Advancing Online Student Experience in the Digital Era

Case Degree Programme in Aviation Business

Kaylin Ani

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences
Aviation Business
Bachelor Thesis
2024

Abstract

Author
Kaylin Ani

Degree
Bachelor of Business Administration, Aviation Business

Thesis Title
Advancing Online Student Experience in the Digital Era
Case Degree Programme in Aviation Business

Number of pages and appendix pages
55+ 15

The objective of the thesis was to find out what the aviation business online student experience is, and to recognize which elements have an impact on online student experience. The aim was to provide valuable information for Haaga-Helia's development purposes in aviation business degree programme within online education.

Traditional forms of education are experiencing a profound reshape due technological advancements, enabling access to higher education irrespective of one's location, time, or age. Educational forms aligned with the digital age, coupled with the emphasis on continuous learning, not only represent current trends but are also forecasted to be pivotal in the futures reshape. The purpose of University of Applied Sciences education is to provide social capital, foster a sense of independence, and equip students with sufficient skills and confidence to pursue future employment opportunities.

The conceptual framework consisted of both written and digital literature base, articles, and academic research. The data were collected by means of mixed research method. The benefits of the chosen method provided a multi-faceted approach to the research topic, enabling to capture interconnections within quantitative and qualitative areas. Background research was implemented to familiarize with the research topic, and to identify areas that required further investigation. The collected data were analysed with SPSS software, and the findings were visualized by implementing service design approach and tools.

The results indicated that main concern areas within online student experience were mainly related to time-management challenges. The findings suggested that intentions of quitting mainly occurred during the second and third academic study years, and that these often resulted due imbalance of work, family, and study combination. However, the results confirmed that there is no singular reason explaining online student experience. Flexibility in terms of the option to choose when and where to study was the most satisfying element within online student experience.

Future development aspects were aimed to advance online student experience within the identified online education concern areas. The focus concentrated on a student-centric approach and student skill assessment and development. Development suggestions were considered in the areas of time-management, future skill-building, student well-being and effectiveness in online education materials. Furthermore, skill developments were aimed to provide long-term relevance and to be utilized further on in students' personal and professional lives.

Key words
Digitalization, Online Education, Student Experience, Self-Management, Future Skills

Table of contents

1 Introduction

Fostering and elevating human skills and capacities via education, learning, and purposeful employment stands as a crucial catalyst for economic prosperity, individual well-being, and societal unity. The ongoing transition to a future labour landscape is characterized by continual arrival of emerging technologies, presenting numerous opportunities alongside challenges. Technological adoption dictates the disruptive changes within the next five years, highlighting the shortages of essential skills in human intelligence, and the transformation due to the human- machine frontier. According to statistics (WEF, 2023), 50% of employees need to re-educate themselves and learn new skills by 2025. Future of jobs report 2023 indicates that 44% of the current employee core skills will face significant changes by 2025, and that 23% of today's jobs will experience a total change. Re-skilling is under the responsibility of all stakeholders, influencing individuals, companies, industries, and societies. (WEF, 2023.)

According to futures estimates, the impacts of digitalization affect all industry sectors. This paper focuses on aviation business studies, preparing students especially for the expertise areas in the aviation industry. However, it is important to note that this degree programme also equips the students with a broader skill set, extending beyond the competence areas within aviation industry. Degree programme in aviation business features cross-functional elements, allowing students to apply their learnings to various aspects of their personal and professional lives. Overall, this unique BBA degree programme provides students with competencies and skills that are beneficial across wide range of different industry professions.

1.1 Background

The author's motivation for the thesis topic reasoned both from personal and professional interests. Topics and areas of interest included digitalization, and future related matters within future of work and future skills. The core elements discussed online student experience and matters included within the context. The author has a background in the aviation field, specializing in customer experience both on the ground, and up in the air. The industry experience encompasses various aspects, including airport environment and work with three different airlines. The core focus in both areas relies on the importance of customer-centricity. In today's experience economy, the creation of positive, memorable, and seamless experiences is the key to success in any business.

The author accomplished a personality strengths test before starting the thesis process, and the report confirmed and validated the author's interest areas. The received report helped in selecting the most suitable thesis type and provided clarity for the author's thesis plan and process. According to the author's strengths, motivations and natural tendencies, the thesis design concentrated

on both creative and analytical elements. Service design methods and tools were utilized in the thesis research design, emphasizing creative thinking and visual presentations. The report results indicated the author's preferences, areas of interest, and key factors influencing decision-making. The purpose of the test was to increase self-awareness, and to use it as a tool to navigate towards the thesis design in alignment with the author's characteristics. Followingly, the description of author's profile:

> ”You have an innovator and organizer profile. You prefer activities where you are able to put forward your ideas and show off your dynamic, enthusiastic, and independent spirit. You're not afraid of adventure and appreciate original and assertive ideas and concepts Your profile typically works best in activities related to organising cultural events and managing artistic projects. People with this profile know how to find original ideas without pushing too far against the rules or conventions.”

1.2 Objectives and Scope

The objective of the thesis was to find out what the aviation business online student experience is, and to recognize which elements have an impact on online student experience. The aim was to provide valuable information for Haaga-Helia's development purposes in aviation business degree programme within online education.

From sustainability approached objectives, the research topic is both appliable for current and future oriented timeframe. Online studies show constant growth; therefore, the results provide long-term relevance by maintaining the result significance over an extended period. Education has always been an important part of societies, and most probably it will be valued and recognized by its importance also in the future, especially when traditional education forms are under change.

When researching student experience, we must acknowledge that the topic is rather complex. There were challenges when capturing this research area since various elements do have an impact on online student experience related matters. Student experience is a broad concept, it is subjective and based on individual perceptions. The research scope is limited to Haaga-Helia's undergraduate aviation business online students in degree programme studies, and open path studies.

1.3 Structure

The thesis design in this report consists of six chapters. Firstly, beginning with introduction, secondly presenting theories of the changing landscapes of future skills and future of work. Chapter three explores digitalization related matters within higher education online studies. Chapter four presents the background research, and chapter five describes the research design and outcomes. Lastly, chapter six closures the thesis with conclusions and development aspects.

The background research was conducted using a mixed method survey, and its purpose was to help identifying the elements impacting online student experience. The survey was divided into three parts, first part discussed respondent background related questions (RQ1). Second part discussed student journey map related questions, identifying touchpoints in application -, onboarding -, and education stage (RQ2). Open-ended qualitative questions were created, as the aim was to gain deeper understanding regarding different elements impacting student experience (RQ3).

Table 1 describes the research structure, including theoretical framework and result chapters. Survey questions are utilized to solve the main research question: What the aviation business online student experience is, and which elements have an impact on online student experience?

Table 1. Overlay matrix (adapted from Peltonen 2017, 3)

Background research subquestions	Theoretical framework	Survey questions	Results
RQ1: What are the characteristics of a typical aviation business online student?	3.1, 3.2	1-10	5.2
RQ2: What are the online students' experiences in different stages of student journey?	3.3, 3.4, 3.5	11-23, 27	5.3
RQ3: What are the online students challenges and motivations?	3.3, 3.4, 3.5	24-26	5.3

2 Changing Landscapes of Skills and Futures Work

The aim of this chapter is to explore the future-related skills and work, and how these are aligned to student skills within online education. The nature of jobs and the skills needed in the future work field are highly impacted due digital advancements. Todays and futures skills are presented in this chapter through OECD's Learning Compass 2030, WEF's top 10 future skills, and the 7 skill areas within educational skills and the employability skills. Additionally, the ongoing cultural shift in the value of work is explained, as people seek more meaningfulness in what they are doing. Moreover, future success significantly relies on transformative skills. This means the ability to learn, unlearn, and to relearn new skills, as the pace of change remains constant.

2.1 Future Skills

Changing work landscapes due technological advancements is under discussion, and the dialogue reveals the fear of people losing their jobs as robotics and automation take the lead. In the future human and machine work in cooperation, as artificial intelligence and robotics are to help and fill the gaps of human work. Realistically said, work landscape has always been under change, and this has lighted the space to reform new jobs as new kind of needs have come to exist. One hundred years ago, 70% of the Finnish earned their living from agriculture, today the corresponding share is 2%, yet we are not in the middle of mass unemployment. The old jobs have been replaced with the new ones thanks to human intelligence and our ability to tackle problems and to learn new skills. (Varamäki, 2019,14-17, 51.)

What are you going to be when you grow up? This is an epoch-making question shrouded in a veil of trickiness, since according to estimations 85% of the jobs in 2030 do not exist yet. In the future, our children who are now completing their compulsory education, are possibly working in jobs that we have not yet even heard of. According to Varamäki, in the future people are qualified in various areas, possessing variety of different future skills. Work culture is under change and it is recommended to modify accordingly, as it can be a requisite for a career continuity. Moreover, the future does not just happen, in fact we are creating and designing it even at this moment. Although the vast changes around us are not solely based on individual decisions, the ability to design your own life is in the core of futures success. Today's higher education also shows cross-functional learning solutions and outcomes, as it emphasizes the importance in self-management skills. Due technological transformation, and constantly changing landscapes, people are more dependent on the ability of managing themselves. (Varamäki, 2019, 9-11.)

Self-management is presented numerously in different areas of future skill requisites. Individuals with well-developed self-management skills are often characterized to have a curious mindset and proactive approach in life. They are skilled with “life designer skills” as their attitudes include characteristics of resilience and adaptability. Self-management also includes the desire for constant self-development, and this is often implemented in a form of lifelong learning. This type of person is motivated and accountable in own actions and decisions. Navigation in life and decision-making is done through self-reflection where the development areas are identified and further improved. (Varamäki, 2019, 12.)

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published its Learning Compass 2030 to highlight common objectives for a better future and better lives. Future of Education and skills 2030 framework aims to guide students towards better wellbeing and to help them in recognizing the skills for succeeding in the middle of uncertainties. Vital competencies include knowledge, values, skills, and attitudes, all necessary in building individual wellbeing. Individual wellbeing is being built and promoted when one can set personal goals, self-reflect, and take responsibility of own actions. The skill foundation consists of basic skills, such as literacy and numeracy, as well as data and digital literacy. Moreover, socio-emotional skills, along with physical and mental health all contribute to holistic wellbeing. Today’s learners must adapt transformative skills and increase competencies in the thinking areas of adaptability and reflecting. Framework 2030 instructs and encourages learner of all ages as a global initiative to achieve a brighter future. (OECD, 2024.)

Learning Compass 2030 aims to guide educational systems towards curriculum design modifications, which provide improvement and solution suggestions to student wellbeing related questions. What are the skills, attitudes and values that today's students need? What kind of knowledge does it require for the students to successfully shape their world? How can educational systems develop these knowledge, skills, attitudes and values effectively? According to OECD’s framework, an individual well-being consists of life quality related factors, such as health, work-life balance, education and skills, social connections, and environmental quality. These build the sustainability of individual well-being over an extended period. Moreover, the individual wellbeing extends to the material conditions, such as income and wealth. OECD’s framework and UN’s Sustainable Development Goals alignment within education include areas of good health and wellbeing, quality education and gender equality. (OECD, 2024.)

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2023) the Future of Jobs 2023 Report indicates the top 10 future skills. The timeline for following skill relevance is estimated to maintain result significance between years 2023- 2027. (WEF, 2023.)

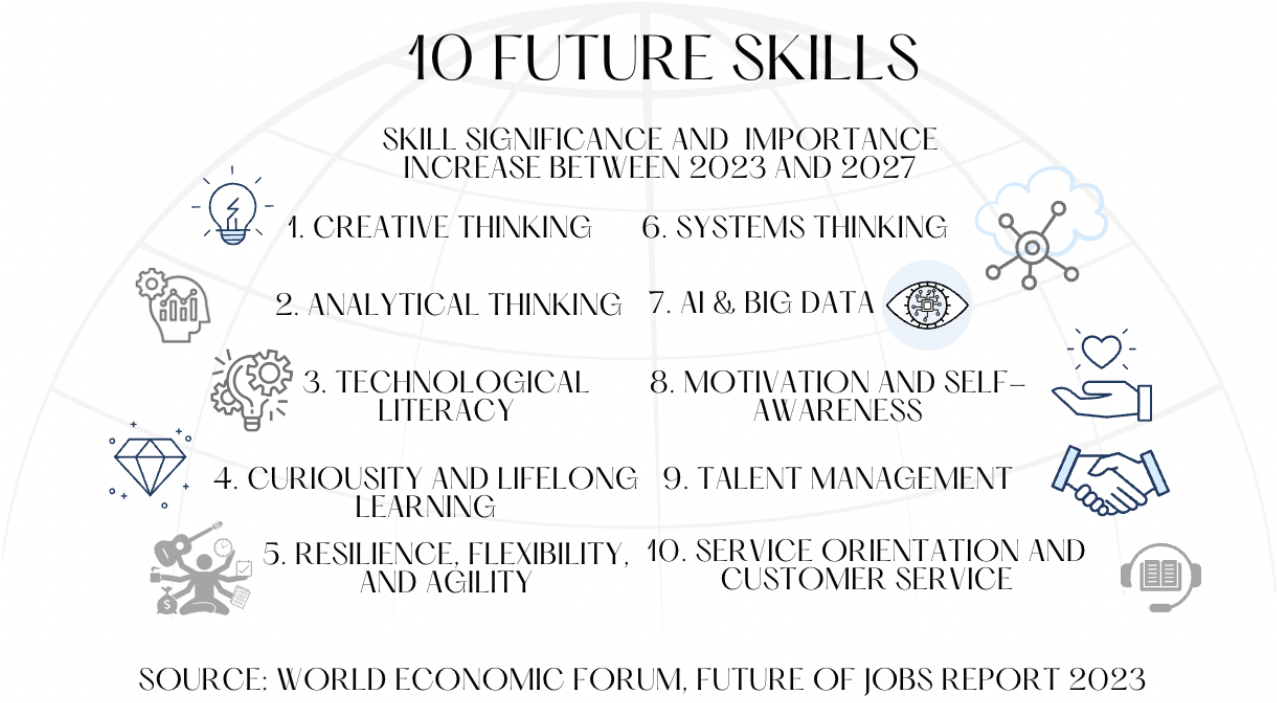


Image 1. Ten future skills (Design by author, contents based on World Economic Forum 2023)

Cognitive skills, including both creative thinking, and analytical thinking, translate to the ability for complex problem-solving skills, which are the most valuable skills to possess in the future of work. According to the report (WEF, 2023), analytical skills are the most prioritized ones in the organization's workforce development initiatives. Technological literacy is the third fastest growing core skill in the requirements of the future. Curiosity and lifelong learning are both crucial skills in the changes and uncertainties of our present-day societies. Resilience, flexibility, and agility are the beneficial characteristics to possess, as these skills show a rising trend and increase in importance. Systems thinking refers to the ability to solve problems. The focus lays in understanding the complexity of real-world systems including cross-functional elements. Knowledge in AI and big data are both highly valued skills in the world of work, today and especially in the future. Motivation and self-awareness are the key skills in self-regulation and self-reflection, both highly beneficial skills to possess. Talent management refers to strategic approach in which the skilled individuals are aimed to meet with the business needs. Successfulness in any given industry sector will be dictated by the performance level in customer service and service orientation. Having the ability to work with others, as well as skills in empathy, and active listening are crucial within the areas of engagement skills. (WEF, 2023.)

Morgan & Jaspersen (2022) describe that there is a mismatch between the graduate skill areas and the work skill requirements. They have identified that the “hard” theoretical skills are the ones mainly taught in the school, yet today there is a strong need for the soft skills. Soft skills are the ones that enable the students to manage themselves. According to employers and organisations, self-management skills are not taught in an effective way and study designs need to be modified towards the necessary future skills. The concept of the seven skill areas introduces practical implementation methods for the students to qualify accordingly to their future employer expectations. (Morgan & Jaspersen, 2022, 7.)

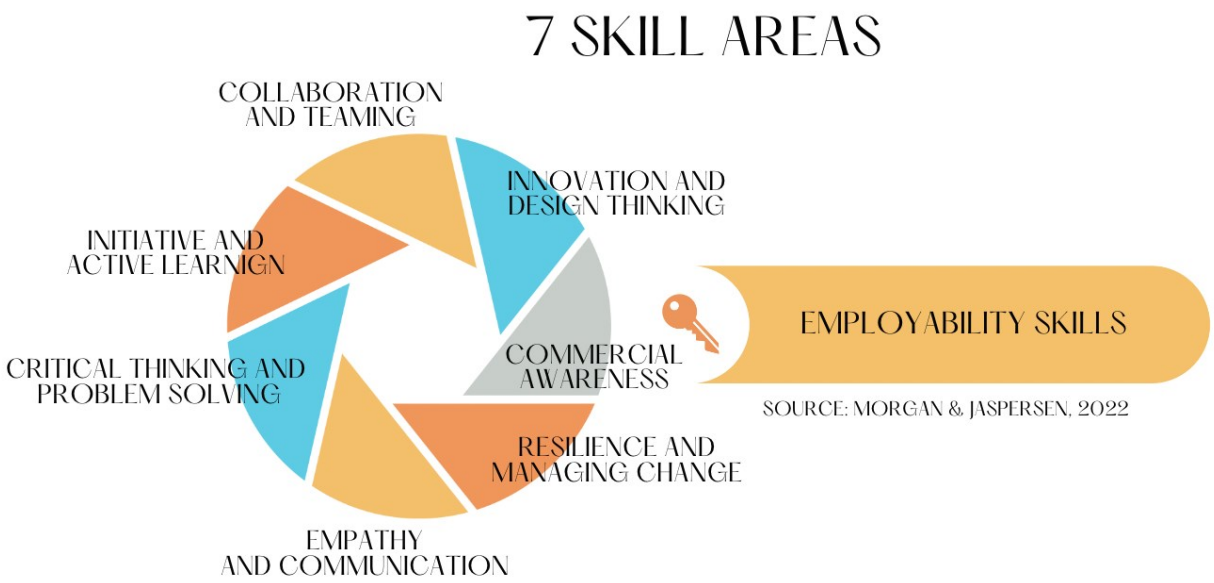


Image 2. Seven skill areas within employability skills and graduate skill gaps (Design by author, contents based on Morgan & Jaspersen 2022)

The main idea behind innovation and design thinking is the ability to solve problems, identifying unmet needs, and to understand opportunities, and then seek for solutions. Design thinking approach, tools and methods firstly concentrate on the problem, rather than the solution. Innovation defines into implementing new ideas, or further developed ideas in a new form. The solutions aim to deliver value by solving existing problems, or future-related problems. Innovation as added value seeks to find an improved version for already existing solution. Innovation can be seen as a strategic tool and a survival necessity within the constant change of landscapes. Types of innovation include products, services, processes, operations, and business models, and quite often these are connected to each other. (Morgan & Jaspersen, 2022, 8, 69-70.)

Collaboration and teaming define the ability to constructively work with others, highlighting the importance of emotional intelligence. For instance, diverse teams and different personal backgrounds require understanding, empathy, and communicational skills from each team member. Moreover, diverse teams tend to generate more fruitful ideas and outcomes, compared to teams having similar mindset and backgrounds. Additionally, teamwork requires organisational skills, including time-management and flexibility. (Morgan & Jaspersen, 2022, 8.)

Critical thinking and problem solving refer to interpreting circumstances, information, and given facts, and turning them into solutions. Complex and often abstract issues require skills in analytical thinking, this can include critical thinking and suggesting out of the box type of new ideas. Quite often, understanding the problem requires dedication and effort in digging deeper into the complexities in the given context. Commercial awareness, or business acumen, is about understanding the money flows, having the numerical knowledge, and how these impact the business. It requires realistic mindset, and understanding what is possible and what is product of a fantasy. Having an entrepreneurial mindset consists of two key factors; understanding how to balance costs with the income and understanding matters from customer's point of view. (Morgan & Jaspersen, 2022, 9.)

Empathy and communication refer to the ability to communicate effectively in an understandable way, according to different situations and circumstances. Communication aims to attract the attentions of a certain target audience. It requires among others emotional intelligence and having the ability to express given content in an effective way. Resilience and managing change are important skills when facing obstacles. Learning from mistakes, handling frustration and overcoming challenges are all relevant skills in the changing landscapes of today and in the future. Resilience is important, as it indicates person's skills in adaptability, meaning the ability to self-regulate. Initiative and active way of learning is both interactive and engaging. Learning from experience in decisions made, or problems solved and learning the new ways to learn, is a must today and in the future. Active learning is opposite to passive learning, where the information is given, or the instructions to do something are provided. Today, we must actively participate in continuous learning, and reflect the outcomes in our decision-making and problem-solving. (Morgan & Jaspersen, 2022, 9-10.)

Furthermore, assuming that plain degree is a guarantee for employments is false according to recruitment experts. Hard skills and great results may guarantee some professions; however, majority of employers wish to see the combination of attitude and aptitude. According to above presented list of skill areas, employers are expecting more than just intellectual properties, as they highlight the importance of other types of skills. These types of skills improve opportunities within employability, and these skills are learned by active doing and reflecting, not only by passively reading about them. (Morgan & Jaspersen, 2022, 3-4.)

2.2 Future of Work

The societal landscapes and different stages of economic development have been reshaping ever since the early pre-industrial society with its' raw muscle power. Previously work requirements included a strong healthy body and a piece of land for activities such as farming, or agriculture (Curedale, 2019, 18-20). Today we live in a society in which technology is an essentiality in any given industry. Digital transformation has significantly changed all industry sectors, services, and solutions. Digitalization has an extensive impact on businesses, people, devices, data, and products. Our daily lives and habits are influenced as humans are more linked to technology through devices, and this has become the new normal (Varamäki, 2019,16). According to SITA (2023), aviation industry is undergoing an enormous digital transformation, with automatization and digitalization increasingly gaining importance. (SITA, 2023.)

Social networks have evolved into digital environments in which people communicate, share and interact with each other (Varamäki, 2019,16). We, as human beings are physical creatures, yet today we live in a world where the digital and physical environments are linked together and it becomes more challenging to draw the line between these two. We are transforming towards to a society where we think digitally. Our habits and pillars of life are under change, as our physical and mental activity is moving towards digital environments. (Varamäki, 2019, 13-15.)

Mobile devices and applications are vital factors in terms of seamless passenger journeys. Especially within travel industry the passenger technology determinates the successfulness of a business. For example, airline mobile applications enable various functions, such as bookings, shopping, and flight details communication. Future of work requires skilled personnel for the design and development within the technology, as digital solutions keep on gaining significance. (SITA, 2023.)

The potential in artificial intelligence and robotics lies in the superpowers of human + machine combined work. The advantages supplement human intelligence and human work, by adding physical strengths from robotics and vast amount of memory and information storage. AI is affecting all industry sectors, and in the future, it will be more like a colleague for many more. Artificial intelligence is augmenting the human work, meaning that it complements human work in areas where needed. This is increasing the productivity as the works is done more effectively, resulting in increased profitability and overall wellbeing of personnel. (Varamäki, 2019, 46-51.)

Robots do not experience burnouts, nor do they have bad days. Therefore, many businesses find it attractive to utilize robotics for example, in warehouse settings, where strength and good memory storage is required. In the future, people need to serve longer working careers, and robotics might be one solution, when it comes to career continuation and coping with physical work. AI and robotics do not work alone, this is where the human intelligence comes along as it is people's job to program and "teach" them what, when and how to do. These are the areas where human intelligence is still required (Varamäki, 2019, 39-46). Moreover, technology is influencing the future of work within aviation flight operations among others. As mentioned in the future skills chapter, the discussion regarding robotics reveals a fear of people losing their jobs. In some parts this is the future reality, for example, unmanned cargo aircrafts have replaced the pilots in some companies due the technological advancements and effectiveness in operations. According to IATA, the future work roles and task distribution estimate which roles continue to be under the responsibility of a human, and where the technology and automatization take the lead. (IATA, s.a.)

In the landscape of digitalization, the number of data shows a constant growth. There are different types of data, such as big data and open data, and these have become valuable assets for many businesses. The data is precious asset and it has been described as the new currency of our time (Varamäki, 2019, 86). Advanced algorithms, machine and deep learning, chat GPT, all contribute to the increased amount of data, having both negative and positive impacts to us all. While benefitting from the data for example in decision making, the downside introduces the risks in cybersecurity, in terms of cyber-attacks, or improper use of personal information. (Varamäki, 2019, 75.)

Futures work will largely consist of virtual work, which is not attached to time, nor place. Platform working is gaining popularity, as for example, freelancers on different expertise areas market themselves in digital platforms and get employed through them. Entrepreneurship shows a rising trend, and more commonly this is combined as part-time entrepreneurship along with wage employment. (Hiltunen s.a.) For far more people, the future is already present. Organizations view the online learning as an effective tool to train personnel and to combat the future skills shortage. (WEF, 2022.)

"The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn". This profound statement encapsules Alvin Toffler's educational approach towards learning to learn in the world of tomorrow. The statement is not solely addressed to students but is intended for all who will experience the impacts of the future. As job roles and nature of work undergo disruptive changes, preparing for the future forms to be a continuous learning journey. (Forbes, 2022.)

3 Digitalizing Higher Education

The aim of this chapter is to explore higher education matters within the digital age. Firstly, the phenomenon of online education, and aviation business BBA studies are presented. Secondly, the characteristics of the non-traditional student profile are explained. The online student experience is described, highlighting the complexity within the definition ‘student experience’. The relevant elements are presented through common traits of human experience drawn from human psychology and behavioural sciences. Online education is explained from various perspectives, including its advantages and disadvantages, as well as the importance of online education design.

3.1 Online Education Phenomenon

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”, as famously stated by Nelson Mandela, describes the transformative power of education on humankind and humanity. Building prosperity via education creates work, economic growth, and provides the tools, resources, and knowledge to seek for better opportunities in life (UNESCO, 2024). The importance of education emphasizes the significance of equipping student with skills that align with future skills, and future of work. Higher education has a pivotal role in this narrative, requiring rapid adaptability to keep pace with the landscape shifts and transformations ahead. (Varamäki, 2019, 75-78.)

Remoteness has previously been viewed as exclusiveness for the rare, however, today this form of freedom can bring advantages for many more (Finell, 2021, 20). Higher education institutions (HEIs) aim to make a positive difference by development and improvement within the flexibility of online education environments. Increasing accessibility by eliminating entry barriers, strengthening student engagement and motivation, all impact on the core topic ‘student experience’. Moreover, there is no one size fits all model into this context. (Bracken, 2019, 1-2.)

The unique degree programme in aviation business is exclusively offered by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. The studies serve different student needs and promote continuous learning opportunities. Studies can be accomplished through a degree programme, or via open path studies. It is important to note that online studies include both online, and virtual course implementation types. Online courses include scheduled lectures and groupworks, and deadlines are prefixed for all students. Virtual courses on the other hand are accomplished fully independently and studies can be accomplished according to student’s own timetables. Open path students must apply degree student status after completing open path courses before they can graduate.

Aviation Business studies can be accomplished through:

1) Open UAS, online studies. The studies are mainly implemented as online studies, and the course assortments include both online and virtual courses. However, the students have also the possibility to participate in contact studies, if preferred.
2) Degree Programme, day studies. The studies are mainly implemented as contact studies. However, the students have the possibility to choose different course implementation types, such as online and virtual courses.

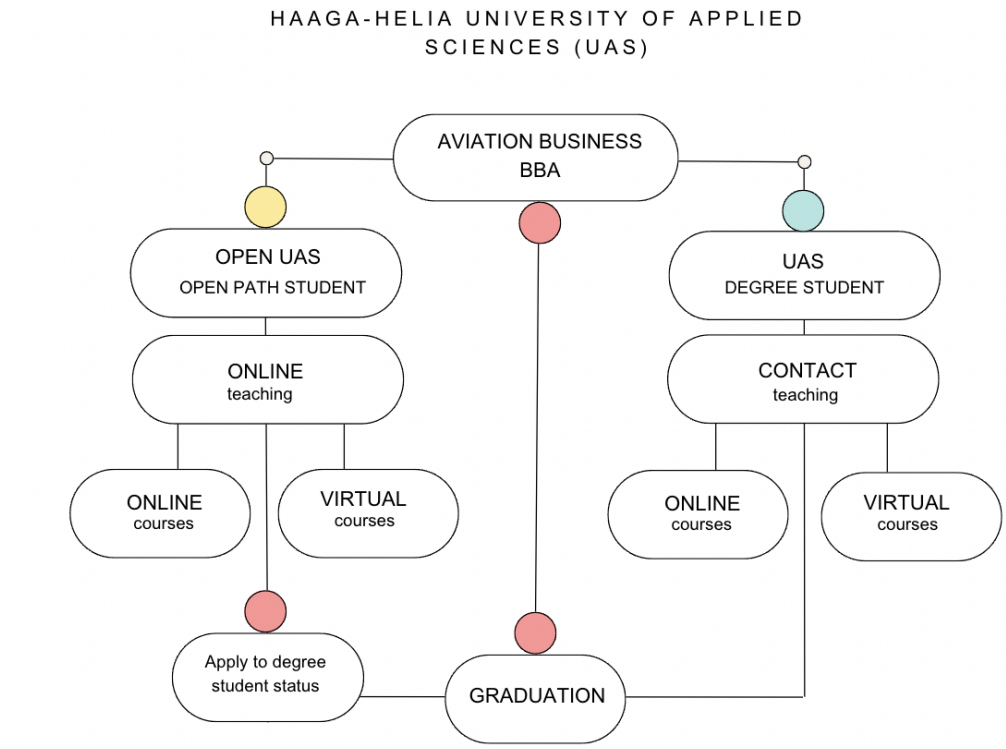


Image 3. Aviation business BBA education paths (Design by author, 2024)

E-learning, remote learning, online education, digital education, and distance learning, here are a handful of examples describing study forms in which the teaching and learning take place remotely, via internet connection. Online education is the faster expanding segment in the education industry. Since 2000, the online education has grown a significant 900% worldwide, as today the statistics represent 180 million people participating in an online education to learn new skills. Estimates indicate that by year 2026, the online education industry grows worldwide by 19% reaching the worth of 375 billion USD, compared to figures in 2021 worth of 315 billion USD. Online education is a global phenomenon and the statistics show constant growth in different parts of the world. (OE, s.a.)

Distance learning was firstly implemented in 1852 in a form of a shorthand correspondence course, when a teacher named Caleb Philipps promised to perfectly instruct and teach the student by mail. The lessons material was sent to the student on a weekly basis, and by completing the required assignments the students were admitted by a certificate. Over the decades the education expanded, and in 1923 it evolved into the International Correspondence School, by then the school had provided education to 2.5 million students. The revolutionary outbreak occurred in 1990s when the World Wide Web was released, which opened limitless opportunities for distributing information, as well as providing educational delivery platforms. (Ferriman, 2013.)

Today, online education assortments concentrates to variety of courses, and certificates as well as qualifications for bachelor's and master's degrees. Different sorts of paths to access studies are evolving offering the opportunity to approach education regardless of student's life circumstances or other personal barriers. Digital mobility has transformed the educational selling arguments into "study whenever you want, and wherever you want". Changes in student needs and preferences have an impact on the demand and supply of educational institutions. The future online education landscape will face more competition, and this will distinguish the adaptive one's from the non-adaptive education organizations. (Grant et al., 2019, 2-4, 8.)

The rise of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) in 2008 had a significant impact on the landscape of teaching and learning, as it offered an opportunity to access education opportunities for thousands of students. Students tend to prefer online courses rather than campus contact courses, as these bring the sense of flexibility of not being attached to time or location (Grant et al., 2019, 2). Although MOOCs provide an easy access, the dropout rates are up to 80-90% high. According to Hew & Cheung (2014), the challenges from the student point of view concentrated on two major issues: MOOC education quality and assessment of student work. Further reasoning for the identified challenges were expressed by having no one to reach when in need of help, failures in understanding the education material and content, and overall lack of support. (Hew & Cheung, 2014.)

The arrival of COVID-19 had an increasing impact on the online education popularity, yet the same identified challenges in online education remained unresolved. According to Aristovnik et al., (2023), to avoid dropping out the students' self-management skills needed strengthening, especially in the touchpoints when facing challenges, or circumstances when "being all alone". Although the benefits of online education flexibility, students need to be equipped with sufficient skills in self-regulation to proceed and to graduate from their online studies. By taking actions towards modifying course content and study design to more approachable, the student dropout rates proved to show a decreasing rate. (Aristovnik et al., 2023.)

3.2 Online Student Profile

Online students represent a unique student population, and it is important to acknowledge these elements in this certain student profile. In this paper, the online student profile has been identified to fulfill the criteria of nontraditional student. According to research (NCES, 2015), wide range of backgrounds and circumstances have been identified in the non-traditional student profile. The statistics enlighten the online student demographics, indicate that more women apply to online studies compared to men, and the most popular age-group represent 25-29 years of age. Often there are limitations in online students' lives which have guided towards the online studies. Half of the online student combine family life along the online study obligations, meaning that these students are married and have at least one child to take care of. Statistics also reveal that 40-60% of online students combine work responsibilities along their educational obligations. Compared to the traditional student profile, the criterion for the non-traditional student fulfills at least one of following criteria. (NCES, 2015.)

- Students who are working full-time.
- Students who are studying part-time.
- Students who have for some reason delayed their studies.
- Students who are approaching a second degree.
- Students who have gained some financial independency.
- Students who have at least one child under the age of 18 years.
- Student, who are single parenting.

Each student has a unique student profile, therefore there is no single explaining reason for applying to online education or pursuing an online higher education degree. Regardless of the students' key drivers for education, to succeed in the online studies, the students must be equipped with following characteristics. Having persistency and the skills in self-management are in the core of a successful online education journey. Successful online students can set goals, and when facing obstacles, they are not afraid to seek for help. They are organized, independent, and self-directed. Online students cannot purely rely on the traditional classroom support and teaching; therefore, this unique student profile requires extra support from academic advisors, and other supporting platforms to ensure a smooth student journey. (Phillpott, 2022.)

Skills assessment is also in the core of the online student success. Each student is different; therefore, it is important to monitor student's skills in different phases of online student journey throughout the online education. Additionally, with the continuous increase of an online student enrolment, they may no longer be described as non-traditional students. In the future, this trend could establish the new norm, making the online student profile standardized and commonplace. (Phillpott, 2022.)

Aviation industry itself has certain characteristics, which impact the nature of aviation business online student profile. Aviation industry operates around the clock, and most of the aviation business online students already work in the industry. Therefore, flexibility in terms of education implementation is a must. Meeting the student needs within the challenges of aviation industry characteristics is an important factor within online student experience.

For the last approximate one hundred years, the nature of aviation industry has been cyclical and highly sensitive to external factors, such as global crisis and market economy shifts. The entire industry is prone to complexities, as the dynamics and the operational environment includes nonstop rivalry and challenges. Aviation industry is dominated by influencing factors, such as demand and supply, global economy and GDP, volatility of jet fuel prices, and unusual occurrences such as terrorist attacks. Besides above mentioned, the business is also challenged by flight operation risks, human error, contaminated food, cyber risks, and digital and technical disruptions. Complex business surroundings, image and brand reputation, and customer engagement are elements that are highly vulnerable, and at the same time highly important for the business. (Samunderu, 2019, 7-19.)

Additionally, gender equity imbalance in the aviation industry is constant, with female representation remaining rather low. The International Air Transport Association (IATA) launched the 25by2025 global initiative to address this issue and enhance gender balance within the industry. For instance, in 2022 the representation of females in senior leadership positions increased to 28%, indicating +4% increase from 2021. However, the representation of female pilots remained only at 5%. Despite the efforts made, gender equity improvement remains a challenge. A recent study in 2024 further highlights the prevalence of male dominance in pilot roles, indicating that males are favoured over females for these positions. This underscores the ongoing challenge of addressing gender disparities in the industry. (IATA, 2023.)

3.3 Online Student Experience

Student experience, often abbreviated as SX, is the holistic perception formed by students throughout their interactions within education. It encompasses various touchpoint along student journey, shaping their emotions, perceptions, and expectations. In essence, it's about crafting journeys that leave students feel valued and satisfied. Understanding student experience is important as it guides towards the efforts that should be made to guarantee student satisfaction. Evaluating the student experience is a valuable part in education, its' aim is to make sure that the student needs have been met, and expectations fulfilled. It is important to note that the student journeys are multi-faceted, therefore it is essential to delve into various stages in student journey, as this provides effective and reliable results. Various studies show that student experience is measured within certain academic year, however it important to note that student journey extends beyond certain academic year and that student experiences change. As time goes by, people's attitudes and perceptions encounter new dimensions (Rincon & Acosta, 2023). It is important to notice that student needs change over time, for instance, pandemic with its mega- and meta-trends had a significant impact on student behaviour, as it increased the demand in online education. (Aristovnik, et al., 2023.)

Despite the casual use of term student experience (SX), there is no official definition explaining the nature and element included into student experience. Various research examines student experience, student satisfaction, and student engagement, yet the dilemma remains, as there is no consensus within the definition. Although the evaluations of student experience are much needed, it is rather challenging as different research examine student experience related areas accordingly to their own set elements (Matos, Rusu, Cano, 2021). According to research of McKinsey (2021), to fully understand the student needs and the student experience, it takes several years to gather information, and to take further actions in online education redesign. (Child et al., 2021.)

According to Research Handbook on the Student Experience in Higher Education, the term 'student experience' is defied differently among various stakeholders. The critique challenges the concept definition, as it is not possible to define singly one, or general definition of student experience. Students are all different, and so are their educational institutions, and study programmes. The authors argue that the crucial elements in student experience should focus on student learning and objectives of higher education. Further on, the facets of student experience that have an impact on the learning provide another perspective to the context. (Kahu & Baik, 2023.)

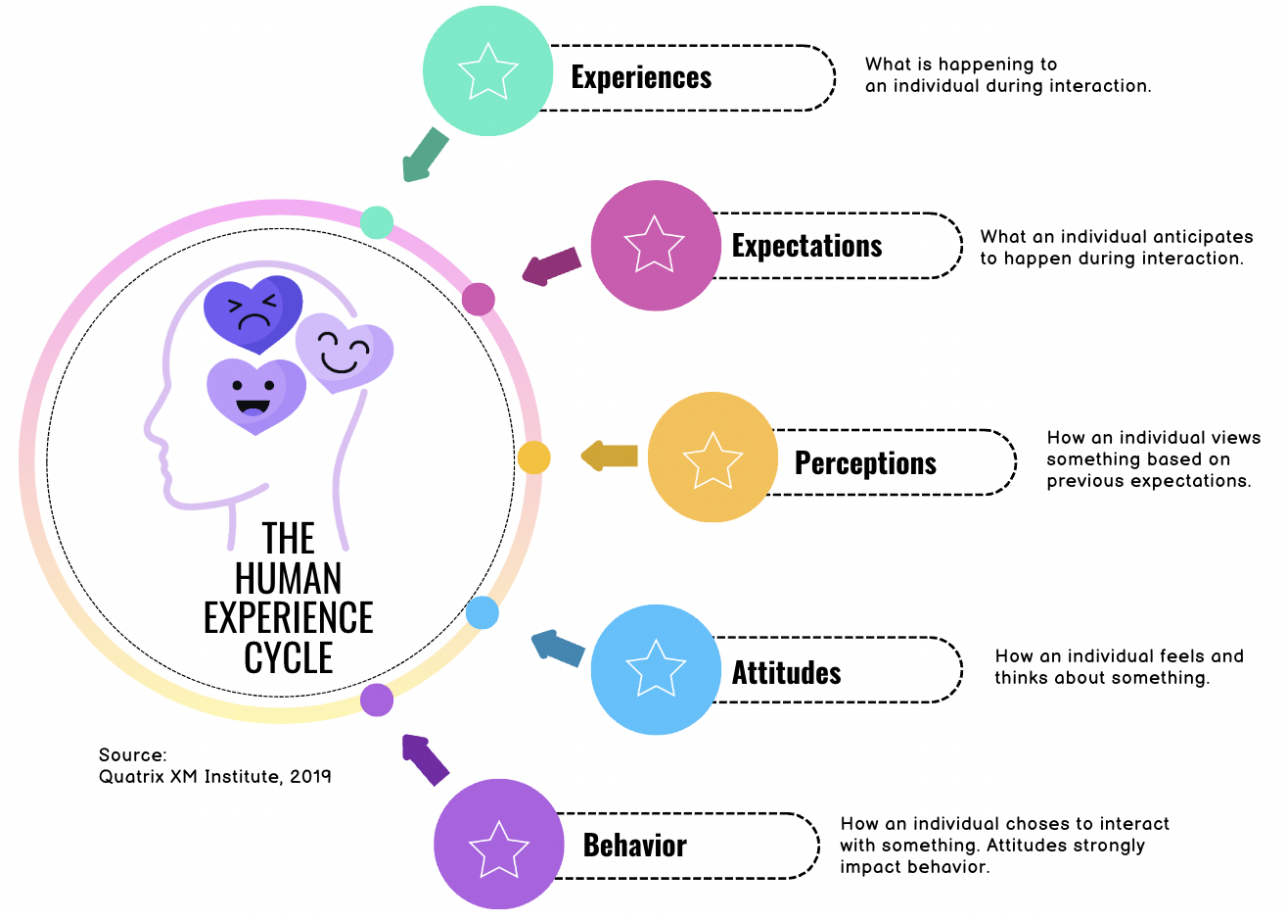


Image 4. The human experience and its five influencing factors (Design by author, contents based on Quatrix XM Institute 2019)

To get a closer look at the context of student experience, we must firstly introduce ourselves with the basics of human behaviour. Experience Management (XM) roots its scientific approach from human psychology and behavioural sciences, and it explains why and how people act the way they do. People's emotions, thoughts, their backgrounds, all shape the way how they experience in their lives. Attitudes affect behaviour, which are followed by the subconsciously learned patterns. This is influencing how we tend to react in different situations. Human beings are highly complex, and often our behaviour is impacted by cognitive biases. However, there are scientifically proved common traits in human behaviour, and by acknowledging these, it is possible to achieve better understanding of how people's experiences are formed. (Zdatny, 2020.)

Present-day uncertainties and constant change do have an impact on students in variety of means. Therefore, it is crucial to ponder student related matters, and precisely, the key factors impacting student success and failure. In higher education, students are all adults, they do have a will to learn and study through their own volition. According to Barrett (2007), a will is the most significant asset in education. Secondly, having the ability to make commitments is crucial in student success,

one must commit to make the time for studying. Furthermore, students are often setting themselves into the time horizon, they do dedicate their time for study in return of something better in the future. Study motives and student experience reason from multiple different angles, as both internal and external factors have an influence. However, today's students no longer view the learning as a purely rational thing in terms of technical skills, or diploma. Education is expected to provide meaningfulness, experience, and added value to students lives. Student persistence is heavily forced by personal challenges. Goal setting and persistence commit students to their projects or graduation, even in times of uncertainties. (Barnett, 2007, 1-18.)

3.4 Online Education Advantages and Disadvantages

Technological innovation, increased accessibility, flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and online education quality and qualification all contribute to the growing momentum of online education. Along with online education growth, the potential benefits and associated challenges are profoundly influencing our educational landscape.

Digitalization: Technological developments have increased the power in computing devices, making them smaller, faster, and more effective. Online education environments show constant advancements, providing platforms and programs with high-quality content, and well-functioning study solutions. Due technological advancements it easier for institutions to deliver interactive and engaging learning environments. High-quality educational content, both online and offline, enables to deliver a smooth and innovative learning experience, which ultimately has a direct effect on student experience. Technological advancements reform online education by emphasizing the skills in digital literacy, which is an essential competence within the future work. (Varamäki, 2019, 17, 79.)

Accessibility: Online education provides an opportunity for people to access learning resources from anywhere. Internet breaks down the geographical barriers and allows individuals to study at their own pace. It serves varied types of student needs, considering people with e.g., disabilities, or other responsibilities in life. Significant portion of online learners concurrently balance work commitments with their studies. Today's online education approaches are designed to accommodate individuals who are employed, have family obligations, or occupy with other life circumstances. Additionally, the number of international online students show a rising number due globalization and digitalization. Challenges are met due distraction, or e.g., simultaneous multitasking during studying. Additionally, easy access and exit barriers tend to have a negative impact on students' study performance by increasing the dropout rates. (Grant, 2019, 2.)

Flexibility: Online education offers greater flexibility in terms of schedules, and allows students to balance their studies with work, family, and other commitments. According to Oxford online students, 84% of respondents replied to enjoy the flexibility in online studies, and 81% of respondents preferred online studies because of the ability to study according to own schedules (OE, s.a.). Although the flexible nature of online education, far often students are challenged due the lack of time-management skills. According to research (Nawrot, 2014), online courses should include tools for time usage optimalization by introducing sufficient knowledge and skills for time-management. Often, the main reason for discontinued and uncompleted online courses is found in time-management failures within online education implementation. (Nawrot, 2014.)

Cost-effectiveness: Online education often eliminates the need for transporting and the campus related expenses. The working spaces, and the importance of a physical building or presence in educational institution is under change. For instance, the Competence Campus in the city of Vantaa is built to solve different topical challenges, and to serve variety of user needs. The campus area includes both physical and digital education environments, serving different users at different times. This type of solution concentrates on space as a service concept, meaning that the facilities are rented out based on the user needs. The motivations behind Competence Campus are based on various sustainability matters, such as shared use, efficiency in operations, environmental factors, and operational savings (Vantaa, 2024). Additionally, some educational institutions operate fully online, as an example, the International University of La Rioja online university. (UNIR, s.a.)

Eco-friendly: Carbon dioxide emissions produced by educational purposes mainly consist of travel and campus related operations. According to research (Caird et al., 2015), energy consumption in online education can be decreased up to 88% when compared to traditional campus education. Online education is energy efficient, however, the research indicated potential improvements in online education. These improvements consider ICT energy consumption, and paper handouts (Caird et al, 2015). Traditional campus education usually requires printed material, this increases the natural resources consumption. For instance, producing a page of A4 requires 2- 13 liters of water, depending on the paper specifics (The World Counts, 2024). Travel is the largest contributor in CO2 emissions when it comes to student transportation and car commuting. United Nation’s 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) consist of 17 subdivisions, all aiming to achieve a common goal of a better present and future. SDG13 is focusing on taking urgent actions to combat climate change and its impacts, and this has also challenged educational institutions to take part in the sustainability objectives. (UN, s.a.)

Lifelong Learning: Online education is a significant enabler in the context of lifelong learning. United Nation's Agenda 2030 includes a goal for lifelong learning, enabling and promoting education opportunities for all (UN, s.a.). According to Sitra (2021), the foundation of Finnish prosperity and competitiveness lies in intellectual skills. Lifelong learning should be attainable for individuals at various stages of life, empowering them to develop and enhance their capabilities. Lifelong learning serves as an enabler for re-skilling, fostering intellectual growth while also improving life satisfaction among individuals (Sitra, 2021). Due to political changes in Finland, the objective in lifelong learning is challenged, as the financial support in adult education is to be discontinued. Due changing landscapes in workforce re-skilling is highly needed, yet the conflict between political changes and lifelong education objectives remain a challenge. (Sinervo, 2024.)

Quality and Qualification: As online education became more prevalent, institutions began to develop standards and guidelines to ensure the quality of online programs, which helped to increase trust and acceptance of online certificates and online degrees. Today, online education degrees are more recognized in the field of work. Additionally, the prospective students view the education accreditation as the primary reason for selecting and applying to studies. (OE, s.a.)

Communication: Lack of physical face-to-face interaction bring new dimensions to online education elements. Challenges are met due to the isolative nature of online education. Humans as social creatures tend to long for the company of others, while this has a positive impact on people's well-being. Although not actively interacting, already the presence of others in the same space works as an enhancing element impacting individual wellbeing (Varamäki, 2019, 22). An adaptive implementation in study design acknowledges the need for effective communication, including social and relationship capital building. Communication, socializing, and networking skills should not be mistakenly regarded as non-academic skills belonging outside the online education area. Positive experiences in communication build towards stronger student engagement. (Grant et al., 2019, 6.)

Health: The overall purpose of education is to advance individual well-being and to provide skills applicable to all aspects of life. According to WHO, health is a complete physical, mental, and societal well-being, not the absence of disease or fragility. Various studies confirm that education has benefitting impact on health, as increased knowledge tends to direct us towards smarter decision-making and to cope better in life. Education is also one of the most important factors in preventing marginalization. Due correlation between health and education, the educated ones tend to live longer and healthier lives and this has a benefitting influence from the individual, societal and global perspective (WHO, s.a.). Online education has faced criticism due passive nature of working, and poor working ergonomics might cause health problems. (Krishna & Adalarasu, 2022.)

3.5 Online Education Design

Design plays a pivotal role in the online education. It can be divided into two main areas: user experience design (UX), and user interface design (UI). User interface defines into digital touchpoints of human-computer interactions and communication in the digital environments. These touchpoints have become a natural part of our everyday lives. We are no longer paying active attention, or making conscious decisions when using digital services, such as applications, or study platforms. Today's digital services are easy to use, and there are no advanced technical skills required. Already by possessing a smartphone enables various activities in different digital environments. (Varamäki, 2019, 16.)

The purpose of design is to create technical functions that serve user needs effortlessly, and that navigating in the user interface is easily comprehended. User friendly functions follow common patterns, trusting the intuitive human behavior, in which extensive instructions for the interface usage are not needed. Addition to functional elements, aesthetic factors pay a pivotal role in the user experience. The objective in UX and UI is to create a digital service that is effective and enjoyable to use. Today's platform economy is about creating digital environments that serve the user needs by making their everyday lives easier. (Mäkinen, 2016.)

An example of online education design is found in a form of an e-book. In Estonia, an advanced solution of e-textbook provides an opportunity for students to experience interactive learning methods. This type of study design enables quick navigation, highlighting and commenting, and an option to add own materials into the study pages. It contains interactive materials, such as videos and animated images, and AI assisted materials are recommended for further educational purposes. E-textbook is adaptable in any device, and the assignments completed are automatically corrected, as these provide instant feedback for the student. (OECD, 2020.)

Horila's pedagogically effective digital study material criteria consist of 11 subdivisions. Horila's criteria framework is created based on the research results of Nielsen's (1993) usability principles in learning, and Jonassen's (1995) significance in learning. (Horila, 2002.)

Nielsen's theory of five subdivisions ensures a high degree of usability in the final user interface. These subdivisions form the foundation of Nielsen's usability principles, as presented in his guidebook on usability engineering and its methods. By acknowledging these five subdivisions the study design improves learnability, efficiency, memorability, error-reduction and satisfaction, ultimately enhancing the overall student experience (Nielsen, 1994, 26). Jonassen's theory of seven subdivisions ensures the significance in learning. By emphasizing these seven subdivisions, educators can create learning environments that promote active engagement, meaningful construction of

knowledge, collaborative interaction, contextual understanding, thoughtful discussion, and self-awareness, ultimately fostering significance in student learning experiences. (Jonassen, 1995, 60-63.)

According to Horila (2002), creating a universal guideline for online education implementation and development purposes is challenging, yet not impossible. He reminds that improvements need to be considered due to the constant changes in the educational and societal landscapes. When Horila's digital study material criteria were released in 2002, the research was in the early stages, and overlaps were observed. At that time, the objective weas to utilize the criteria addressed to primary school materials, and further on in adult education, and finally, to serve work life requirements. Following framework works as criteria for pedagogically effective digital study material. (Horila, 2002.)

- Learnability: The material should be easily understandable and conducive to learning.
- Graphic layout and simplicity: Clear and visually appealing presentations advance comprehension and reduce cognitive load.
- Technical and pedagogical usability barriers: The material should be accessible and navigable without the need for technical or pedagogical instructions.
- Motivation: The content should actively engage and motivate learners to participate in the learning process.
- Applicability into different study designs: The material should be adaptable to various instructional designs and learning contexts. Additionally, it should adapt to different study designs alternatives, and to suit different student needs.
- Hardware environment usability: Compatibility with various hardware devices and environments ensure accessibility for all learners.
- Sociability: Social interaction and collaboration opportunities enhance learning outcomes and increase learner engagement.
- Interactivity: Interactive elements promote active engagement and facilitate a deeper understanding of the material.
- Goal orientation: Clear learning objectives and goals provide guidance for learners and facilitate the tracking of progress.
- Value creation: The material should offer value to learners, contributing to their personal and professional development.
- Effectiveness: The material should demonstrate effectiveness in achieving desired learning outcomes and improving learner performance.

Image 5. The twelve elements of an effective online education material (Design by author, contents based on Horila 2002)

Although the undisputed benefits of flexibility and freedom in remote learning, the education design continues to place challenges. Certain elements, such as sense of presence, behavioural aspects, and face-to-face interaction, cannot be identically shaped into digital format (Finell, 2021, 21). Remoteness can also have a negative impact on online student experience. For instance, physical isolation from others can cause an absence of emotional and social interaction, causing a feeling of disconnection, which might also impact on student's study performance. Promoting students' sense of presence is important, as according to Chang & Chien (2022), the outcomes improve student motivation and increase student engagement. (Chang & Chien, 2022.)

4 Background Research

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the mixed research method utilized in the thesis. Background research is a small-scale study conducted to assess the feasibility of measuring student experience through an online survey. Its purpose is to familiarize with the subject area and to gain deeper understanding of online student experience. Background research helps to identify student characteristics, touchpoints within the student journey, and the motivations and challenges faced by students. As mentioned previously, the definition ‘student experience’ is rather complex, and there is no consensus within the elements included into the context. Background research assists in identifying potential issues when researching student experience, and highlights the areas requiring further investigation, or more effective methods for student experience measurements.

4.1 Mixed Method Approach

Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods increase research credibility. Relying on single research method may result in limited results and increase the risk of research bias. Combined research methods decrease the risk of generalization, for instance, utilizing solely quantitative data might provide statistical and static data, yet it might not capture the in-depth qualitative aspects. The benefits of mixed research methods complete the overall picture of the research topic, as providing multi-faceted approach enables to capture interconnections within the research area. (Spratt et al., 2004.)

Quantitative research provides answers to ‘how’ related questions. Research uses mathematical methods and it can be quantified. The aim of quantitative research is to provide findings that can be generalized. Usually, sample size in this type of method is large. Based on results, conclusions are drawn and generalized to a larger population in the context of the research area. Quantitative data is often perceived objective and easier to analyse; therefore, it is perceived more reliable compared to qualitative data. Challenges include the difficulty in controlling the respondent environment. Research methods are static and structured, and do not interact with the real world, and modify along the changes. (Curedale, 2016, 73.)

Qualitative research provides answers to ‘how, and why’ related questions and the research nature is descriptive. The aim is to find out patterns in behavioral matters, or characteristics within research category. Open-ended questions are a form of qualitative data, as these express respondents’ feelings, thoughts, and reasons explaining their behavioural matters. Challenges include concerns with validity, as the data is subjective. Respondent might behave differently compared to what told, and it is challenging to repeat the research. Experience related matters are not easily generalized, as human experiences are always subjective. (Curedale, 2016, 71.)

4.2 Reliability and Validity

Finnish National Board on Research Integrity has published the guidelines of good scientific practice and procedures on research regarding ethical and quality matters. These guidelines aim to supervise in research practices, procedures and publications. The main objective is to preserve the best interests of science and research, and guarantee its credibility, reliability and validity. (TENK, 2012.)

The aim in scientific research is to establish content that present results that encompass trustworthiness and transferability. Research credibility in quantitative research is measured by validity, referring to accuracy and correctness, and reliability, referring to consistency and repeatability. Validity means that the research methods are correctly indented to provide results to research questions, or research objectives. Reliability means that the research results can be tested, and that the similar result are found when repeating similar research. (Middleton, 2023.)

The objective of the thesis was to find out what the aviation business online student experience is, and to recognize which elements have an impact on student experience. The similar setting for this research repeatability is close to impossible to create. Time has passed and many of the survey respondents have either progressed with their studies, or they have graduated. According to Rincon & Acosta (2023), it important to note that student journey extends beyond certain academic year and that student experiences change. As time goes by, people's attitudes and perceptions encounter new dimensions and student needs change over time. (Aristovnik, et al., 2023.)

The survey link was sent to the aviation business students, both open path and degree programme, total of 150 students. The survey was sent to the students with the help of academic advisor of the aviation business degree programme. Although the advisor's help, the survey respondent rate was rather low, out of 150 possible respondents, solely 20 % responded, summarizing into 30 survey responses. Small sample size in quantitative research may affect the research reliability and validity, consequently influencing the overall research credibility.

Subquestion nr. 12 "Have you applied to Haaga-Helia's online studies (online/ virtual courses?)" served as a control question, confirming that respondent had experience within online studies. The purpose was to prevent false information leaking into the survey data from respondents who lacked online study experience. In case of respondent response "No" the survey came to an end, since the focus of this study was specifically on researching student experience within online studies. The question statement had a clarification of online studies referring to courses that have either virtual or online implementation type. Despite this clarification, some students have responded 'no'. Moreover, according to the academic advisor of the aviation business degree programme,

especially the second- and third-year students all have experience within online studies. The ones who responded “No” were mainly second- and third-year students. Additionally, the academic advisor noted that only the first-year students may lack in experience within online studies. Therefore, there may be a bias in the comprehension of the question. The author recommends having a critical interpretation on the results of question 12, as respondents may not have paid sufficient attention on the question comprehending. SPSS analysis tool revealed contradictory findings when analysing respondent data, therefore some parts of the research are recommended to be viewed with criticality. The author acknowledges the challenge of controlling the respondents’ concentration levels, or respondent environment during survey participation.

4.3 Conducting the Survey

The online survey included both quantitative and qualitative methods, as the aim was to reach for in-depth understanding within student experience. Mixed research method was the most suitable approach in terms of reaching for the research objectives. Quantitative research method was mainly chosen due its reliable nature, while qualitative research method was chosen for its descriptive elements. For the supporting purposes, the author participated to quantitative survey online course at the same time during the thesis writing process. The survey link was opened on 27th of October and closed on 12th of November 2023.

Webropol survey was created with careful consideration with the data analysis part, as the questions were created to be compatible with SPSS software analysis tool. Webropol online survey was addressed to undergraduate online students in Haaga-Helia’s aviation business degree programme. The survey was divided into three parts, first part discussing respondent background related questions (RQ1). Second part discussed student journey map related questions, identifying different touchpoints in application -, onboarding -, and education stage (RQ2). Open-ended qualitative questions were created, as the aim was to gain deeper understanding regarding different elements impacting student experience (RQ3). Furthermore, open-ended questions were added since solely prescript survey might narrow and delimit information by restraining the outcomes of rich and relevant feedback.

The objective of the thesis was to find out what the aviation business online student experience is, and to recognize which elements have an impact on online student experience.

Research subquestions were created to guide and limit the research focus area:

- RQ1: What are the characteristics of a typical aviation business online student?
- RQ2: What are the online students’ experiences in different stages of student journey?
- RQ3: What are the online students’ challenges and motivations?

A well-implemented survey forms the core of an empirical research, featuring a clear layout, introductory foreword, and cover letter. The language used in survey is clear, avoiding jargon or overly professional terminology. The survey is advised to keep short, and quick to fill in. Asking one question at a time and beginning with easy questions is recommended. Answering options must have an option for every respondent, or the possibility to leave an empty- option. Poorly created survey does not meet the research conditions, consequently, this might negatively impact the research credibility. Answering alternatives were placed on a scale of 1-5, as the number increased along with the answering alterative positivity. Mid-point represented answering alternative number 3., indicating neutral opinion, neither agree nor disagree attitude. Negative statement among positive statements is considered as control question, and the purpose of this kind of question is to measure research reliability. (Toepoel, 2016.)

The question layout is formed short, succinct, unambiguous, and simple. Form of conversation follows a certain pattern, placing similarity in statement and answering alternatives. In other words, the survey continuation follows a consistent manner. Double-statement questioning should be avoided. For example, asking quality and efficiency related matters in the same sentence, as it can impact research reliability. Sentences should not include exaggerated words, such as ‘all, never, ever, always’, as these are considered leading questions, and these might create response bias. Side sentencing should also be avoided. Additionally, it is recommended to maintain neutral language and non-prejudiced attitude. (Toepoel, 2016.)

5 Research Design and Outcomes

The aim of this chapter is to present the research design and the background research findings by utilizing service design approach and tools. The chosen mixed method enables statistically robust quantitative survey data, and deeply human-centred qualitative elements. The benefits of this holistic approach provide in-depth insights and powerful communication through visual tools, including infographics, student personas, and student journey maps.

5.1 Service Design Approach and Tools

Service design encompasses both analytical and creative elements, with its primary objective being the identification of customer needs and desires. Additionally, the aim is to devise innovative solutions that advance quality and the overall customer experience (CX). Human needs serve as the foundational cornerstone for both service design and design thinking. The approach concentrates on understanding the customer's interaction with a service, solution, or a product. The goal is to elucidate behavioural patterns, identify pain points, and to reveal hidden gaps in the customer needs. The driving force and catalyst for change lies in the aspiration to provide experience driven solutions. The integration of design thinking tools offers an alternative to traditional problem-solving methods, emphasizing a shift in mindset towards empathy and ideation. (Koivisto et al., 2019, 37-42.)

Customer personas represent characters within a specific group, sharing common goals, behavioural patterns, and attitudes. While not a portrayal of an actual individual, personas are crafted based on insights derived and data collected from real individuals. Personas are distinctive and reflect personal aspirations (Curedale, 2019, 54-56). Typically, the development of customer personas aims to cultivate a more profound understanding and empathy for a designated customer category (Morgan & Jaspersen, 2022, 139). This multifaceted portrait includes details encompassing background, circumstances, goals, values, issues, and challenges. By including opinions, behaviours, motivations, and needs, the overall portrayal delves into deeper dimensions of understanding personas. Qualitative factors, such as emotions and thoughts further unveil the precious information of personas (Kimbell, 2016, 92). Customer journey maps work as valuable tools for explaining the customer interactions throughout the journey. Maps visualize how customer perceives and experiences over time, usually before and after interactions are included for a refined understanding of a customer. Maps aim to capture the hidden pain points and ensure a positive experience for current and prospective customers. Root causes for pain points need to be further examined for improvement and development purposes. (Curedale, 345.)

5.2 Online Student Characteristics

Infographics is utilized as a part of service design process, visualizing the numerical data collected from the background research. It helps to communicate the findings, and to summarize the results into an easily comprehended visual format.

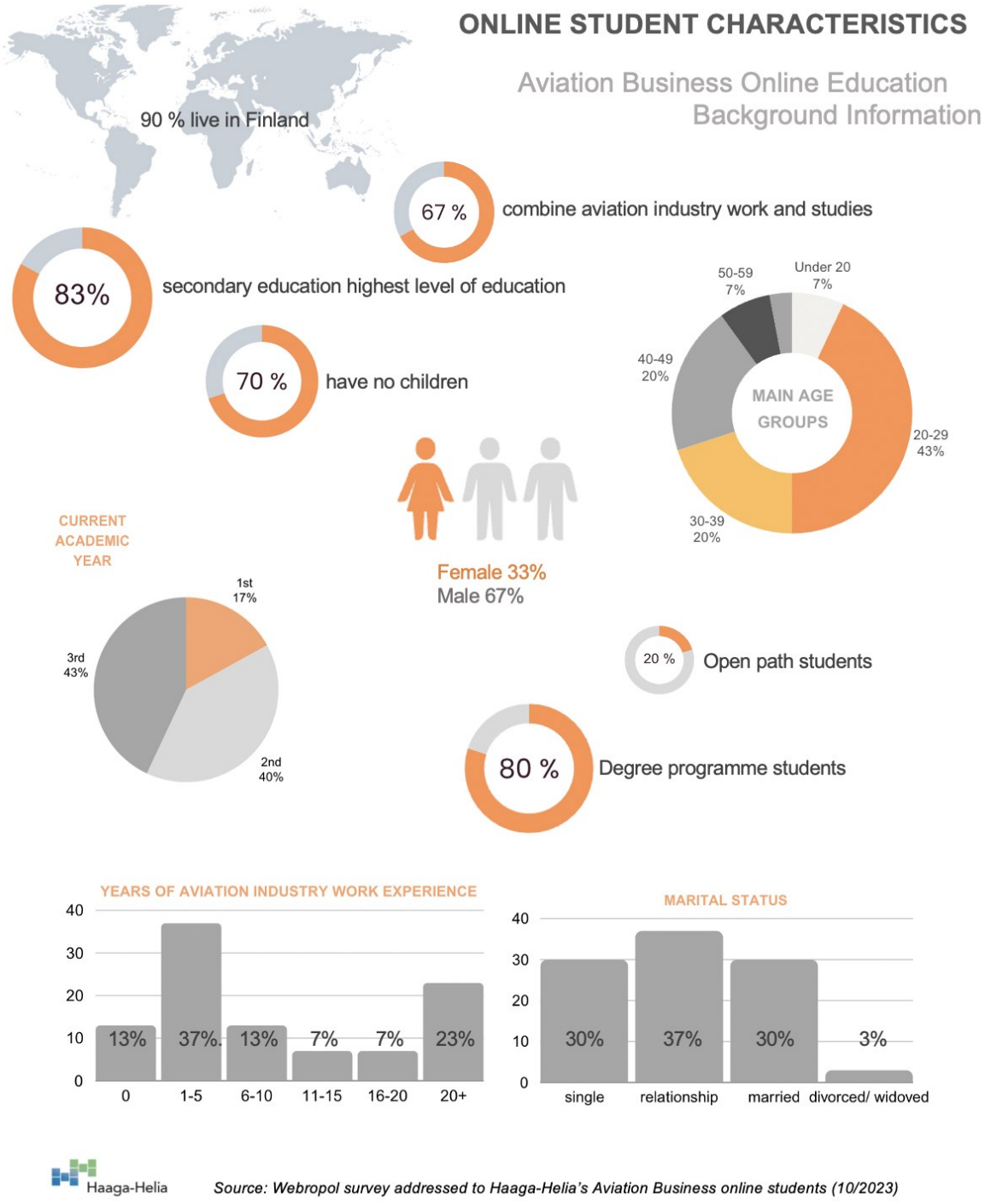


Image 6. Aviation business online student characteristics

Background information provides valuable insights into the unique student profile of an aviation business student, highlighting distinctions compared to traditional online students. The main idea is to present the key findings quickly and clearly, with no excessive need for explanations. The selected infographics content encapsulates the main findings from the background research subquestions 1-10. Students' current life circumstances significantly impact on their expectations from studies, and the limitations that influence on their study performance. These findings give information of the non-traditional student profile and its potential impact on the online student experience. RQ1: What are the characteristics of a typical aviation business online student?

The respondent data indicates the demographic information of aviation business online students. It reveals a gender distribution where men represent the majority at 66,67%, while females represent 33,33% of the total student population.

In terms of age demographics, the majority of aviation business online students are between 20-29 years of age, representing 43,3% of the respondents. Second and third largest age groups represent 30- 39 years of age are accounting 20%, and 40- 40 years of age accounting 20%.

Marital status among aviation business online students varies, with the highest proportion being in a relationship (37%), and secondly married (30%), and singles (30%). Interestingly, a significant majority, 70%, do not have children. 10% answered having one child, 13,3% answered having 2 children, and 6,7% answered having more than 3 children.

When it comes to industry experience, the data indicates that the majority of aviation business online students have 1-5 years of experience (36,7%). A notable portion of highly experienced ones represent 23,3%, having industry experience of 21 years, or more. Both 6-10 years and no industry experience (0 years) represent 13,3% of the respondent data.

Additionally, a notable portion of aviation business students (66,7%) combine industry work with online studies. Moreover, the overwhelming majority (83%) of aviation business online students have completed only secondary education.

Regarding respondent study paths, the data indicates that 80% of aviation business online students are enrolled in degree programme, and minority representing 20% participate in open path-studies. Moreover, a large majority (90%) of aviation business students live in Finland.

Academic year distribution indicates 3rd year students represent 43%, 2nd year students 40%, and 1st year students representing 16,7% of the survey respondents.

5.3 Personas and Journey Maps

Background research findings were the foundational basis of creating student personas and their educational student journeys. Two personas, Sandra, and Mikko were created based on the respondent data from subquestions RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3. The responses helped to capture the characteristics of an online student, and to identify the student's point of view and behavioural aspects within the areas of student experience. The personas visualize the elements student's lives consist of, emphasizing the cross-functional factors that do have an influence on their experience. Sandra's persona reveals the characteristics and educational journey of an open path student, focusing on matters related to first academic year related matters. Mikko's persona reveals the characteristics and educational journey of a degree programme student, focusing on 2nd and 3rd academic year related matters. The open-ended survey responses were added to both personas revealing their attitudes through their goals and perceptions. Both students share the common goal of graduation, while expressing their perceptions related to time-management issues. These personas portray the details encompassing student's background and demographics. Life circumstances discuss their marital status, work-life situation, and where and how they live. Goals, values, and needs explain their driving forces and what motivates them in their lives. Main concerns, challenges, and opinions regarding issues further portray student's needs and behaviours. Qualitative factors, such as emotions and thoughts have been added into the personas to unveil student attitudes and needs. This enables to reach deeper dimensions of understanding which elements have an impact on the overall experience of an online student.

Student journeys guide us through the educational touchpoints and experiences of Sandra and Mikko. In the journey maps, the positive and neutral touchpoints are visualized in colour black, and the identified pain points are visualized in colour red. The storytelling part guides the reader deeper into the student's lives, explaining different elements influencing their individual online student experience. This part is visualizing the responses from RQ2: What are the online students' experiences in different stages of student journey? To make the educational journeys more informative, respondent data has been included also from research responses RQ1 and RQ3. Open-ended survey responses (RQ3) are highly important in the creation process of educational journeys. These reveal the elements that impact online student experience, as the responses clarify the motivations and challenges, they individually experience. The responses have been selected based on the relevance in the context of online student experience. The aim was to include the content the way respondents have expressed themselves, however, in some parts the grammar has been corrected and the sentence structures have been improved to fit better into the context.

BACKGROUND:

Name: Sandra

Student Profile: 1st year online student in Aviation Business Open Path

BEHAVIOURS:

Main Concerns: Sandra's full-time job is affecting her study performance, and she lacks sufficient IT skills (her work experience is solely in the customer service industry).

Challenge: Sandra has a busy social life while juggling full-time work, and higher education online studies, resulting in constant struggle with time-management.

Perception: "There must be a better way to organize life as a working student!"

DEMOGRAPHICS:

Age: 29
Gender: Female

Home Location: London, UK
Marital Status: Single, no children
Education: Secondary education
Online Study Experience: None

Industry Work Experience: 1-5 years
Current Work: Waitressing at the airport restaurants, primarily working late-night shifts.

MOTIVATIONS:

Goal: Graduation! Sandra is strongly dedicated to graduate.

Values: Sandra is environmentally consious; she chose aviation business online studies to make an impact on environmental matters through her future work.

Needs: She wants to improve her well-being and to take better care of herself in terms of health, exercise, nutrition, and sleep.

Ultimate Goal: Pursue a job that promotes her well-being and allows for balance between work and other aspect of life.

Image 7. Student persona Sandra, open path online student

Sandra, 29, is an open path student, living in London, and she enjoys the flexible nature of her chosen online studies. With her father being English and her mother is Finnish, she has connections to both countries. She speaks a little Finnish, but she considers herself a native English speaker. She became interested in Haaga-Helia's aviation business online studies because the teaching is implemented in English, aligning with the international nature of aviation industry.

She is an enthusiastic traveler, yet at the same time she is very conscious about the environmental matters. Additionally, she feels a bit stuck in her life at the time being. She is approaching her 30th birthday and she would like to find a new direction in her life. Her life is rather hectic, she works full-time at Heathrow airport restaurants, mainly in late-night shifts. Her concerns relate to well-being; therefore, she would like to make concrete improvements towards a better balance in her life. She is keen on pursuing a proper job and she aims to focus on continuing her aviation business degree studies. This is the big step forward in her career aspirations and personal growth.

Although she is single and has no children, her timetable is always packed, and she is constantly experiencing time pressure. Moreover, she struggles with the school assignment deadlines due lack of sufficient time-management skills, and shortage in IT competencies. Sandra finds herself "slow" when using digital tools, and she is aware that she needs to improve her skills for more effective studying. She considers digital literacy and time-management skills today's essentialities within any given industry. She would like to assess and develop her skills within these areas. In the future, Sandra visualizes herself in a 9-5 job, where she has achieved balance and routines that promote her wellbeing, both personally and professionally.

Aviation Business BBA, Open Path

Sandrao's online student journey

STRANGER

Found out about the studies from her Finnish friend.

AWARENESS

Did not enjoy Haaga-Helia's website, according to her opinion the marketing was "bad".

"Information should be provided quickly and clearly, and it should be easily understandable."

INTEREST

Was interested in quality online degree programmes.

CONSIDERATION

Worried about her lack of IT skills and whether she is going to succeed in her higher education online studies!

ENROLLMENT

"Sometimes it is really frustrating and waste of time to figure out how each course is expected to be performed (might be the first year open student problem...)"

EDUCATION

LOVES THE FLEXIBILITY!

"Better instructions and feedback culture. There should be no mistakes in instructions of assignments."

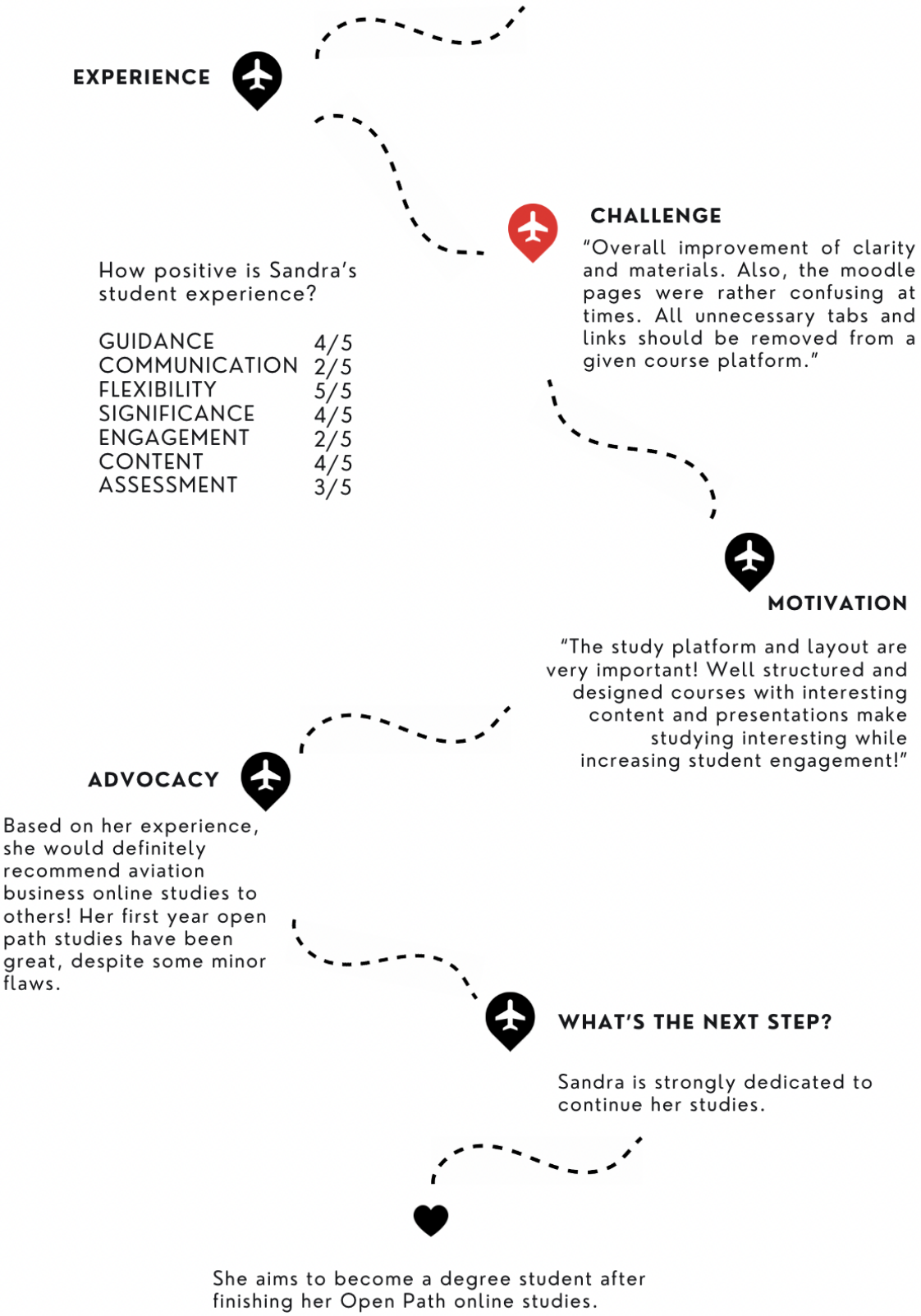


Image 8. Sandra's educational journey

Sandra was firstly introduced to aviation business open path studies through her Finnish friend. Knowing that Finnish educational system is one of the best in the world, she was not concerned about the quality of education offered by Haaga-Helia's. However, despite Haaga-Helia's good reputation, she felt a bit lost when seeking further information about online studies on the company webpage. The differences between open path studies, and degree programme studies, were not explained in an easily understandable way and she felt that the website lacked clarity.

Most importantly, she wanted to know whether the online courses would have scheduled timetables or if the courses could be performed based on personalized preferences. Some of her chosen courses were offered online, and at the beginning of the course, students had the option to choose how to participate the course. Additionally, she felt that there were differences in teacher's skills within online teaching; "Teachers use learning tools and materials in such various ways, and in some courses the objectives were obscured throughout. Due covid-19, online classes were a new thing for many teachers I know, however, some adapted the online methods quicker than others." Sandra's overall experience with online education has been positive. She enjoys the flexibility it offers, and that the study content adds significance to her life in general.

Sandra's pain points focused on worries regarding lack of IT skills, as the implementation of online studies heavily relies on digital tools. She would also like to see improvements in communication and engagement within the online learning environment. According to Sandra, the feedback culture is not at its' best, and mistakes in the course assignments and instructions often cause frustration among students. The clarity of study platform and layout positively impacts Sandra's student experience. She prefers courses that include well-structured study designs and interesting materials. Conversely, a messy course design including unnecessary materials is causing confusion, and it will have a negative effect on her student experience.

All in all, she is happy to be an open path student. Sandra thinks that it is an excellent way to "test" how she is going to succeed as an online student. Based on her experience, she is strongly dedicated to continuing her studies after completing open path courses. As figure 2 indicates, first-year students are the most engaged ones when researching quitting intentions according to student academic year. Despite the minor issues regarding online studies, she would definitely recommend aviation business open path studies to others!

BACKGROUND:

Name: Mikko

Student Profile: 3rd year online student in Aviation Business Degree Programme

BEHAVIOURS:

Main Concerns: Family responsibilities affecting study performance, and health issues.

Challenge: Mikko faces worries due his mandatory yearly medical examination, as an approved medical certificate is a requirement for job continuation.

Perception: “For adult students, even more flexible schedules are needed! No obligatory lessons to take part that are scheduled only once. Group works are very hard to handle. Everyone has own timetables, hard to find time that suites everybody”.

DEMOGRAPHICS:

Age: 48
Gender: Male

Home Location: Espoo, Finland
Marital Status: Married, with 3 children
Education: Secondary education
Online Study Experience: Moderate

Industry Work Experience: 24 years
Current Work: Airline Pilot, primarily flying long-haul flights.

MOTIVATIONS:

Goal: Mikko aims to graduate someday, but he often struggles with thoughts of quitting studies due fatigue and challenging timetables.

Values: He loves his work and wants to continue working as long as possible (Plan A).

Needs: He wants to secure his future with aviation business BBA degree, as he curremtly holds only pilot’s licence. He recognizes the importance of updating his skills and knowledge to meet today’s requirements (Plan B).

Ultimate Goal: Peace of mind, especially concerning health issues that may affect his airline transport pilot licence (ATPL).

Image 9. Student persona Mikko, degree programme

Mikko, 48, is a degree programme student and living in Espoo with his wife and three children. He became interested in Haaga-Helia's aviation business studies after being laid off during the pandemic. At that point he realized that he needed to have a plan B in his life. He loves flying, with 24 years of experience as a pilot, he hopes to continue his work as long as possible. However, he has recently experienced minor health issues. He is realistic about the fact that these health issues could worsen over time, potentially affecting his ability to continue as a pilot.

Mikko finds it challenging to find time for studies, given that he has three small children and all his "free time" is spent with them. His family is his top priority, and secondly comes work. He would like to achieve his goal of graduating, as this could secure his and his family's future. He is aware that relying only on his pilot's licence may not be sufficient. He needs to update his skills to meet today's industry demands, enabling him to work in other professions besides pilot work.

To Mikko, BBA degree would provide a piece of mind, however, constant thoughts of quitting intentions have negatively impacted his study performance. He mentions that first year studies were easy and relaxing, as he could concentrate only on studying while staying at home with his family due to the pandemic. In his second academic study year he returned to work, and now Mikko is participating his third academic year studies. Combining both airline pilot work and online studies, proves to be a challenging combination. He frequently flies long-haul flights, and he would really benefit from offline content during internet outages. Mikko emphasizes the importance of study design related matters, stating: "Removing recommended deadlines, as each student has their own pace and style of studying, and recommended deadlines create pressure when a flashing red notification appears on your desktop for late assignments. Mentioning one deadline is sufficient, especially in virtual courses." According to Mikko's opinion, students should have a say in how they want to perform their online studies!

Aviation Business BBA, Degree Programme

Mikko's online student journey

STRANGER

Found out about the studies from Labor Union's advertisement.

AWARENESS

Due Covid-19 he was laid off for some time, aviation business online studies felt like a natural continuum as he has been a commercial pilot for his hole life.

"During the pandemic I realized that I needed to have a Plan B in my life. I have family and mortgage to pay, and if thing go wrong, I have no other profession.That would risk my family's future."

INTEREST

His main interest was to secure his future due the highly sensitive and cyclical nature of aviation industry.

CONSIDERATION

It has been years since he has been in school. Worries if he knows how to learn and study new things.

ENROLLMENT

"I think the onboarding stage of the studies was supportive, study requirements, learning goals, and digital tools used were all well-informed!"

EDUCATION

"For me, it would be better if there is no requirements of presence in the online lessons. In my job, I can ask only 5 days per months to have off and those days are usually already busy and scheduled for family."

"Group works are very hard to handle. Everyone has own timetables, hard to find time that suites everybody. Also, immediate feedback from assignments would be great."

Image 10. Mikko's educational journey

An advertisement from the airline pilot's labor union raised Mikko's interest towards aviation business studies. Having worked within the industry long enough, he is well aware of the industry's sensitive nature, therefore earning a BBA degree would benefit and secure his future. Despite Mikko's moderate experience within prior online studies, he was still having concerns about his ability to succeed in higher education studies. During the onboarding stage of his studies, he realized that he was not alone having a longer pause within education, which eased his mind. According to research (NCES, 2015), non-traditional students might need extra support as they need to relearn how to learn. Mikko felt that socializing with other students increased his sense of belongingness, and occasional meetups had a positive impact on his study motivation. He felt engaged with his online studies, and he found a sense of community among other aviation student who shared a same ambition towards the industry.

At the beginning of his 2nd academic study year, Mikko returned to work. Soon he realized that it was challenging to participated in the scheduled lessons of online courses. His job as an airline pilot followed a 24/7 lifestyle, therefore he was facing constant fatigue due to time-zone differences. Consequently, his study motivation experienced a significant downfall, and it has been a constant struggle during 2nd and 3rd academic study years. He says that it is not easy to find space for groupworks, where all the participants have busy lives while juggling between adult life responsibilities. According to Mikko's opinion, majority of aviation business students have already gained experience in work life, therefore building teamwork skills is not a relevant skill to study in school. He thinks that there should be more personalized study options, and that the studies should be designed based on students' personal preferences. Skills assessment and development should be built on necessary skill improvement. This requires more effective ways of monitoring and identifying skills gaps.

Mikko is currently finishing up his 3rd year studies. As figure 2 suggests, the quitting intentions occurred during students' second and third academic years. Additionally, figure 1 indicates that quitting intentions may increase among students who combine industry work and online studies. Supported by the above-mentioned findings, Mikko is facing a significant amount of stress. Mikko's goal is to graduate, yet he recognizes the need for support in achieving a better balance in his life. He thinks that the school should provide a support platform, in which students skills in time-management are assessed and developed. Same implies to reminders of breaks, importance of exercise, and other areas in life impacting individual well-being.

What comes to study materials, he would benefit from offline materials, such as PDF's or downloaded audiobooks. He would like to utilize the time during layovers for studying, however, there is not always the possibility for internet connection. He thinks that it would be great if he could

combine exercise and study. He thinks that the online study materials should provide an option to choose from reading materials, listening audiobooks, podcasts, or digital articles, or watching study videos. Based on Mikko's experience, he hesitates to recommend aviation business studies to others combining work and study. Additionally, he is uncertain whether he is going to achieve his goal of graduating. He says that especially thesis writing besides full-time work would be too challenging and cutting down the adult support makes the study leave option rather impossible.

Figure 1 and 2 have been analysed with SPSS software, researching two separate variables and how these impact each other. The findings have been presented through Sandra's and Mikko's personas and their educational journeys.

RQ3: What are the online students' challenges and motivations?

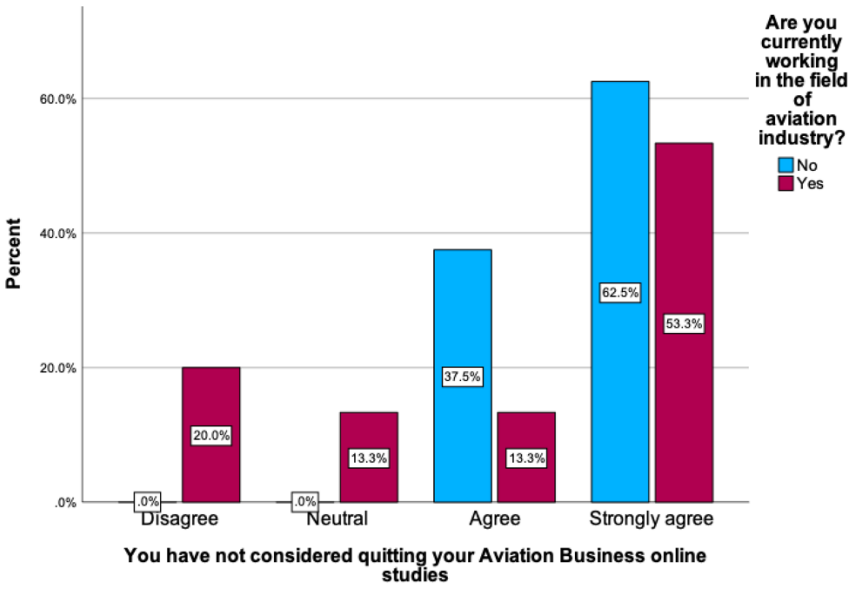


Figure 1. Quitting intentions, work-study combination (N=23)

The analysis suggests that quitting intentions may increase when work and study are combined. Among those working in the aviation industry, responses to question "You have not considered quitting your aviation business online studies" varied with 20% disagreeing and 13,3% remaining neutral.

Moreover, respondents who do not combine work and study, they have no quitting intentions at all, responding agree (37,5%) and strongly agree (62,5%). Consequently, it can be stated that work and study combination may increase quitting intentions. The most confident and engaged students are those who concentrate only on studying.

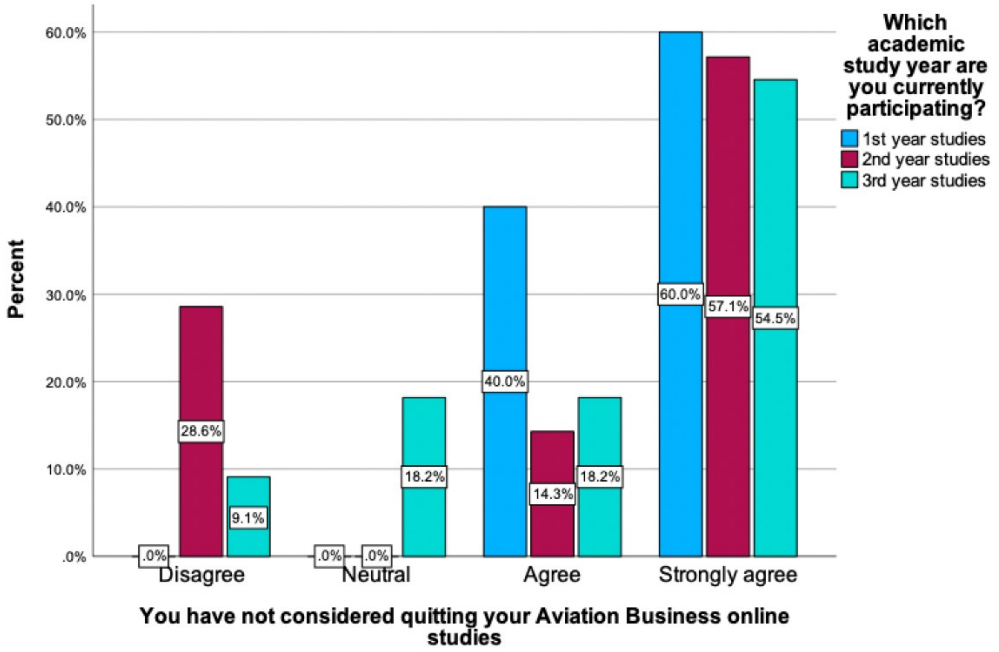


Figure 2. Quitting intentions, student academic year (N=23)

The analysis suggests that quitting intentions occurred among second- and third-year students. Second year students responded disagree (28,6%) and third year students responded disagree (9,1%) to question “You have not considered quitting your aviation business online studies”.

Interestingly, the first-year students indicate the highest engagement levels. A significant majority, 40%, responded agree, and strongly agree (60%) when asking about their quitting intentions.

6 Conclusions

The objective of the thesis was to find out what the aviation business online student experience is, and to recognize which elements have an impact on student experience. The author identifies the challenge when researching the overall student experience in online studies. Students might have extremely positive experiences in some areas of their education, yet other areas might include negative experiences. Moreover, experience is always subjective and it is highly influenced by individual aspects of human behaviour. It is worth mentioning that the student experience starts already before the actual education phase, therefore pre-education elements are also considered important. Based on background research results, the findings have been clarified through student personas and their educational journeys emphasizing following elements within online student experience.

The finding suggest that majority of students were satisfied with the flexibility of online studies, and that students enjoy the freedom to choose when and where to study. The most positive skill improvement was in the areas of writing skills and self-management skills. Findings also suggest that not all students were fully engaged with the teaching methods, nor learning materials utilized. Additionally, the lowest student experience was identified within the area of communication, as the clarity of instructions was not fully unambiguous within online course implementations and instructions.

The three main motivators were identified to have an impact on student experience; flexibility, goal of graduation, and meaningful study content. Learning new things and interesting course offerings motivate students. The lowest skill improvement was in the areas of social skills and time-management skills. Based on findings, the main challenges impacting online student experience reasoned due time-management issues. Moreover, the student expressed to have difficulties in fitting their studies into their private, and professional lives. Findings indicate that having children and family is not one of the main reasons for applying to aviation business online studies. Majority of the online students did not have children at all, and there were no significant differences in the single or the married ones. However, online study designs are recommended to serve different student needs. Students with family obligations express that the balance between family and study is important for them, and that it highly impacts their online student experience.

The study programme attracts mostly younger students, and this aligns with the traditional online student profile. However, the study programme also attracts the older students who mainly already work within the industry jobs, and this aligns with the non-traditional student profile. Findings also indicate that students combining work and study viewed the balance as one of the most important elements impacting their online student experience. The findings suggest that the main reason for

applying to aviation business online studies is securing their future. Other reasons for applying included unemployment, location, and distance challenges, or need for further education.

Currently majority of the aviation business online student are men, and this contradicts with the general online student profile, in which most students are female. Gender equity matters are recommended to be taken account in online aviation business student representatives by aiming to increase the number of female student intake. Additionally, research findings indicate that 90% of the aviation business online students live in Finland. Due the international nature of aviation industry, and an English taught quality study programme, there is a huge potential in attracting student from abroad.

The author encourages for further pondering in the quality control and student experience measurements methods. It is important to develop and improve the student experience measurement methods, since fill-in type of general feedback form is not an effective solution. Students want to know whether their given feedback has been considered with importance, and what are the actions taken towards the identified problem areas. There are various aspects that affect online student experience, such as group dynamics, teaching methods, and students' personal life contributors, all need to be taken into consideration.

Marketing online education could be improved within the areas of attractiveness and information clarification through visual aids, for example, infographics, or PDFs. Open path entrance gives an opportunity for the students to try out higher education online studies, and ultimately offering an opportunity to become a degree student. As a conclusion, this type of entrance paths could be marketed more effectively, highlighting the benefits of open path advantages. The author recommends clarifying the important touchpoints of open path and degree programme touchpoints and to visualize these student journeys. Additionally, the findings revealed that online and virtual implementation types were confusing for some students, as research subquestion 12 indicates. As a conclusion, clarifying study types could be improved. Currently, online education consists of online and virtual courses. Modification could include better terminology of implementation types, for example, 'hybrid course' used instead of 'online course'.

The author has experience with both open path studies and degree programme studies. Throughout her educational journey, she has gained insights of the online student experience by observing and discussing with other students in the same study programme. In conclusion, it can be stated that the real-world online student experiences and the findings from research respondents support each other, and the identified concern areas are truthful and realistic.

6.1 Development Aspects

Higher education degrees are no longer viewed as a guarantee for employment (Rajala, 2024). Rethinking online education elements and how to equip students with necessary skills for their careers and overall life is a fundamental aspect within the reshape of online student experience. As mentioned previously, there is no one size fits all- solution for the objective in advancing online student experience. Following development aspects aim to promote online student experience within the identified concern areas. Online student experience development areas are divided into four categories, skills assessment and development, support and well-being, flexible and adaptable learning materials, as well as engagement and enjoyment.

Skills Assessment and Development

How to success in the long-term learning outcomes, acknowledging the necessary skills to be utilized further on in students' careers and personal lives? How to effectively teach students the time-management skills? As clarified through student personas Sandra and Mikko, time-management is the biggest concern among online students who combine work and study. According to research (Nawrot, 2014), online education should include tools for time usage optimalization by introducing sufficient knowledge and skills for time-management. Often, the main reason for discontinued and uncompleted online education is found in time-management failures within online education implementation. The author recommends introducing advanced digital solutions within online education to combat this challenge. Introducing solutions to time-management practices, in which students actively monitor their time usage, identify concern areas, and take further actions to optimize time-management. Time-management practices should be implemented throughout the educational journey, as this can help to internalize the skills providing long-term relevance.

Goal orientation within online education means having clear learning objectives, goals guiding learners, while also facilitating the progress tracking. Goal orientation is an important part of self-management, and it also defines as life designer skills. According to Morgan & Jaspersen (2022), higher education should emphasize the importance of students' soft skills, as these are equipping student towards what the employers wish for. Developments in online education could improve in skills assessment and development, materials should demonstrate effectiveness in achieving desired learning outcomes and improving learner performance (Horila, 2002). Additionally, due the sensitive and changing nature of aviation industry, the students need transformative skills. The online education is encouraged to focus on basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, data and digital literacy, and socio-emotional skills, as mentioned in OECD's Learning Compass 2030.

Support and Well-being

Assessing and monitoring student wellbeing, health, and motivation could be improved, as the status quo reveals that it is fully on students' responsibility to take care of themselves. Often students do not have sufficient skills that align with online studies and maintaining health and wellbeing. According to OECD's Future of Education and Skills 2030 framework, the aim is to guide students towards better wellbeing. Reminders of wellbeing related factors during online studies could be implemented, enough breaks and structuring studies by emphasizing the wellbeing and health related elements. Reshaping online education solutions and designs could be modified to manage and promote student wellbeing and health. Online education has faced criticism due its passive nature, and poor ergonomics causing health problems. To combat this passive nature of online education, alternative study designs are recommended to be utilized. For example, studying by listening audiobooks, digital articles, or podcasts while walking in nature promotes an individual wellbeing, as it also provides an active type of study. Alternative study designs might also help to prevent motivational issues and to decrease quitting intentions. Students' self-awareness is increased as the importance of health is being emphasized through promotive study designs. As defined by WHO, health is a complete physical, mental, and societal well-being, not the absence of disease or fragility (WHO, s.a.). Online education should acknowledge this from theory to practice.

Support and guidance should be improved within online education. Online students cannot rely on the traditional support and teaching; therefore, this unique student profile requires extra support from academic advisors, and other supporting platforms ensuring a positive online student experience. According to Hew & Cheung (2014), challenges within online student experience were identified when students had no one to reach when in need for help, or failures in understanding the education material and content, or overall lack of support. The findings also indicate that online students often face challenges when fitting studies into their private and professional lives. The findings suggest that students need for extra support accordingly to their academic study year. Often first year students are enthusiastic and excited about the new, as seen with 1st year persona Sandra. Whereas second and thirds year students might already experience motivational challenges, as described through 3rd year persona Mikko. Academic year related matters and students' mindset are recommended to be taken account and to provide extra support for the student in need.

Flexible and Adaptable Learning Materials

As previously mentioned, and visualized through personas Sandra and Mikko, majority of aviation business online student combine industry work and their online education. Flexibility and adaptability in online education materials should be improved significantly. Aviation industry operates an 24/7 basis, often including frequent time zone travelling. Students working in the industry jobs have

a non-routine lifestyle and they must be able to adjust to irregular schedules. Offline content needs to be provided as an important study material format within online education. During internet outages downloadable content such as, PDFs of lectures and other course materials is a necessity, and the materials need to be adaptable into different devices. Audiobooks, podcasts, digital articles of industry related topics with audio option would also benefits aviation business online students. The material should also be adaptable to various instructional designs and learning contexts. Additionally, it should adapt to different study designs alternatives, and to suit different student needs. The material should be adaptable for all ages, and the material should be easily understandable and conducive. It should support different types of learners. Other important elements include smooth usage and memorability of online materials.

Positive online student experience is highly dictated by material flexibility, significance, and content meaningfulness. Interactive elements promote active engagement and deeper understanding of the material. Findings indicate that students would like to receive instant feedback on their assignments, as described by persona Mikko. Interactive solutions are recommended to be utilized within the aviation business online education. For instance, e-textbook provides the students an opportunity to experience an interactive learning method. This type of study design enables quick navigation, highlighting and commenting, and an option to add own materials into the study pages. It contains interactive materials, such as videos and animated images, and AI assisted materials are recommended. E-textbook is adaptable in any device and this type of effective online education solution can serve various student needs (OECD, 2020). This type of study design might also help to combat concentration challenges due distraction, or simultaneous multitasking during studying.

Engagement and Enjoyment

As previously stated by Chang & Chien (2022), promoting students' sense of presence is important, as the outcomes improve students' motivation and engagement. Combating the isolative nature of online education remains a challenge, especially since the student preferences vary significantly in the area of socializing. Findings indicate that some students have the need for occasional meet ups, some student on the other hand prefer fully virtual studies, with no meetings. The need may also change over time, as clarified through Mikko's educational journey. Implementation types are recommended to provide alternatives based on student needs and preferences.

Online education materials and environments could improve especially in the areas of aesthetics and study design. Clear and coherent style in education design engages and motivates learners to participate actively in the learning process. According to student persona Sandra, an overall improvement within clarity and materials requires further actions. The study platform and layout play

a crucial role in engaging and enjoyable study experience. All unnecessary materials should be avoided, as having too much content in different platforms is causing frustration among students.

Horila's framework of pedagogically effective framework is recommended to be utilized in the aviation business online materials, as it guides towards easy and enjoyable usage of materials. As mentioned in Sandra's educational touchpoints, graphic layout and simplicity guides towards smooth student experience. Future recommendations consider elements of personalized needs and preferences, and material content relevance providing interest and new stimulus. Clear and visually appealing presentation aids towards better comprehension while reducing cognitive load. Usability barriers should be avoided, providing accessible, navigable and effortless usage of online education materials. The development suggestions are aimed to solve the identified concern areas within online education materials. Materials should not include any communicational or instructional mistakes, as student persona Sandra has expressed an improvement area within error reduction. Well-structured courses and materials should offer value to learners, contributing to their personal and professional development. Study implementation type alternatives should align with students' individual wellbeing and with work-life balance. Student values and needs also tend to change over time, therefore it is worth to note that quality education is not a static element, and that it requires constant assessment and development.

6.2 Own Learning Process

This was the author's first time to implement empirical research and it has been the largest production of her academic studies. The topic was rather challenging, as there is no consensus of the term 'student experience', therefore the background research seemed to be the smartest way to research student experience, and the elements that have an impact on it. Conducting the survey was a time-consuming process, however during the process the author's digital skills developed and a new skill in using SPSS software was acknowledged. The author did not have prior experience of quantitative research implementation and analysis, therefore the support from the course was a crucial part of the successfulness of the thesis process. Additionally, the author has not previously utilized combined mixed research methods, and this has further developed the author's skills in adaptability. Creating a coherent production including numerical data and creative elements, aligned with theoretical framework, all contributed to increase the author's self-management skills.

There were moments when the thesis process felt like a puzzle with too many separate particles, and also the process included learning from the mistakes. The author's thesis advisor changed during the thesis process, and along the new advisors help new dimensions were fetched and the thesis process found a clarified approach. The research topic, research limitations and thesis

design reshaped, consequently this resulted in deleting already written text and other produced materials. Summarizing and editing the text was a learning journey as well. Development areas in the thesis process would have required further delimitations within research topic. The research topic is rather complex as many elements have an impact on online student experience. The process has been a lesson in resilience, teaching to face challenges and accepting uncertainties as the thesis process has included both success and failures. According to design thinking process, it is all about loving the problem, not the solution. This problem-solving approach has advanced author's open and curious mindset, empowering to find solutions to future challenges with confidence.

Moreover, especially the data collection stage taught acceptance towards the areas that are not fully controllable. Collecting research data through an online survey was not an easy task, as it was rather challenging to attract already busy online students. This also taught prioritizing skills, as the author decided to focus on the thesis process areas that are under her control. The thesis process has further developed the author's digital skills, as she has utilized different digital tools in her work, such as Excel, Canva, and PowerPoint. Digital literacy within the areas of source criticality encountered improvements. Effective ways of working were practiced when utilizing for example, artificial intelligence in grammar mistake spotting.

The thesis is an independent production and the process has taught active decision-making and taking responsibility of own actions. The author's self-awareness has increased during the process, and she has learned to implement more structured ways to work when aiming to achieve her goals. Knowledge within the areas of future skills has been increased and acknowledged. The author has gained valuable information, and the learnings benefits her further on in her life. The thesis process has reminded and highlighted the importance of balance and wellbeing. Moreover, this thesis process has taught gratitude of the possibility to accomplish higher education degree fully online, while also having other responsibilities in life. Without this this opportunity, the author would not have accomplished her goal.

Resources

Alé-Ruiz, R. Abad, M. & Moral-Marcos T. 2023. Academic Engagement and Management of Personalised Active Learning in Higher Education Digital Ecosystems. Educ Inf Technol. DOI: 10.1007/s10639-023-12358.4. Accessed: 04 February 2024.

Amdur, E. 2022. The Illiterate of the 21st Century. URL: https://www.forbes.com/sites/eliamdur/2022/10/04/the-illiterate-of-the-21st-century/?sh=6218fda06a3e Accessed: 16 April 2024.

Aristovnik, A., Karampelas, K., Umek, L. & Ravšelj, D. 2023. Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on online learning in higher education: a bibliometric analysis. Frontiers in Education. 8:1225834. DOI: 10.3389/feduc.2023.1225834. Accessed: 11 March 2024.

Barnes, C. Blake, H. & Howard, T. 2017. Selling Your Value Proposition. Kogan Page. UK, USA.

Barrett, R. 2007. A Will to Learn. Open University Press. Being a Student in an Age of Uncertainty. USA.

Bracken, S. & Novak, K. 2019. Transforming Higher Education Through Universal Design for Learning. Routledge. USA.

Caird, S. Lane, A. & Roy, R. 2015. Design of Higher Education Teaching Models and Carbon Impacts. International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education. 16(1):96-111. DOI: 10.1108/IJSHE-06-2013-0065. Accessed: 12 March 2024.

Child, F. Frank, M. Lef, M. & Sarakatsannis, J. 2021. Setting a Bar for Online Higher Education. URL: https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/education/our-insights/setting-a-new-bar-for-online-higher-education Accessed 01 May 2024.

Curedale, R. 2016. Experience Maps Step-by-step Guide. DCC. USA.

Curedale, R. 2019. Customer and User Experience Maps Step-by-step Guide. 2nd edition. DCC. USA.

Ferriman, J. 2013. The History of Distance Learning. URL: https://www.learndash.com/the-history-of-distance-learning-infographic/ Accessed: 11 January 2024.

Finell, N. 2021. Remote Teaching Requires New Skills. URL: https://www.haaga-helia.fi/sites/default/files/file/2021-04/global-signals-2021.pdf Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK. 2012. URL: https://www.tenk.fi/sites/tenk.fi/files/HTK_ohje_2012.pdf Accessed: 12 April 2024.

Grant, K. Remenyi, D. & Singh, S. 2019. The University of the Future. ACPIL. UK.

Haasio, A. & Piukkula, J. 2001. Oppiminen Verkossa. Gummerus. Saarijärvi, Finland.

Hew, F. & Cheung, S. 2014. Students' and Instructors' Use of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs): Motivations and Challenges. DOI: 10.1016/j.edurev.2014.05.001. Accessed: 23 March 2024.

Hiltunen, E. s.a. Tulevaisuuden työ. URL: https://www.whatsnext.fi/graphs/ Accessed: 08 April 2024.

Horn, L. & Carroll, D. 1996. Non-traditional Undergraduates. URL: https://nces.ed.gov/pubs/97578.pdf Accessed: 15 February 2024.

International Air Transport Association. s.a. High-level Concept Paper on a Changing Environment for Flight Rules. URL: https://www.iata.org/contentassets/8c2566421a524258896e89aceb739333/high-level-concept-paper-on-a-changing-environment-for-flight-rules_webpage.pdf Accessed 16 May 2024.

International Air Transport Association. 2023. 25BY2025. URL: https://www.iata.org/en/about/our-commitment/25-by-2025/ Accessed: 22 February 2024.

Jonassen, D. 1995. Educational Technology. URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/44428289 Accessed: 25 March 2024.

Kahu, E. & Baik, C. 2023. Research Handbook on the Student Experience in Higher Education. URL: https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollchap/book/9781802204193/book-part-9781802204193-8.xml?tab_body=abstract-copy1 Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Kimbell, L. 2016. The Service Innovation Book. 2nd edition. BIS Publishers. Netherlands.

Koivisto, M. Säynäjäkangas, J. & Forsberg, S. 2019. Palvelumuotoilun Bisneskirja. 2nd edition. Alma Talent. Lithuania.

Krishna, A. & Adalarasu, K. 2022. Analysis of Ergonomic Issues Faced by Students and Teachers in Online Education. DOI: 10.1007/978-981-16-6982-8_6. Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Matus, N. Rusu, C. & Cano, S. 2021. Student eXperience: A Systematic Literature Review. Appl. Sci. 11:9543. DOI: 10.3390/app11209543. Accessed: 30 March 2024.

Middleton, F. 2023. Reliability vs. Validity in Research. URL: https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/reliability-vs-validity/ Accessed: 16 April 2024.

Morgan, T. & Jaspersen, L. 2022. Design Thinking for Student Projects. SAGE. UK.

Mäkinen, V. 2016. Unraveling the Design process of Finnair's Mobile Application. URL: https://www.reaktor.com/articles/unraveling-the-design-process-of-finnairs-mobile-application Accessed: 23 November 2023.

National Center for Educational Statistics. 2015. Demographic and Enrollment Characteristics of Nontraditional Students: 2011-12. URL: https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015025.pdf Accessed 11 January 2024.

Nawrot, I. & Doucet, A. 2014. Building Engagement for MOOC Students. Introducing support for time management on online learning platforms. DOI: 10.1145/2567948.2580054. Accessed: 17 February 2024.

Nielsen, J. 1993. Usability Engineering. URL: https://www.academia.edu/40437644/Usability_Engineering Accessed: 25 March 2024.

OE. s.a. Online Student Trends and Success Factors. URL: https://www.onlineeducation.com/guide/who-studies-online Accessed: 15 February 2024.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2023. OECD Future of Education and Skills 2030. URL: https://issuu.com/oecd.publishing/docs/e2030-learning_compass_2030-concept_notes Accessed: 22 March 2024.

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2020. Example of an e-textbook in Estonia. URL: https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/6b49e118-en/1/3/1/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/6b49e118-en&_csp_=7c2d431041fe9bca3c22f7990d376f35&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book#figure-d1e7799 Accessed: 03 May 2024.

Phillpott, M. 2022. How Does Online Learning Support Non-traditional Student? URL: https://www.cypherlearning.com/blog/k-20/online-learning-support-non-traditional-students Accessed: 20 April 2024.

Peltonen, L. 2017. Työhyvinvoinnin tila autoalan pk-yrityksessä. Thesis. Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. Degree Programme in Business Management. URL: https://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/124806 Accessed 19 May 2024.

Rajala, S. 2024. Kauhistuttaako ajatus 9–17 toimistotöistä? URL: https://www.mimmitsijoittaa.fi/blogi/kauhistuttaako-ajatus-917-toimistotista-kyse-on-arvojen-muutoksesta Accessed: 20 March 2024.

Rincon, G. & Acosta, C. 2022. Student Experience Scale: Factor Analysis in Higher Education Systems. Frontiers in Education. 7:1057651. DOI: 10.3389/feduc.2022.1057651. Accessed: 22 March 2024.

Ruhanen, L. & Benckendorff, P. 2009. Deconstructing the Student Experience: A Conceptual Framework. URL: https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1447677000000516?via%3Dihub Accessed: 04 February 2024.

Saarinen, J. Varis, T. Vainio, L. Rintala, M. Piipari, M. & Nokelainen, P. 2002. Kouluttajana Verkossa, Menetelmät ja Tekniikat. Hämeen Ammattikorkeakoulu. Hämeenlinna, Finland.

Samunderu, E. 2020. Air Transport Management, Strategic Management in the Airline Industry. Kogan Page. UK, USA.

Sinervo, T. 2024. Tradenomi- Tradenomien Jäsenlehti. 1/2024. Miksi Osaamisen Kehittäminen On Niin Tärkeää- Kaikille?

SITA, 2023. Passenger IT Insights 2023. URL: https://www.sita.aero/resources/surveys-reports/passenger-it-insights-2023/ Accessed 19 May 2024.

Spratt, C. Walker, R. & Robinson, B. 2004. Mixed Research Methods. URL: https://oasis.col.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/a0f649ca-9764-438a-b10b-84638b956ebf/content Accessed 03 May 2024.

The World Counts s.a. URL: https://www.theworldcounts.com/challenges/other-products/environmental-impact-of-paper Accessed: 12 March 2024.

Toepoel, V. 2016. Doing Surveys Online. URL: https://methods-sagepub-com.ezproxy.haaga-helia.fi/book/doing-surveys-online Accessed 20 November 2023.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization s.a. Goal 4. URL: https://www.unesco.org/sdg4education2030/en/sdg4 Accessed: 11 March 2024.

United Nations s.a. Goal 13. URL: https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13 Accessed: 11 March 2024.

Urpilainen, J. 2024. EU Invests to Education to Change the World. URL: https://www.unesco.org/sdg4education2030/en/articles/eu-invests-education-change-world Accessed: 24 April 2024.

Universidad International de La Rioja. s.a. URL: https://www.unir.net/ Accessed: 18 April 2024.

Vantaa. 2024. The Competence Campus. URL: https://www.vantaa.fi/en/projects/project/tikkurila-competence-campus-project Accessed: 26 March 2024.

Varamäki, A. 2019. Future Proof Tulevaisuuden Työkirja. Docendo. Latvia.

Vesa, A. 2021. Sitra's Seven Recommendation Towards a Finland of Lifelong Learning. URL: https://www.sitra.fi/en/news/sitras-seven-recommendations-towards-a-finland-of-lifelong-learning/ Accessed: 11 March 2024.

World Economic Forum. 2022. These Three Charts Show the Global Growth in Online Learning. URL: https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/01/online-learning-courses-reskill-skills-gap/ Accessed: 27 March 2024.

World Economic Forum. 2023. The Future of Jobs Report 2023. URL: https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2023/infographics-2128e451e0/ Accessed: 27 March 2024.

When, U. Gershberg, I. Contreras, G. 2017. University Business Models and Value Propositions in the Digital Age. URL: https://unifuture.network/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/07/Gershberg-Wehn_WS5_UniversityBusinessModelandValuePropositions_-7-11-17.pdf Accessed: 19 September 2023.

World Health Organization. s.a. Constitution. URL: https://www.who.int/about/accountability/governance/constitution Accessed: 16 April 2024.

Wingard, J. & Farrugia, C. 2021. The Great Skills Gap, Optimizing Talent for the Future. Stanford Business Books. USA.

Zdatny, I. 2020. Understanding Human Behavior: The Softer Side of Experience Management. URL: https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/understanding-human-behavior/ Accessed: 22 April 2024.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Survey Cover Letter

Student experience survey of Haaga-Helia's Aviation Business online studies.

Dear student!

Digital technologies are reshaping the traditional forms of education models by enabling access to higher education, regardless of one's location, time, or age. Current times post COVID-19 have highlighted the significance of web-based education, as the pandemic has permanently modified today's work culture, as well as teaching and learning.

I am an Aviation Business student and a thesis writer researching student experience in Aviation Business online studies. The research has been commissioned by Haaga-Helia. The purpose of this study is to gain insights from Aviation Business students who have participated in online studies (online or virtual implementation).

Your opinion matters! The research findings give valuable information and the results can be utilized for the improvement and development purposes in Aviation Business degree programme. Every answer counts, with your support higher education could be within reach for many more! The results will be handled confidentially, answering is anonymous, and the information will not be shared with third parties. Answering takes 3-5 minutes.

Please, response latest 12th November.
Webropol survey link: https://link.webropolsurveys.com/S/FB05C8C4219DC859

Best Regards,
Kaylin Ani
Haaga-Helia Aviation Business degree programme
BBA online-student
kaylin.ani@myy.haaga-helia.fi

Appendix 2. Survey Questions and Answers

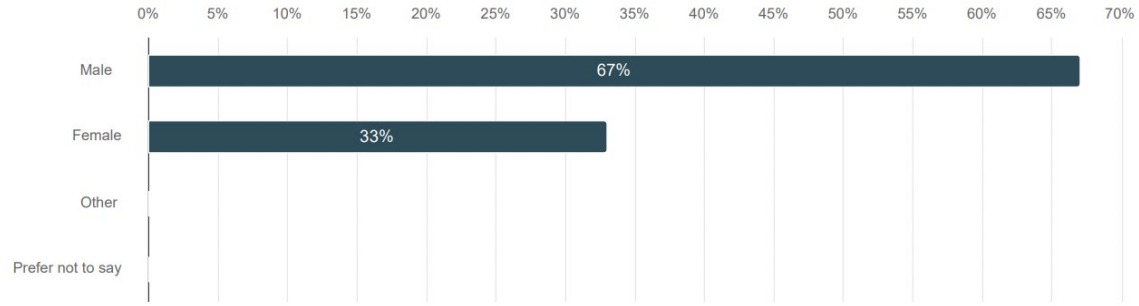
Basic report

Aviation Business Online Studies in Haaga-Helia

Total number of respondents: 30

Please, select your gender identity from the options below:

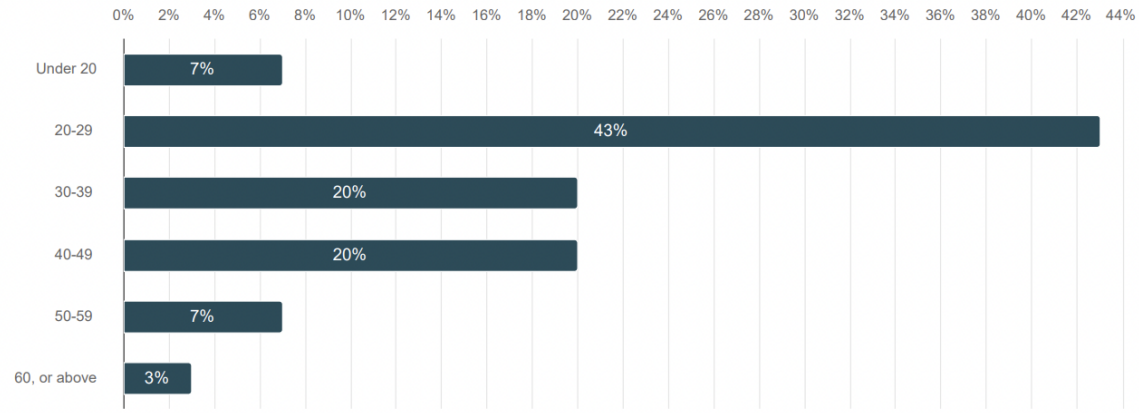
Number of respondents: 30



	n	Percent
Male	20	66.7%
Female	10	33.3%
Other	0	0.0%
Prefer not to say	0	0.0%

Please, select your age group from the following options:

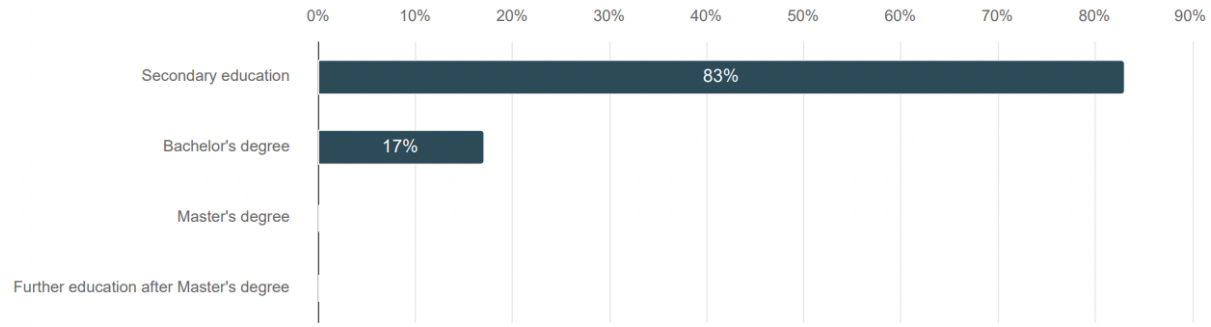
Number of respondents: 30



	n	Percent
Under 20	2	6.7%
20-29	13	43.3%
30-39	6	20.0%
40-49	6	20.0%
50-59	2	6.7%
60, or above	1	3.3%

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

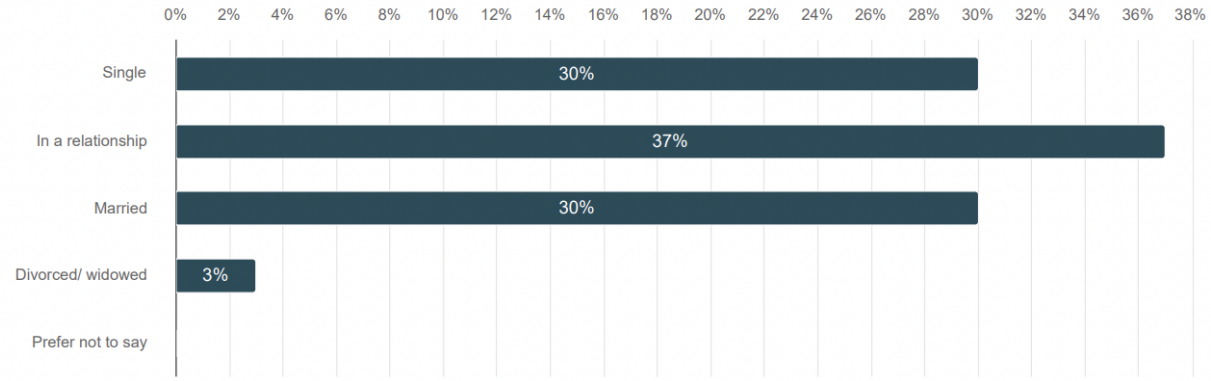
Number of respondents: 30



	n	Percent
Secondary education	25	83.3%
Bachelor's degree	5	16.7%
Master's degree	0	0.0%
Further education after Master's degree	0	0.0%

What is your marital status?

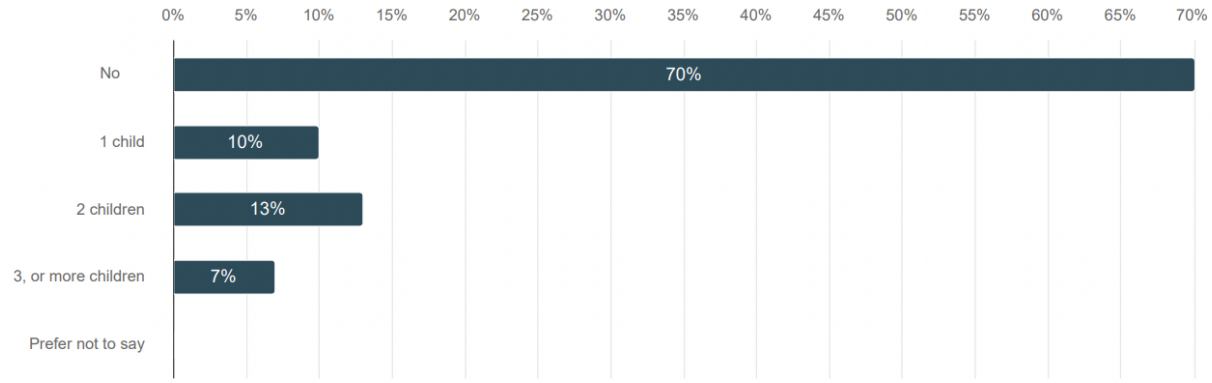
Number of respondents: 30



	n	Percent
Single	9	30.0%
In a relationship	11	36.7%
Married	9	30.0%
Divorced/ widowed	1	3.3%
Prefer not to say	0	0.0%

Do you have children under 18 years of age?

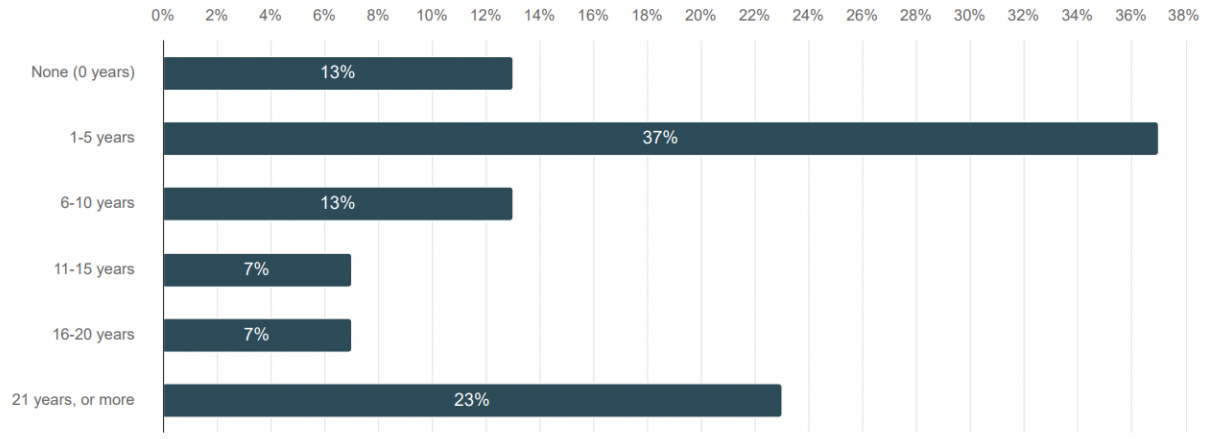
Number of respondents: 30



	n	Percent
No	21	70.0%
1 child	3	10.0%
2 children	4	13.3%
3, or more children	2	6.7%
Prefer not to say	0	0.0%

How many years of aviation industry work experience do you have?

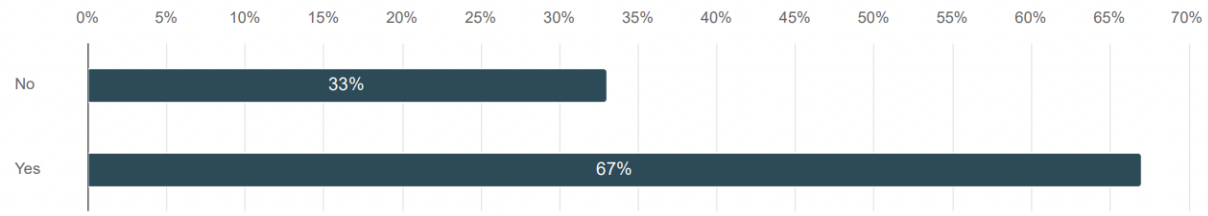
Number of respondents: 30



	n	Percent
None (0 years)	4	13.3%
1-5 years	11	36.7%
6-10 years	4	13.3%
11-15 years	2	6.7%
16-20 years	2	6.7%
21 years, or more	7	23.3%

Are you currently working in the field of aviation industry?

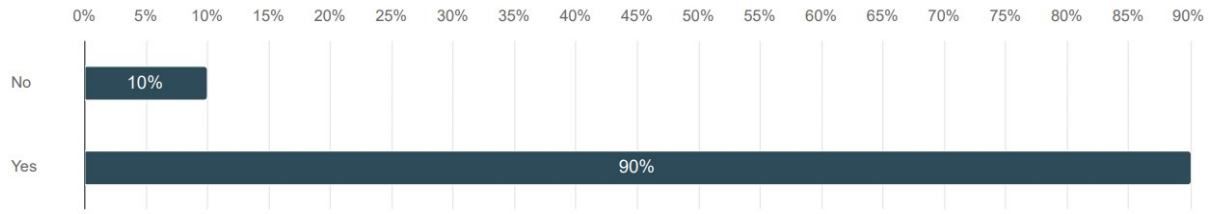
Number of respondents: 30



	n	Percent
No	10	33.3%
Yes	20	66.7%

Do you live in Finland?

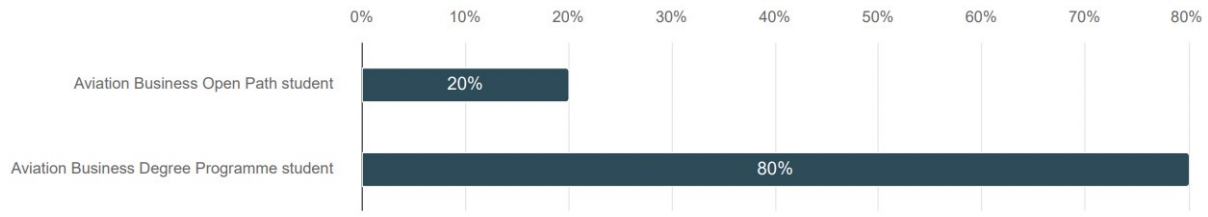
Number of respondents: 30



	n	Percent
No	3	10.0%
Yes	27	90.0%

Which of the following options decribes your current student profile?

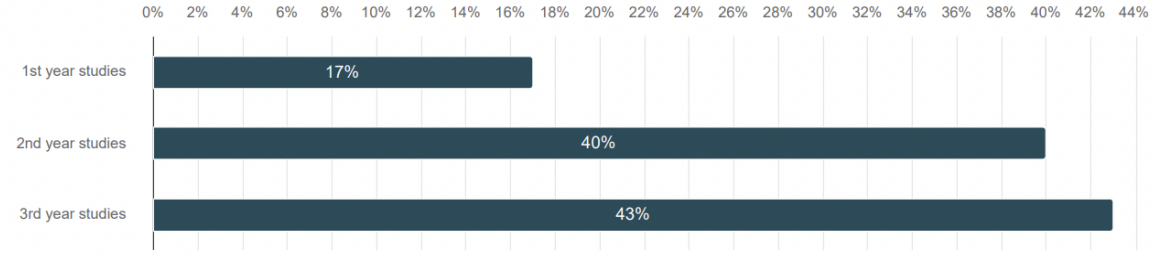
Number of respondents: 30



	n	Percent
Aviation Business Open Path student	6	20.0%
Aviation Business Degree Programme student	24	80.0%

Which academic study year are you currently participating?

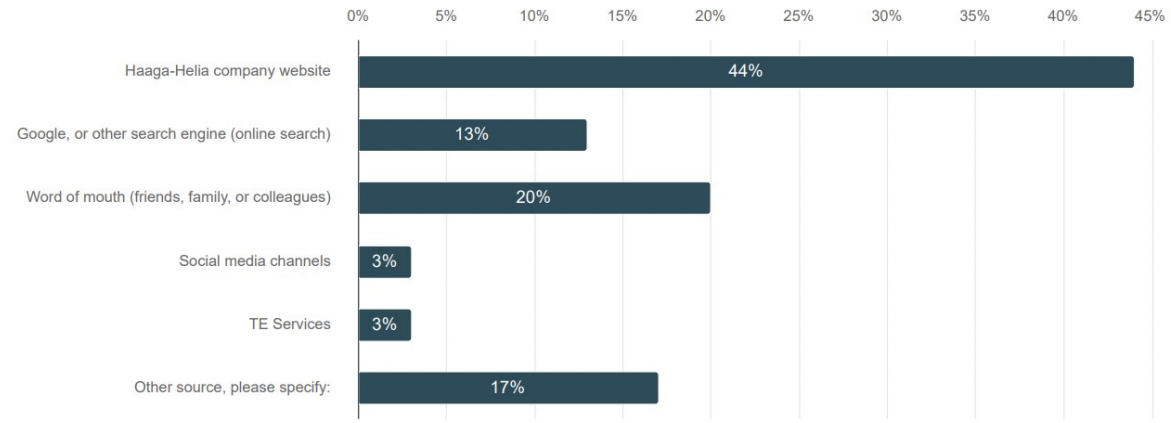
Number of respondents: 30



	n	Percent
1st year studies	5	16.7%
2nd year studies	12	40.0%
3rd year studies	13	43.3%

What was your main source of information regarding Aviation Business studies?

Number of respondents: 30



	n	Percent
Haaga-Helia company website	13	43.4%
Google, or other search engine (online search)	4	13.3%
Word of mouth (friends, family, or colleagues)	6	20.0%
Social media channels	1	3.3%
TE Services	1	3.3%
Other source, please specify:	5	16.7%

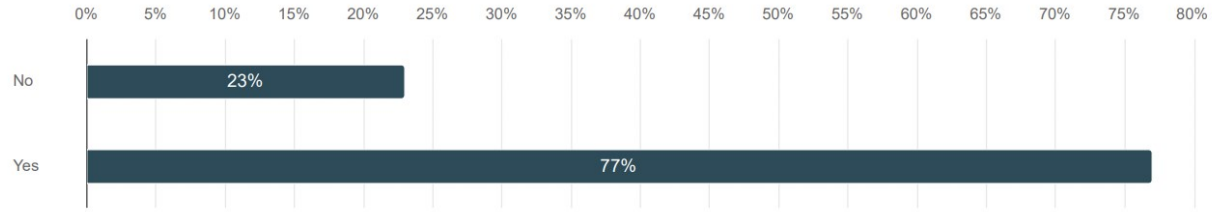
Answers given into textfield

Show all

Option names	Text
Other source, please specify:	My friend. The marketing on haaga's behalf was so bad
Other source, please specify:	Advertisement shared by labor union
Other source, please specify:	magazine
Other source, please specify:	Opintopolku
Other source, please specify:	Labor union

Have you applied to Haaga-Helia's online studies (online/ virtual courses)?

Number of respondents: 30

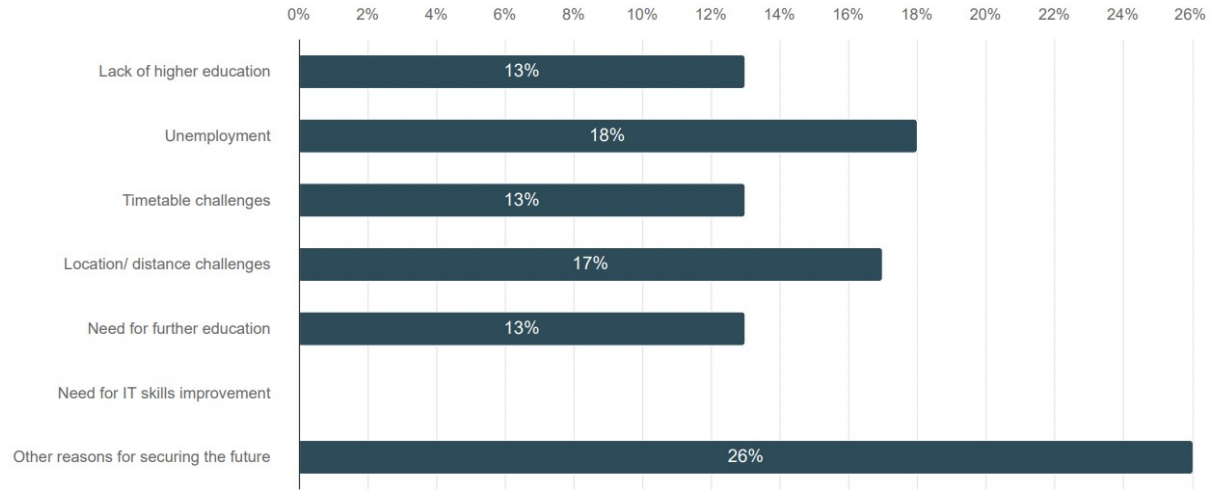


	n	Percent
No	7	23.3%
Yes	23	76.7%

What was your main reason for applying to online studies?

Online studies= online/ virtual courses.

Number of respondents: 23

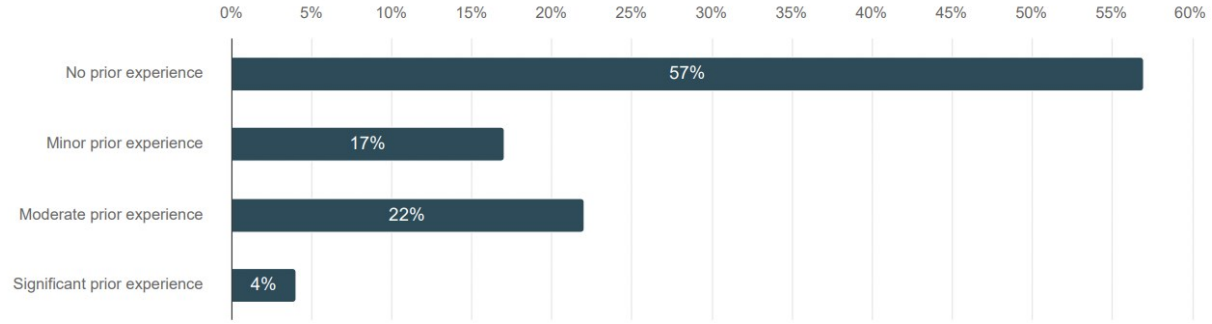


	n	Percent
Lack of higher education	3	13.1%
Unemployment	4	17.4%
Timetable challenges	3	13.0%
Location/ distance challenges	4	17.4%
Need for further education	3	13.0%
Need for IT skills improvement	0	0.0%
Other reasons for securing the future	6	26.1%

Have you had any prior experience of online studies?

Online studies= online/ virtual courses.

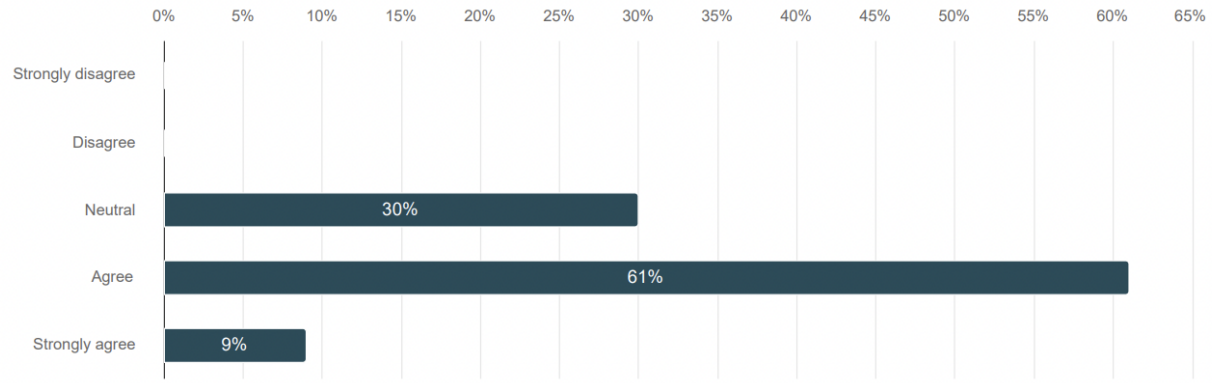
Number of respondents: 23



	n	Percent
No prior experience	13	56.5%
Minor prior experience	4	17.4%
Moderate prior experience	5	21.7%
Significant prior experience	1	4.4%

The study requirements (prerequisites) were well-informed in the beginning of the online studies

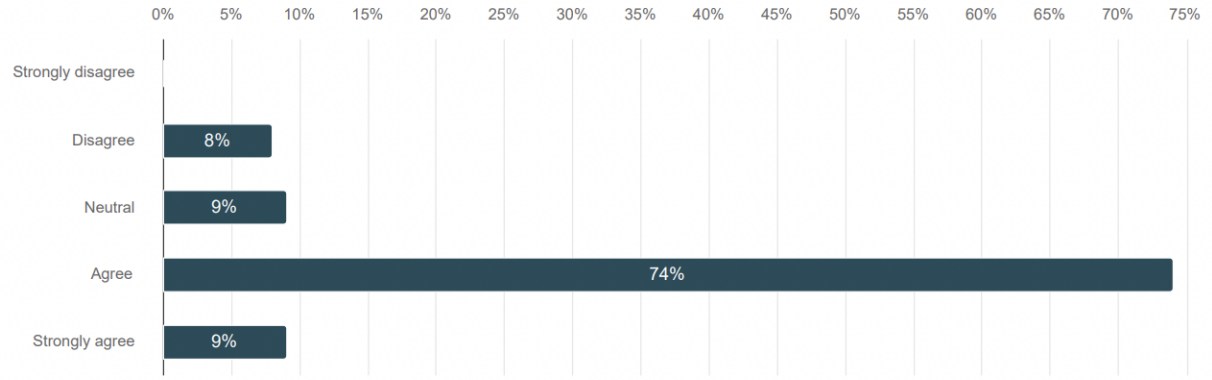
Number of respondents: 23



	n	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Neutral	7	30.4%
Agree	14	60.9%
Strongly agree	2	8.7%

The study objectives (learning goals) were well-informed in the beginning of the online studies

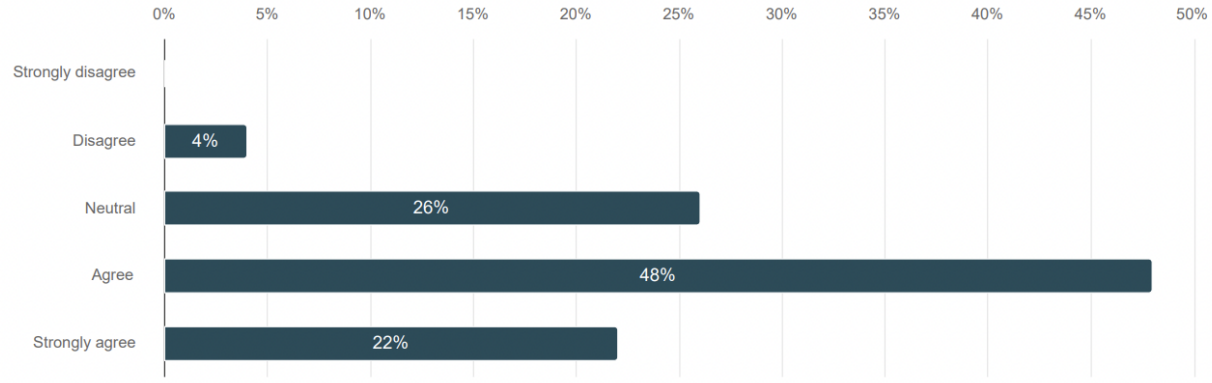
Number of respondents: 23



	n	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	2	8.7%
Neutral	2	8.7%
Agree	17	73.9%
Strongly agree	2	8.7%

The digital tools used in the studies were well-informed in the beginning of the online studies

Number of respondents: 23

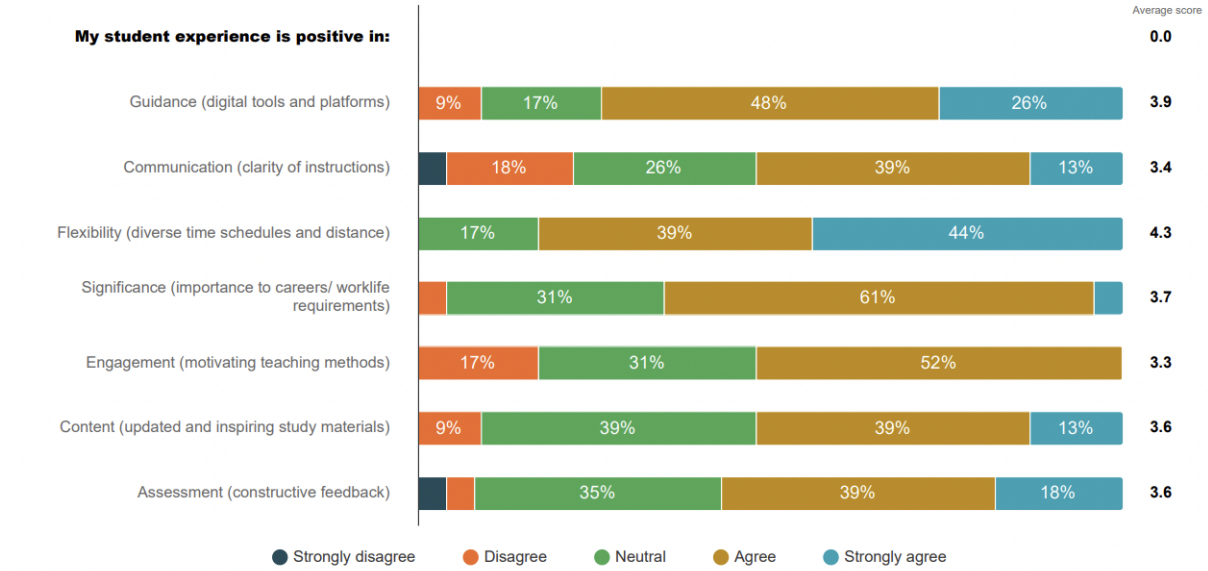


	n	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	1	4.4%
Neutral	6	26.1%
Agree	11	47.8%
Strongly agree	5	21.7%

How positive your student experience is in the following areas?

Identifying areas of study related assistance, communication, content, and implementation in online studies.

Number of respondents: 23

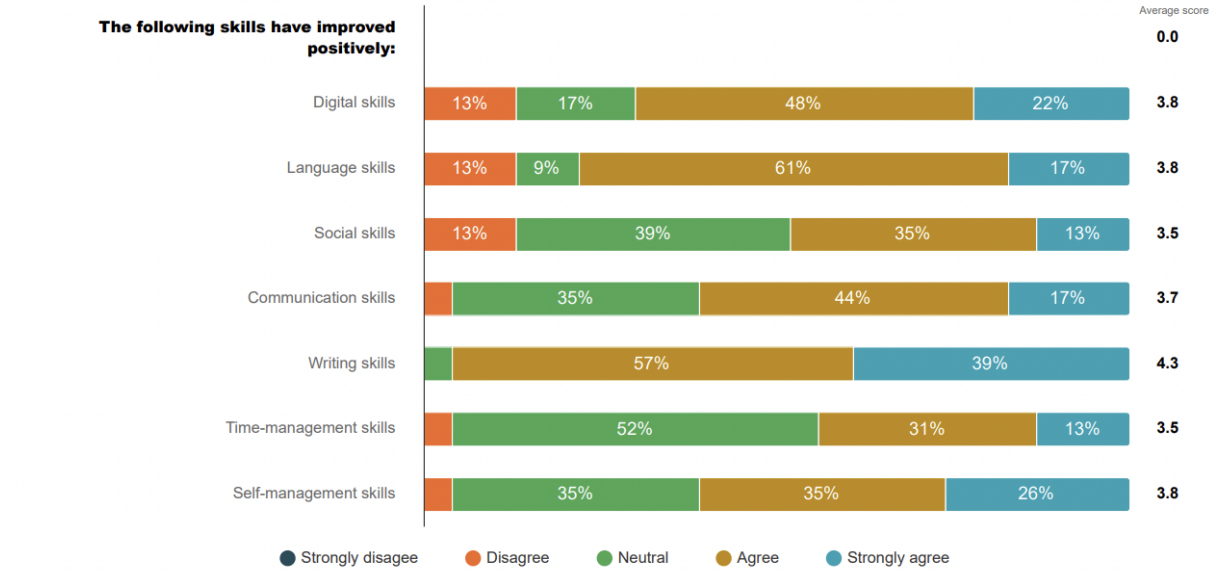


	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Average	Median
My student experience is positive in:							
Guidance (digital tools and platforms)	0.0%	8.7%	17.4%	47.8%	26.1%	3.9	4.0
Communication (clarity of instructions)	4.4%	17.4%	26.1%	39.1%	13.0%	3.4	4.0
Flexibility (diverse time schedules and distance)	0.0%	0.0%	17.4%	39.1%	43.5%	4.3	4.0
Significance (importance to careers/ worklife requirements)	0.0%	4.4%	30.4%	60.9%	4.3%	3.7	4.0
Engagement (motivating teaching methods)	0.0%	17.4%	30.4%	52.2%	0.0%	3.3	4.0
Content (updated and inspiring study materials)	0.0%	8.7%	39.1%	39.1%	13.1%	3.6	4.0
Assessment (constructive feedback)	4.4%	4.3%	34.8%	39.1%	17.4%	3.6	4.0
Total	**1.3%**	**8.7%**	**27.9%**	**45.3%**	**16.8%**	**3.7**	**4.0**

Have your skills improved positively in the following areas during your online studies?

Indicating possible skill development from the starting stage to the current education stage.

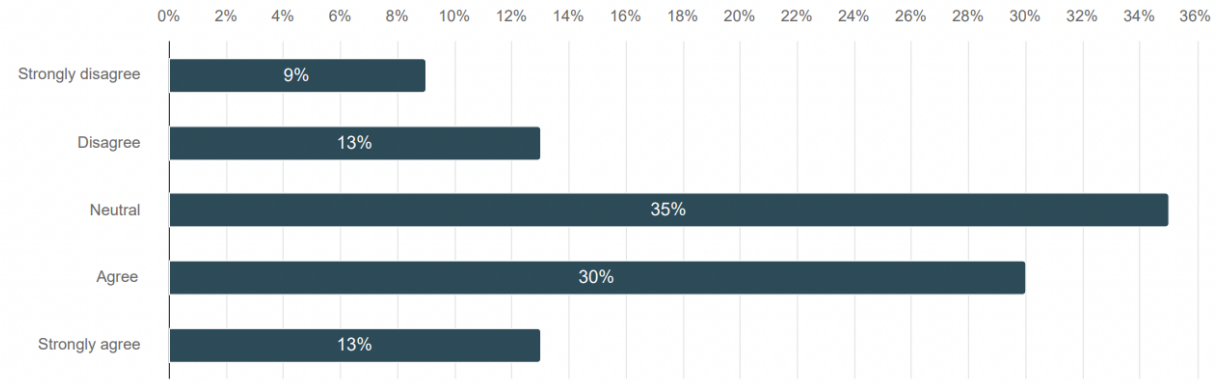
Number of respondents: 23



	Strongly disagee	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Average	Median
The following skills have improved positively:							
Digital skills	0.0%	13.1%	17.4%	47.8%	21.7%	3.8	4.0
Language skills	0.0%	13.0%	8.7%	60.9%	17.4%	3.8	4.0
Social skills	0.0%	13.1%	39.1%	34.8%	13.0%	3.5	3.0
Communication skills	0.0%	4.3%	34.8%	43.5%	17.4%	3.7	4.0
Writing skills	0.0%	0.0%	4.4%	56.5%	39.1%	4.3	4.0
Time-management skills	0.0%	4.4%	52.2%	30.4%	13.0%	3.5	3.0
Self-management skills	0.0%	4.3%	34.8%	34.8%	26.1%	3.8	4.0
Total	**0.0%**	**7.5%**	**27.3%**	**44.1%**	**21.1%**	**3.8**	**4.0**

Your work-related responsibilities and study obligations are well-balanced

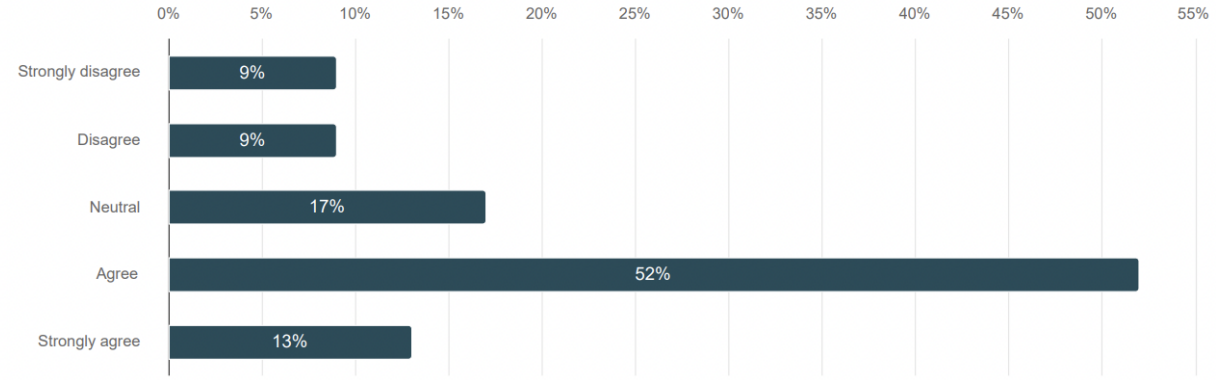
Number of respondents: 23



	n	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	8.7%
Disagree	3	13.1%
Neutral	8	34.8%
Agree	7	30.4%
Strongly agree	3	13.0%

Your family-related responsibilities and study related obligations are well-balanced

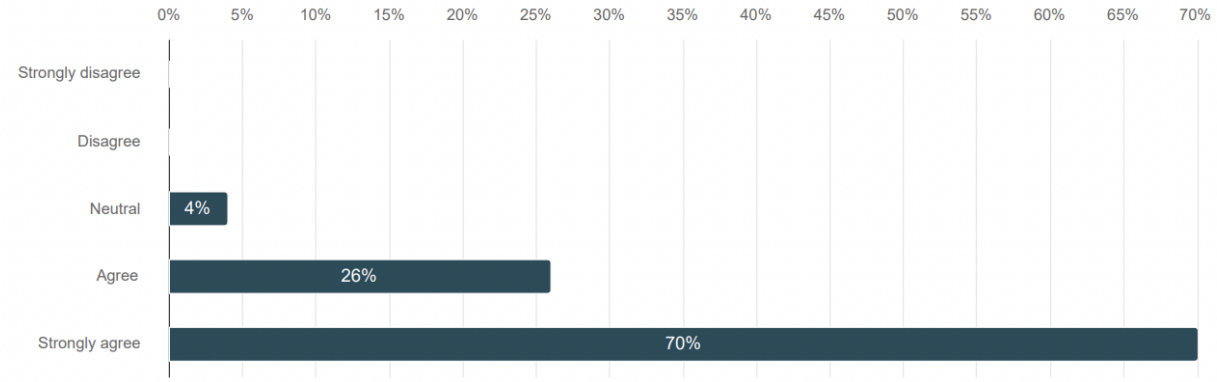
Number of respondents: 23



	n	Percent
Strongly disagree	2	8.7%
Disagree	2	8.7%
Neutral	4	17.4%
Agree	12	52.2%
Strongly agree	3	13.0%

The balance between work, family and study is important to you

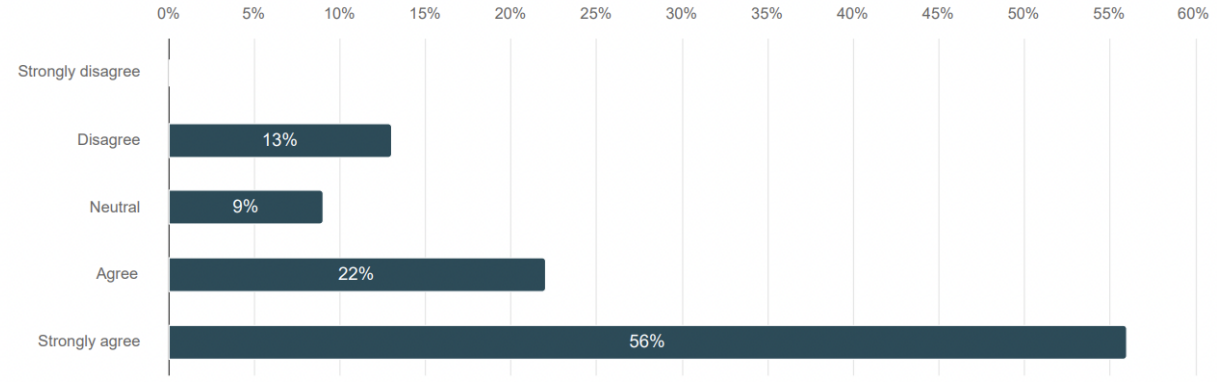
Number of respondents: 23



	n	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Neutral	1	4.3%
Agree	6	26.1%
Strongly agree	16	69.6%

You have <u>not</u> considered quitting your Aviation Business online studies

Number of respondents: 23



	n	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
Disagree	3	13.1%
Neutral	2	8.7%
Agree	5	21.7%
Strongly agree	13	56.5%

What other issues in your life affect your study performance?

Number of respondents: 16

Responses
Time
The combination of work and study is very demanding and stressful. Without study leave, it would have been almost impossible to complete the courses. Especially thesis writing beside work would be too challenging.
None
Lack of motivation.
Mostly family, that is priority no1 after full-time work. Very difficult to find time for studies. I have 3 small kids. All my "free time" spend with them.
Time in looking for job, own business.
Financial difficulties have to Work fulltime and study fulltime. The quiting of aikuiskoulutustuki makes things very difficult to finish my degree.
Work responsibilities/tasks, professional role, other societal responsibilities
Health
Time usable for studying and peaceful place to consentrate on studying.
I resigned from my position as an airline pilot last spring so I have more time.
Full-time job
-
Overall work level
Mostly the combination of other time-consuming activities. Family, work, hobbies, projects, flu, back problems, housekeeping etc. Always something requires attention.
Travel, and not having the possibility to have offline content

What motivates you the most in your online studies?

Number of respondents: 18

Responses
Better future
Graduating some day
The motivation is clearly the fact that online/virtual studies help students to perform better beside work. The student can schedule his/her own time individually.
The study platform and layout
Completing the courses and learning new things that interests you
Getting the degree done.
To get it finnished some day.
Flexibility
My fellow students topics and teachers
Freedom for time management
Relevancy of information taught. Well structured lectures and enough breaks for long days
Interesting courses and possibility of own scheduling of the studies.
To get the degree and the freedom of choosing when and where to study.
Finishing the studies
-
Able to study when time available and efficiently
Just graduating.
The goal of earning my degree

What changes to online studies would make your student experience more positive?

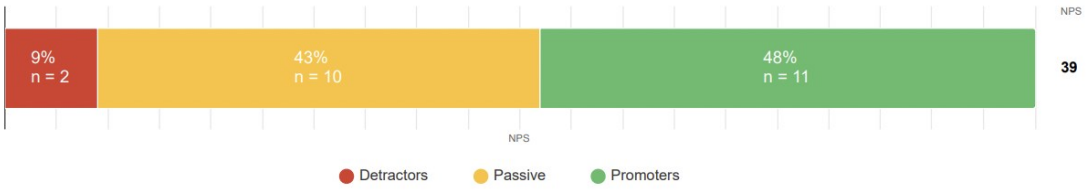
Please, express freely your thoughts and opinions from your personal experience regarding Aviation Business online studies.

Number of respondents: 16

Responses
More interaction
Better instructions and feedback culture
I would recommend not to use groupwork that often in online studies as timetables are tight and there is not much time to set up additional meetings. In addition, students have already gained experience in worklife and are not in futher need building up teamwork competences.
Everything is perfect!
Removing recommended deadlines, as each student has their own pace and style of studying, and recommended deadlines create pressure when a flashing red notification appears on your desktop for late assignments. Mentioning one deadline is sufficient, especially in virtual courses.
For adult students even more flexible scedules, no obilgatory lessons to take part that are scheduled only once. Group works are very hard to handle. Everyone has own timetables, hard to find time that suites everybody.
Meet up once in a while
Happy with it
Teachers use learning tools and material in such a various ways, that it is sometimes really frustrating and waste of time to figure out how each course is expected to be performed (might be the first year open student problem...)
For me, it would be better if there is no requirements of presence in the online lessons. In my job, I can ask only 5 days per months to have off and those days are usually already busy and scheduled for family.
There should be no mistakes in instructions of assignments.
Better way to organize life as a working student
1
Huge difference among lecturers abilities to teach online and presentations content. During online lessons the presentations are much more important making lessons interesting.
There were some courses where objectives were obscured throughout. I know it was new to many teachers as well, some adapted online methods quicker than others. Just overall improvement of clarity and materials. Also, the moodle pages were rather confusing at times. All unnecessary tabs and links should be removed from a given course platform.
quicker responses to queries, and / or immediate feedback

On a scale of 1-10, I would recommend Aviation Business online studies to others:

Number of respondents: 23



Detractors						Passive		Promoters	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
n = 2						n = 10		n = 11	
8.7%						43.5%		47.8%	
0	1	0	0	0	1	1	9	4	7
0.0%	4.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.4%	4.3%	39.1%	17.4%	30.4%

Total		
Respondents	NPS	Average
23	39	8.4