicted to the use of social media, along with physical damages. The

effects were pointed out by respondents who have directly experienced that their mental states and academic performances were adversely affected, therefore methods of preventing the source of the impacts for further investigation are recommended.

5. Acknowledgment

The director of Sarasas Ektra School and Ms. Imee Payumo backed and supervised this research with special care.

6. References

1. Pulford, B.D., Woodward, B. & Taylor, E. [2018 March 07]. Do social comparisons in academic settings relate to gender and academic self-confidence? [Internet]. Social Psychology Education. 2018; **21**, 677–690. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11218-018-9434-1>
2. O'Reilly M, Dogra N, Whiteman N, Hughes J, Eruyar S, Reilly P. [2018 May 20]. Is social media bad for mental health and wellbeing? Exploring the perspectives of adolescents. [Internet]. Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry. 2018; **23**(4): 601 -603. Available from: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29781314/>
3. Ritter D., Ray K., Keefe C. [2021 May 6] Social Media and Mental Health in Adolescents and Young Adults: A Systematic Review. The University of Akron [Internet]. Available from: https://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/honors_research_projects/1359/
4. Beutel M., Klein E., Brähler E. et al. [2017] Loneliness in the general population: prevalence, determinants and relations to mental health. BMC Psychiatry. [Internet]. 2017; **17**:97. Available from: <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1186/s12888-017-1262-x.pdf>
5. Behzadi, Z. & Ghaffari, A. [2011 November 5]. Characteristics of Online Education and Traditional Education. [Internet]. Life Science Journal. 2011; **8**(3):54-58] (ISSN:1097-8135). Available from: http://www.lifesciencesite.com/ljs/life0803/01_5719life0803_54_58.pdf

6. Ferlazzo, L. [2020 May 5]. "My Online Learning Experience as a Student Is Not So Good" (Opinion). [Internet]. Education Week.2020 Available from: <https://www.edweek.org/technology/opinion-my-online-learning-experience-as-a-student-is-not-so-good/2020/05>
7. Bolatov, A. K., Seisembekov, T. Z., Askarova, A. Z., Baikanova, R. K., Smailova, D. S., & Fabbro, E. [2020 November 18]. Online-Learning due to COVID-19 Improved Mental Health Among Medical Students. [Internet]. Medical Science Educator 2021; 31, 183–192. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40670-020-01165-y>
8. Peechapol C., Na-Songkhla J., Sujiva S., & Luangsodsai A [2018 March 29]. An Exploration of Factors Influencing Self-Efficacy in Online Learning: A Systematic Review. [Internet]. International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET). 2018; 13(09). Available from: <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v13i09.8351>
9. Allan, J. & Lawless, N. [2003]. Stress caused by on-line collaboration in e-learning: a developing model. [Internet]. Education + Training.2003; 45(8/9): 564-572. Available from: <https://www.qou.edu/ar/sciResearch/pdf/eLearningResearchs/stressCaused.pdf>
10. Moreno, A. [2020 Oct 28]. Opinion: More work does not equal more learning. [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.wildcat.arizona.edu/article/2020/10/o-online-work>
11. Mann, M., Hosman, C.M.H., Schaalma, H.P. & N.K. de Vries [2004 August 01]. Self-esteem in a broad-spectrum approach for mental health promotion. [Internet]. Health Education Research.2004; 19(4): 357-372. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1093/her/cyg041>
12. Sander, P. & de la Fuente, J. [2020 July 22]. Modelling students' academic confidence, personality and academic emotions. [Internet]. Current Psychology.2020. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-00957-0>
13. Grotan, K., Sund, E.R. & Bjerkeset, O. [2019 Jan 24]. Mental Health, Academic Self-Efficacy and Study Progress Among College Students. [Internet]. Frontiers in Psychology.2019. Available from: <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00045/full>
14. Halupa, C. [2016 November 1]. RISKS: THE IMPACT OF ONLINE LEARNING AND TECHNOLOGY ON STUDENT PHYSICAL, MENTAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SOCIAL HEALTH. [Internet]. ResearchGate. 2016;102(6): [about 6305-6314 p.]. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.21125/iceri.2016.0044>
15. Landrum, B. [2020 September 5]. Examining Students' Confidence to Learn Online, Self-Regulation Skills and Perceptions of Satisfaction and Usefulness of Online Classes. [Internet]. Research Gate. 2020;24(3):[about 128–146 p.]. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v24i3.2066>
16. Berryman C., Ferguson C., Negy C. [2017 November 1]. Social Media Use and Mental Health among Young Adults. [Internet]. Psychiatric Quarterly.2018; 89: 307–314. Available from: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11126-017-9535-6>
17. Kaufmann R., Vallade J. [2020 August 12]. Online student perceptions of their communication preparedness. SAGE Journals. [Internet]. Available from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2042753020950873>
18. Ahn J. [2019]. Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study. National Center for Education Statistics. [Internet]. 2020; 12. Available from: <https://nces.ed.gov/timss/>
19. Richardson, T., Elliott, P., Roberts, R. [2017]. Relationship between loneliness and mental health in students. Journal of Public Mental Health. [Internet]. 2017; 16(2): 48–54. Available from: <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2017-41110-001>

20. Macdonald S., Deacon L., Nixon J., et al. [2018 September 19] The invisible enemy: disability, loneliness and isolation. *Disability & Society*. [Internet]. 2018; 33(7): 1138-1159. Available from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09687599.2018.1476224>
21. Cacioppo S., Cacioppo J. [2018 February 3] The growing problem of loneliness. *The Lancet*. [Internet]. 2018; 391(10119): 426. Available from: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(18\)30142-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(18)30142-9/fulltext).