

A Comparison of Students' Attitude and Perception towards Morning or Afternoon Classes in Texila American University, 2021

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Abstract

This paper reports on the findings from focus groups conducted at Texila American University on the attitudes of its medical students towards morning lectures. Students felt that two things were vital for a good lecture: (1) that the lecturer goes beyond what is written in the lecture notes; (2) that the lecture is interactive, by which students meant that the lecturer asks if students understand concepts and adjust the delivery accordingly, and the lecturer answers the students' questions. The students in the focus groups also discussed what makes for a bad lecture: (1) lecturers reading straight from slides; (2) lecturers who 'blame the students' by saying that students don't work hard enough and are too lazy to turn up to lectures; and (3) lecturers who cover the material too slowly or too quickly. The most prominent reason given for not attending lectures was the timetabling of lectures in such a way that students had too few classes in one day to make the sojourn to university worthwhile and relating to feelings of tiredness each afternoon. Any university seeking to improve attendance at lectures should perhaps look as much to improving its timetabling practices as it does to improve the practices of its individual lecturers.

Keywords: Focus groups, Lectures, Student attitudes.

Introduction

Very simply, a lecture is an organized verbal presentation of subject matter often augmented by visual aids. According to Bligh [1], a lecture is a period of more or less uninterrupted talk from a teacher. A more detailed definition is found in Percival and Ellington, who state that a lecture is 'a didactic instructional method, involving one-way communication from the active presenter to the more or less passive audience'. Perhaps unkindly, we should also include the student who described a lecture as 'an occasion to sleep whilst someone talks. Students of Texila American university were chosen to be the study population as the researchers are also students of the institution and would like to use the information found to benefit their fellow schoolmates. This research was done to assess whether the timing of lectures affects the quality of attitude learning in students

in MD 1 to MD 3 at Texila American University. A study conducted by psychologists Serge Onyper and Pamela Thacher at St. Lawrence found some statistical data proving a correlation between class time and performance. According to the National Institute of General Medical Sciences [2], circadian rhythms are physical, mental, and behavioural changes that follow a 24-hour cycle. Researchers at Stanford University have shown that when the circadian system breaks down, so does memory. This means that sleep influences memory retention. If classes are started later in the morning, students will have more time to rest and are refreshed for classes after. When classes are started later in the morning, it improves grades in courses as students will be in a better emotional state and ready to learn, favouring memory retention. Generally, at Texila American University, students arrive in the morning active and ready

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to learn as compared to in the afternoon in which students' mood and attitude toward learning decrease. Also, the heavy credit subjects (Physiology, Anatomy, Pathology) are mostly taught in the morning in an effort to take advantage of the students' high attitude to morning lectures, while the low credit subjects (Genetics, Medical Ethics) are taught in the afternoon.

Methodology

The researchers sent online questionnaires via Google Forms to Texila American University students, specifically the MD1, MD2, and MD3 students, in December 2021, in order to identify the students' preferences regarding morning classes as opposed to afternoon classes. Information was taken from first-hand observation, participant's observation (primary research), and secondary sources. A questionnaire was given to each student in our inclusion criteria in order to get data to represent a wide population.

Research members were given specific roles and tasks to be done starting from April 2021. All task for each section of the research were completed within a week, and the research continued escalating more tasks continued being issued out because the flow of the resources were being gradually increasing making the research and our hypothesis more effective. With the work being shared, the research was completed in a couple of months before the end of 2021.

A self-developed questionnaire was prepared to determine students' preference for the timing of lectures. The questionnaire was developed based on knowledge collected by the researchers during the literature review. It was written in English, with the cover page presenting the consent form and an explanation about the purpose of the study. Additionally, the confidentiality and sole use of the information for the mentioned purpose were ensured. The research design was reviewed and approved by the ethical committee of Texila American University.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section included the following demographic data: gender, and student level. The second section was about lectures (preferred lecture length, timing of lecture schedule, and attendance). The third section was about the participation of students during the various timing of lectures.

Results

The questionnaire was distributed to male and female medical students in the MD1-MD4 category at Texila American University. A stratified sampling method was applied to collect a sample of 173 participants who participated in the survey.

Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16. Descriptive and crosstab analyses were used to compare the students' preferences for each school and between males and females in general. The chi-square test was used to measure the significance level ($P=0.05$).

A total of 173 students participated in the study, of which 59 males and 114 females. The majority of the responses came from the MD3 class, which was 38% of the Responses. Based on the responses, it could be seen that many students stated feeling more energized during the morning class (44%) as opposed to afternoon classes which come in a close second, which is statically important. When Students were tasked with the question "whether they rise early or not" as to determine the level of energy in the morning. Many responded to rising early in the morning (72%).

The majority of the students preferred morning Lectures and stated that they understood lectures better in the morning, which helps them in academic performance. A vast majority of students responded to being very eager to participate in the morning class as opposed to participating in the afternoon classes, with about 14% stating very eager to participate during the afternoon lectures. The majority of the students who participated in the survey

admitted to the majority of their effort into morning classes (65%) as opposed to afternoon classes. Taking into account of the students' emotions on how they feel before and after classes during a particular period of the day. It was discovered that the majority of the students feel great before and after morning classes as opposed to afternoon classes.

The study shows majority of students are more attentive during morning classes as opposed to afternoon classes.

Discussion

The study was conducted on January 20, 2022, at Texila American University. A survey was sent out in which a Total of 173 students agreed to participate in the study. It is the intention of the researchers to find out the extent to which the timing of classes affects students at Texila American University and their attitudes towards them. We saw where the student had a more positive response especially emotionally, towards morning classes, where students can gain more understanding which proved our hypothesis. The decline in the number of students interested in afternoon classes worldwide underscores the importance of this research into the preferences of the students at a medical school like the Texila American University. The students may not be aware of how much their emotions towards the class/lecture affect what they learn and in the long run, affects the type of doctor they become.

Our findings support those from the 'Journal of Education and Practice (2016)' [3]. It was mentioned that a study conducted by Klein (2001) revealed that there were significant differences in attention levels at different times of day and the later the hour, the lower the level of attention. Both our findings showed that students who preferred morning classes paid more attention than afternoon classes. In addition, According to the States University Blog site (2021), Like Day and Night[4]: "The Difference between Day Classes and Night Classes", technically, there is absolutely no

difference structurally and content-wise between day (morning) classes and night classes, but if you would ask anyone who has taken both, they would tell you that there is definitely a difference between the two, so much so that many students prefer one over the other, and the particular personality of the student is by no means any less of a contributing factor. In fact, the students at Texila American University did agree that there was a difference in the timing of classes, and the majority preferred morning classes to afternoon classes.

In this current study, a high percentage of students (58%) preferred morning lectures. This result is not in agreement with a previous study by Barron et al. [5], who reported that the mastery skills of below-grade-level students are affected by the time of day they receive the lecture. They found an overall increase in the mean scores for below-grade-level students who received instruction in the afternoon compared with those in a similar group who received instruction in the morning.

Limitation

The researchers encountered problems in carrying out this research. These problems include:

1. The fact that it was not possible to evenly distribute the questionnaires across each MD class as it was done through google forms.
2. Another drawback also encountered in using questionnaires as a source of data collection is that questionnaires have to be explained in much more details to some of the students in data collection; this caused the researcher a small amount of time. Despite all that the questionnaires helped the researcher to understand the problem better than before.
3. Also, the secondary sources had a downfall, in that the researchers were unable to gather information from a source within Guyana and much wider the Caribbean. Despite this, the sources contributed to the researcher's understanding of the problem in that they

cited examples and gave an enormous number of details.

Conclusion

The researchers assessed the differential effect on Students' receptiveness to morning classes. The focus was on the emotions/attitudes of the students in MD1 to 4 at the Texila American University. Our hypothesis that the majority of students prefer morning classes as opposed to afternoon classes was proven to be true as the majority of them had a more positive attitude and mood towards it and therefore were more attentive during the morning classes as opposed to the afternoon classes.

Despite several limitations, this study illustrated the following:

1. Lectures should be performed in ten-to-fifteen-minute blocks, which could involve changing the pace every fifteen minutes or so to relieve monotony and recapture students' interests.
2. Teachers should consider the time of day when they plan and implement lectures, as ongoing research indicates that the time of day plays a significant role in students' learning.
3. Lectures should be more engaging, especially during the afternoon sessions, to capture the attention of the students.

A total of 173 students participated in the study. There were 59 males and 114 females.

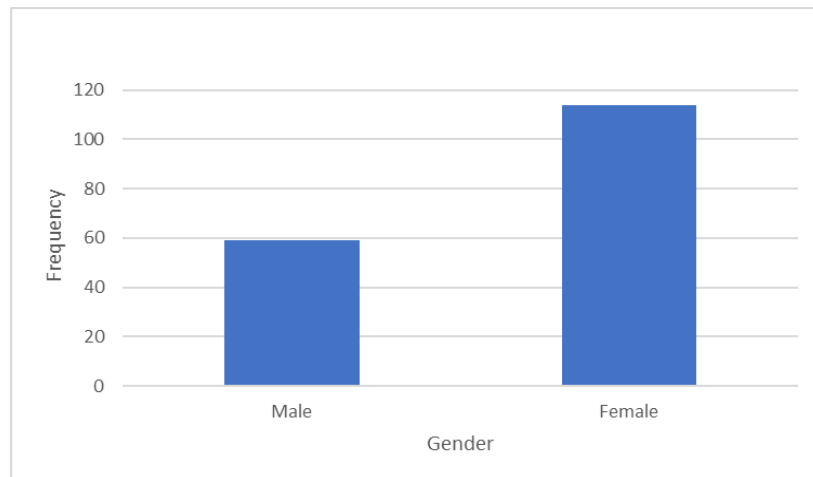


Figure 1. The Frequency of Gender who Partook in the Research

The majority of the responses came from the MD3 class, with about 38% of the Responses.

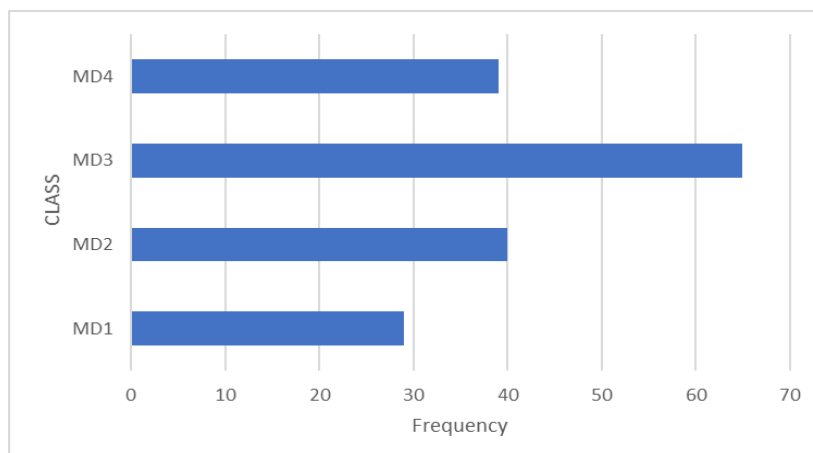


Figure 2. The Amount of Responses Received from Various Classes in the School

We had the highest responses from MD3

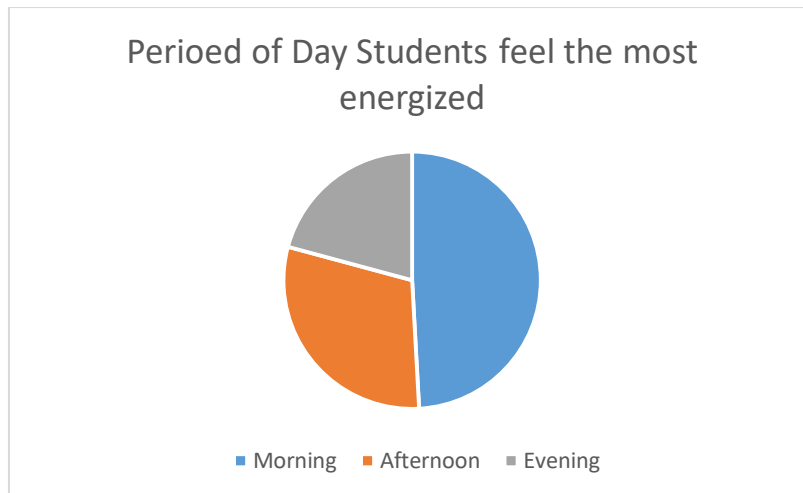


Figure 3. The Period of the Day Student's Feel the Most Energized

Many students stated feeling more energized during the morning class (49%) as opposed to afternoon classes which come in a close second, which is statically important.

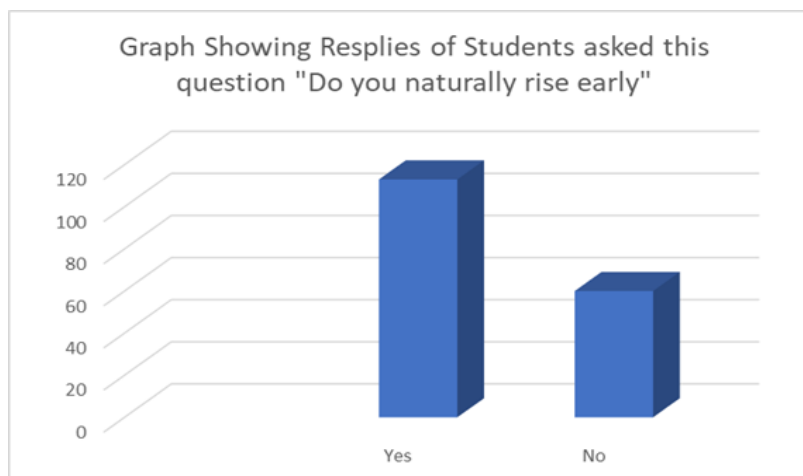


Figure 4. Number of Students who Rise Early in the Morning

When Students were tasked with the question "whether they rise early or not," as to determine the level of energy in the morning. Many responded to rising early in the morning (72%)

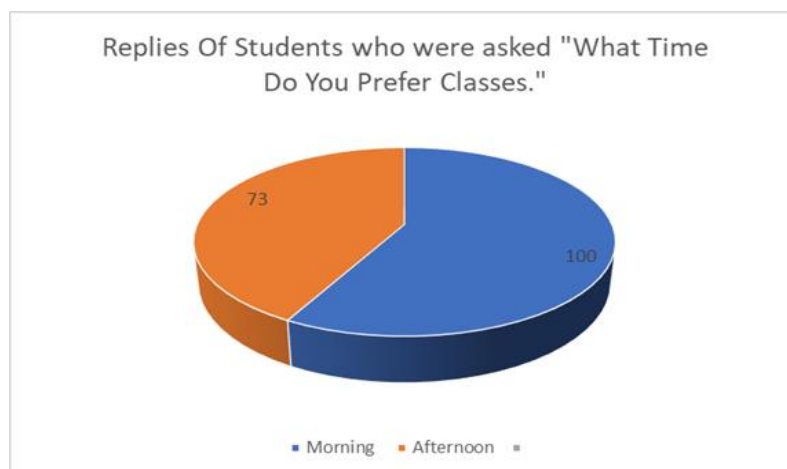


Figure 5. Period of the Day Students Prefer Classes

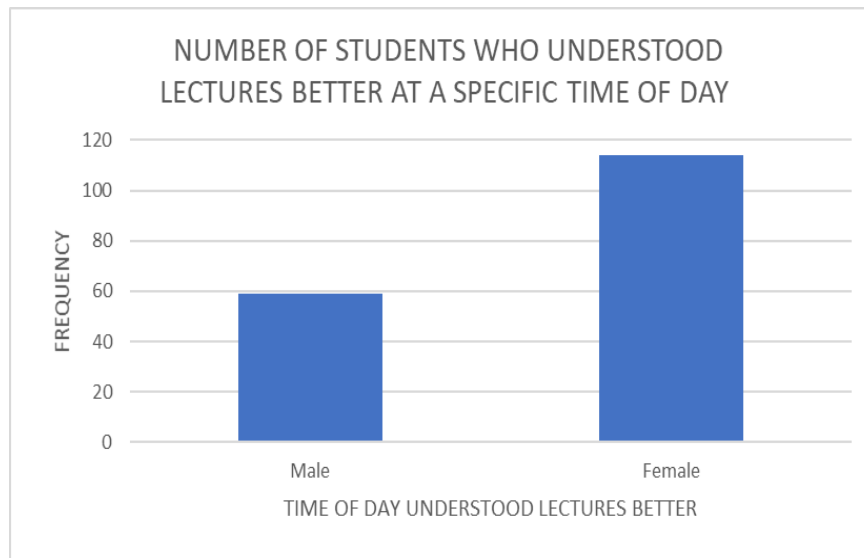


Figure 6. Number of Students who Understood Lectures Better at a Specific Type of Day

The majority of the students preferred Morning Lectures and stated that they understood lectures better in the Morning, which helps them in academic performance. A vast majority of students responded to being very

eager to participate in the morning class as opposed to participating in the afternoon classes, with about 14% stating very eager to participate during the afternoon lectures.

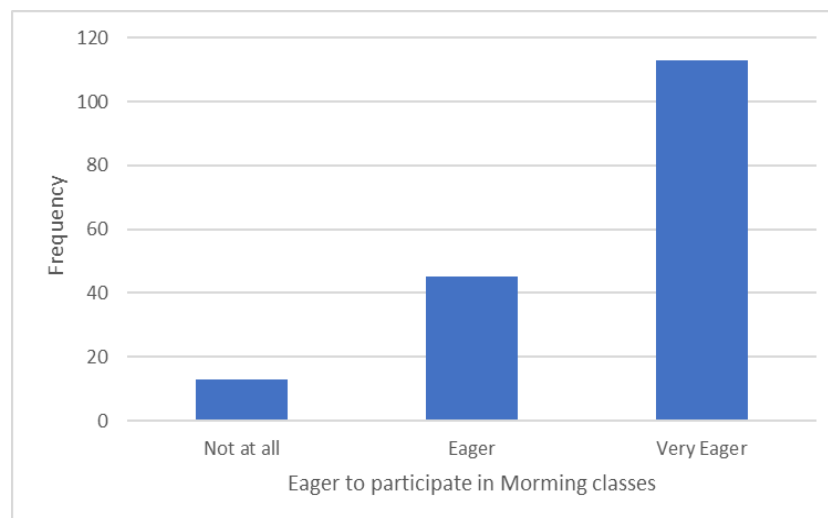


Figure 7. Number of Students Stating how Eager they are to Participate during Morning Classes

A large percentage of students are very eager to participate during morning classes indicating

their willingness of students to participate during morning classes.

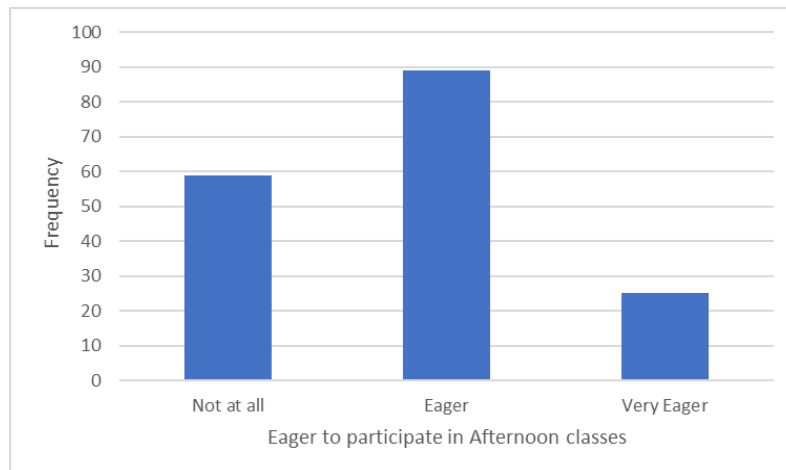


Figure 8. Percentage of Students Eager to Participate during the Afternoon Classes

A large response admitted to being eager to learn during the afternoon classes as opposed to the percentage of students who are very eager to

learn during the morning classes indicating swindling interest as the day goes by.

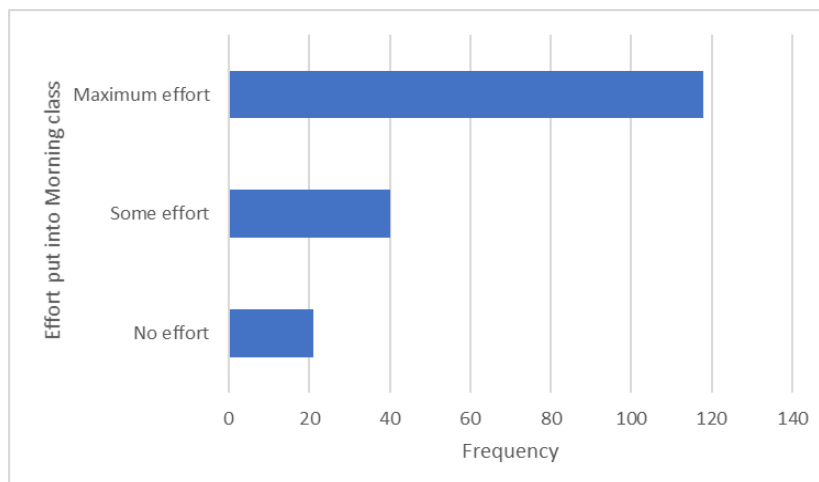


Figure 9. Frequency of Student's Effort during the Morning Classes

The majority of the students who participated in the survey admitted to the majority of their

effort into Morning classes (65%) as opposed to afternoon classes.

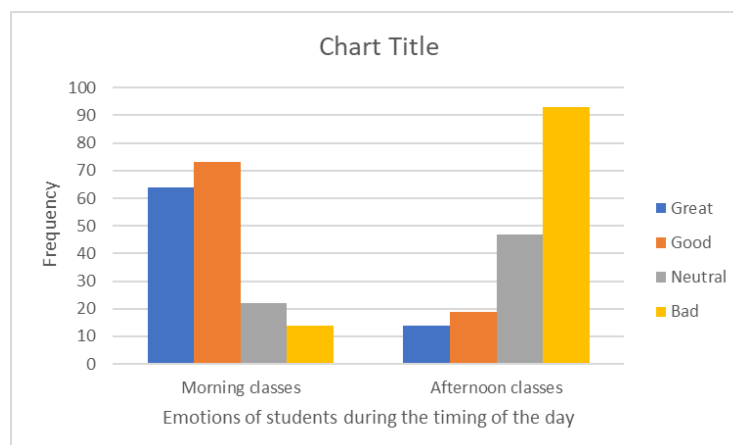


Figure 10. Various Emotions Students feel during the Morning Classes and Afternoon Classes

Taking into account the students' emotions on how they feel before and after classes during a particular period of the day. It was discovered

that the majority of the students feel Great before and after Morning classes as opposed to afternoon classes.

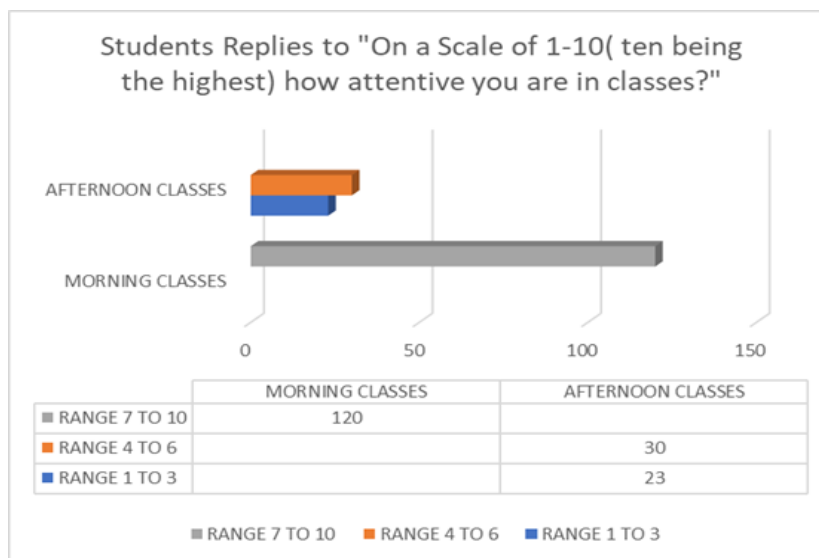


Figure 11. Distribution on how Students are Attentive during the Morning Classes

The Study shows Majority of students are more attentive during morning classes as opposed to afternoon classes.

Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was declared by the authors.

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