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Tertiary Students' Perceptions of Learning Oral Presentation Skills in In-Class and Online Learning Environment: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Online learning is seen to be the solution to education throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Instructional sessions and assessments are conducted in the virtual setting which affects instructors and students alike. Oral assessments like presentation sessions are conducted on teleconferencing platforms which bring different dimensions in pedagogy and online learning strategies employed by students. Thus, this study aimed to determine undergraduates' perceptions of online and in-class presentations. These undergraduates went through remote learning sessions and were not physically campus bound. For this study, the mixed-method approach was adopted and a set of questionnaires with two open-ended questions was distributed online to 1187 Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) undergraduates who were enrolled in the English for Professional Communication (UHL2432) course for Semester 2, session 2020/2021. Quantitative data were collected, and the descriptive statistics were calculated. The findings revealed students' mixed perceptions towards the effectiveness of applying delivery skills and elements of professionalism in online and in-class oral presentations. Furthermore, although findings have shown that students have adapted to online learning and preferred certain elements of oral presentation in a virtual environment, they also indicated that students preferred to learn oral presentations in a face-to-face classroom. Students' mixed perceptions were due to challenges in aspects such as maintaining eye contact, projecting voice, using visual aids, gestures and postures as well as interacting with the audience virtually. The findings of this study will provide a useful guide for the enhancement and development of online teaching and learning methodologies.

Keywords: Covid-19; higher education; in-class oral presentation; virtual oral presentation; technology

INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and the Ministry of Education (MOE) decided to halt physical teaching and learning activity from March 2020 as recommended by the National Security Council (NOC) due to the pandemic Covid-19 outbreak on a national scale. From that point onwards, the pandemic transformed online teaching and learning to an accelerated pace globally and locally (Chung et al., 2020). Emerging concepts have played important roles in influencing how online higher education should be approached and new learning management systems and platforms have been introduced (Basilaia et al., 2020). Students of higher learning institutions can take full advantage of the time and location flexibility (Dhawan, 2020) that online

education has to offer. It is vital for teaching and learning to proceed effectively despite the challenges.

Considering the circumstances, it is the educators' responsibility to reassess the quality of learning delivery and students' performance in virtual and physical settings, particularly in the context of preparing students for their professional practice. It is a shared understanding that entry level graduates generally lack employability skills in terms of qualities, characteristics, and technical knowledge. According to Lam (2021), the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Employer Insights Report, published in September 2020 highlighted that the skills to be attributed among graduates in the order of the highest to the lowest importance are communication, problem-solving, teamwork and flexibility. Lam (2021) reported that industry players in Malaysia demand graduates with excellent communication skills, not only in terms of graduates' proficiency levels, but also their ability to present well and articulate ideas clearly (among others). Apart from delivery skills, industry players also emphasised the importance of professionalism elements which include time management and appearance (Mohamed, 2020).

Since communication skills are identified to be an important factor in increasing graduates' employability (Abelha et al., 2020), it is expected that higher education institutions provide more explicit training and increase efforts to enhance these employability skills, especially in terms of oral presentation competencies. However, Benraghda et al. (2018) reported that ESL students experienced a high level of apprehension during oral presentations. Oral presentation in academic communication includes term paper presentation, seminars and conferences (Aryadoust, 2017). Fast forward to the era of Covid-19 pandemic, do ESL students still experience apprehension now that the presentation mode has gone online or do they still prefer in-class presentations?

Chung et al. (2020), who studied the readiness, preferred online learning methods, and the challenges faced by 399 Malaysian degree and diploma students in two different online learning courses, found that the degree students were more ready than the diploma students. They also found that female students were more ready, more satisfied and had better learning experiences than their male counterparts. More than 50 percent of the respondents would prefer to discontinue with online learning if they had the choice. While internet connectivity issues were found to be the main hindrance to online learning for degree students, diploma students' primary challenge was to understand the content taught during the online lessons. In terms of preferred online learning methods, most respondents favoured online learning via pre-recorded lectures that they could access repeatedly on Google Classroom and YouTube.

However, the study carried out by Chung et al. (2020) was not specific to the learning of presentation skills and was more towards students' readiness. The primary interest of this study is to compare which mode of learning presentation skills is more effective for students to perform better in presentations in terms of delivery skills and professionalism since they have experienced both virtual and physical classroom environments. Thus, the objectives of this study are to investigate the undergraduates' experiences in performing virtual and in-class oral presentations, find out their preferred mode in learning oral presentation skills, as well as identify the challenges faced by the students in performing virtual and in-class oral presentations.

This study is significant in that it aims to understand the challenges faced by the students in both face-to-face and online environments. It also seeks to help instructors to adopt suitable teaching strategies and approaches to accommodate students' learning styles and challenges as the findings allow instructors to further comprehend students' learning process for online or physical class.

Additionally, oral presentation skills are vital skills that all university graduates must possess. Students need to master multiple oral presentation skills in ensuring the effectiveness of delivering important information. The skills involved are not only the proficiency of the language used but also delivery skills such as eye contact, gestures and body language. In summary, by understanding students' perspectives of virtual and in-class presentations, it is hoped that better teaching methodologies may be created and adapted, hence providing better learning experiences for students in the future. In fact, students need to be prepared for a higher percentage of blended learning, post Covid-19 pandemic, compared to before the pandemic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses related literature in oral presentation competence particularly in the context of higher education. Studies on virtual and face-to-face oral presentations will also be reviewed in relation to learners' learning and their performance, as well as instructors' strategies for developing oral presentation competencies of their students in higher education context.

ORAL PRESENTATION COMPETENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Oral presentation competence is defined as "the combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to speak in public in order to inform, to self-express, to relate and to persuade" (De Grez, 2009, p. 5). The ability to present effectively is perceived as crucial in the success of students' academic journey as well as in their professional life. Therefore, various strategies have been developed and introduced to enhance students' competencies in delivering effective oral presentations. For instance, Al Natour and Woo (2020) introduced blended learning methods in one of the Management Information System courses at a public university in North America. In their research, students were required to submit online video presentations and it was aimed to gauge students' satisfaction with the introduction of online video presentations in their blended learning classes. While results showed that online video presentations have positively impacted students' learning, namely in terms of social dynamics in teamwork and the level of enjoyment, they did not reveal insights into students' overall performance. Whether this approach has improved students' oral presentation competencies remains unclear.

Morell and Pastor (2018) suggested that effective classroom presentations entail the application of multimodal competence by the presenters. Morell (2018) defined multimodal competence as the ability to use verbal and non-verbal communication skills. In other words, effective presenters not only demonstrate a certain level of language proficiency in terms of accuracy and fluency in relaying the contents of the presentations, but they are also able to exploit non-verbal modes of communication to achieve the presentation objectives. Morell (2018) grouped non-verbal communication, which consists of paralinguistic features (*i.e.,* pronunciation, volume, speed, tone, stress and intonation), and extralinguistic features (*i.e.,* eye contact, facial gestures, arm and hand). These features were found to counterbalance the challenges that L2 learners face in terms of linguistics competence (Morell & Pastor, 2018). However, the discussion of multimodal competencies was not addressed in relation to virtual presentations whereby there were constraints in the online medium for presenters to apply certain non-verbal communication features effectively.

Similarly, Barrett et al. (2020) emphasised the necessity to train and provide proper instructions in multimodal competencies such as designing slides, using appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication skills and structuring presentations for EFL students. Barrett et al. (2020) found Taiwanese students experiencing anxiety over their language incompetence which could affect the effectiveness of their presentations, as the audience might not understand their messages. Even though these students welcomed the idea of having online collaboration for learning oral presentation skills through mobile phones, they still expressed their concern over the challenges of the online collaborative learning process. For instance, communication problems could arise due to disagreements during discussions (Barrett et al., 2020).

Apart from the anxiety caused by concerns of language competence, students' delivery competence was another central issue in Tsang's (2020) study. He looked at the relationship between public speaking anxiety and self-perceived delivery competence in oral presentations. He also categorised delivery competence into four different categories - speech (five items), body language (seven items), psychological (two items) and miscellaneous features (nine items) which encompass other general presentation aspects. The notions of public speaking anxiety and self-perceived delivery are similar to the idea of self-esteem and self-efficacy emphasised by Chiang et al. (2022) as two of three important components for an effective oral presentation. This makes sense as the higher the self-esteem and self-efficacy level, the lower the students' anxiety level is. Tsang's (2020) results showed that 22 delivery items were found to have significant effects on students' anxiety level while giving presentations. Apparently, students were very conscious of their gestures (especially the arms and hands movements) as gestures are noticeable and cannot be hidden during face-to-face oral presentations (Tsang, 2020). Besides that, strategies to deal with unexpected situations during presentations were also helpful to mitigate their anxiety level.

Research on peer feedback on the presentations given by students were also found to be helpful for students to be more prepared and hence, it improves their performance in the presentation assessment (Murillo-Zamorano & Montanero, 2018). However, the study of Day et al. (2021) yielded contrasting findings. It was found that the peers in the study did not provide feed-forward or in other words, recommendations and suggestions on how to improve their friends' presentations in the future. Therefore, there was no positive relationship between peer feedback and students' presentation performance. Then again, this depended on the quality of the feedback itself. Nonetheless, despite the lack of correlation between the feedback received and presentation performance, Day et al. (2021) stated that it was important to note that students' performance had actually increased though that could be due to the in class and out of class activities provided by the instructors. On the other hand, Benraghda et al. (2022) found that self-assessment helped the engineering undergraduates to identify areas of weaknesses and eventually improved their oral presentation performance. This is supported by Seau et al. (2018) whose study found that it was students' self-awareness that enabled them to independently improve their oral presentation skills over time.

LEARNING ORAL PRESENTATION SKILLS IN AN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the increase in technological integration in teaching and learning was inevitable, and this included oral presentations. Oral presentations require the application of multiple modes such as language, text, videos and body gestures which are applied by presenters to enhance the effectiveness of their oral presentations. The use of multiple modes is also known as multimodality which is defined by Van Leeuwen and Kress (2001) as "the phenomenon in texts and communicative events whereby a variety of semiotic modes are integrated into a unified

whole" (p. 107). In other words, multimodality not only refers to the combination of linguistic and non-linguistic features, but also the variety of modes of doing something.

While many challenges were faced by instructors and learners in integrating technology in improving their teaching and learning processes, many studies found that technology has provided assistance in terms of the effectiveness and learners' engagement particularly in teaching and learning of oral presentation skills. For instance, the use of video recording can enhance learners' oral presentation skills. Tailab and Marsh (2020) examined the effectiveness of video recording in raising students' awareness in the development of their oral presentation skills. In the study, 68 Financial Accounting students were given their own video recordings and asked to review the videos. Findings showed that the students were able to identify areas of weaknesses in their own presentations especially in the delivery areas such as eye contact, voice quality, self-confidence and preparation. This self-assessment evaluation using video recording was found helpful in enhancing students' oral presentation skills (Tailab & Marsh, 2020).

Teacher feedback also helps students in improving students' learning. Xu et al. (2021) investigated the teacher's role in giving feedback to students' oral presentation performance in an online learning environment and reported that the participants who were students of Business English, held a positive attitude towards teacher feedback in improving their oral presentation skills. Besides giving feedback on the content and delivery related components, teachers also provided feedback on the technology use, timing and teamwork. Xu et al. (2021) also highlighted that research investigating the process of oral presentations in online context is limited.

Another study on teacher feedback was conducted by Van Ginkel et al. (2020) focusing on the timing of the feedback: delayed and immediate within the Virtual Reality (VR) environment. 22 pre-university students were involved in the experimental study. Findings showed positive development in all presentation criteria and students claimed to be more motivated to learn presentation skills in the VR platform. It clearly shows that using appropriate technology platforms has the potential to stimulate students' interest in learning and hence improve their presentation skills.

Therefore, in this paper, effective oral presentations comprise knowledge, skills and attitude. This is illustrated by Figure 1 which represents the framework in this study, named Oral Presentation-Multimodal Competence (OP-MM Competence) framework for effective oral presentations. It is adapted from De Grez's (2009) and Morell's (2018) oral presentation competency and multimodal competency respectively. In this framework, *Knowledge* refers to the presentation content particularly the context and quality of the content such as correctness, completeness and conciseness. *Attitude* is characterised as elements of professionalism such as appearance and time management, and *Skills* has two components, which are *Linguistics or Verbal* and *Non-Linguistics or Non-Verbal.* The former refers to language competence of the presenters such as accuracy and fluency which is necessary to impart the content of the presentations effectively. *Multimodal competence* is part of the latter and comprises eye contact, voice projection, use of visual aids, gestures, posture and interaction with audience that enhance the effectiveness of the oral presentations

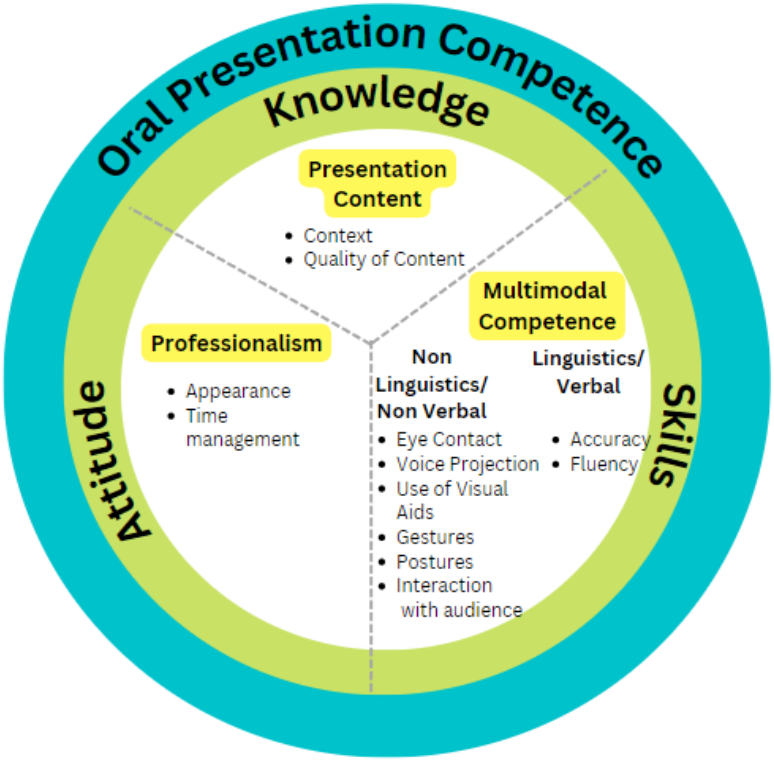

FIGURE 1. Oral Presentation-Multimodal Competence (OP-MM Competence) Framework

While there have been studies looking into the integration of technology when teaching oral presentations and oral presentations in online settings, it is apparent that there is a lack of research that compares students' perspective in terms of which learning environment is more effective in the learning and delivery of oral presentation skills, especially when learning has migrated online and is very much relevant to the current trend in education. An example would be the growing number of massive open online courses. As such, using OP-MM Competence Framework, this study aims to investigate students' preference in learning and delivering oral presentations. This paper mainly focuses on the Non-Linguistics/Non-Verbal elements as well as the Professionalism elements. To further address this objective, the following Research Questions (RQ) were formulated:

1. What are the students' preferred mode in performing oral presentations in terms of effectiveness in applying delivery skills elements?
2. What are the students' preferred mode in performing oral presentations in terms of effectiveness in applying professionalism elements?
3. What are the students' preferred mode in learning oral presentation skills?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-method research design as the questionnaire consisted of quantitative and qualitative elements. The qualitative element was included in the questionnaire to gain specific information in terms of the students' perceptions of the challenges faced when doing oral presentations in online and physical classrooms and these perceptions were used to support the quantitative data.

PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

The sample in this study consisted of 224 students from English for Professional Communication (UHL2432). UHL2432 is a compulsory course for all UMP students. It is a final level English course that students are required to take to be equipped with communication skills that would help them meet the demands of both academic and global professional practice. UHL2432 prepares students from job applications to doing their job at the workplace; it also includes written and oral presentations as part of the assessments. Prior to the pandemic, all students had face-to-face classes and all assessments were conducted face-to-face and that included their oral presentation assessments.

Table 1 summarises the respondents' demographic characteristics, and the profile denotes that the sample is representative of the study population. Out of those 224 students, 79 students were male and the remaining 145 students were female. Most students fall under the 22 to 24 years old age gap (n = 198, 88.4%), followed by the age range of above 24 (n = 24, 10.7%) Lastly, the least recorded number of students fell under the 18 to 21 age gaps (n = 2, 0.9%). Of the 224 students in the sample, 57 were from the Faculty of Civil Engineering which comprised 25.4% of the respondents. Meanwhile, 49 students were from the Faculty of Chemical and Process Engineering Technology resulting in 21.9% of the sample. As seen in Table 1, 27 students were from the Faculty of Industrial Sciences and Technology (12.1%) and 26 students were from College of Engineering (11.6%) respectively. 17 students were from the Faculty of Industrial Management (7.6%), 13 students recorded were from the Faculty of Manufacturing and Mechatronic Engineering Technology (5.8%). The same number of students were recorded from the Faculty of Mechanical and Automotive Engineering Technology (5.4%) and Faculty of Computing (5.4%) with 12 students respectively. Finally, from the data presented, only 11 students were from the Faculty of Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technology (4.9%).

TABLE 1. Summary of participants' demographics

	N	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	79	35.3
Female	145	64.6
Age		
18-21	2	0.9
22-24	198	88.4
Above 24	24	10.7
Faculty		
Faculty of Chemical and Process Engineering Technology	49	21.9
Faculty of Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technology	11	4.9
Faculty of Mechanical and Automotive Engineering Technology	12	5.4
Faculty of Civil Engineering Technology		
Faculty of Manufacturing and Mechatronic Engineering Technology	57	25.4
Faculty of Industrial Sciences and Technology	13	5.8
Faculty of Industrial Management		
Faculty of Computing	27	12.1
College of Engineering	17	7.6
Total	12	5.4
	26	11.6
	224	100

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

An online survey using Google Form was developed and distributed to 1187 students from March 2022 to June 2021 with the help from the instructors who taught the course during that semester. This was to ensure that the survey was given to the right target group. However, only 224 responses were received. These students were chosen because all of them had experienced delivering oral presentations in face-to-face classes prior to the Movement Control Order (MCO).

The questionnaire was developed by the researchers based on the elements that are assessed in the oral presentation (OP) of the English for Professional Communication (UHL2432) course such as delivery competence and professionalism, as well as students' perceptions of the guidance received in learning oral presentation skills during virtual and face-to-face classes. While *Delivery competence* elements consist of eye contact, voice projection, the use of visual aids, gestures and postures as well as interactions with the audience, *Professionalism* refers to time management and attire.

The questionnaire consists of 4 sections, A to D. Section A collected the demographic data of the participants such as age, sex and major of studies, and Section B, which has a total of 15 items, required the students to answer the questions regarding their experiences in performing oral presentations virtually and in-class based on the course OP assessments. The findings will show students' preference in terms of which medium is more effective in terms of applying delivery skills and professionalism elements. In Section C, there are 4 items in which students were asked how they perceived the guidance given by their instructors on oral presentation skills during virtual and face-to-face class. The findings will show which medium they prefer to learn oral presentation skills. While the last section, Section D, which consists of 2 open-ended questions, gauges the students' challenges in performing oral presentations in both mediums: virtual and in-class. The data from Section D were analysed qualitatively and are used to support students' preference from

the aspects of applying delivery skills and professionalism elements in oral presentations. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using the Cronbach Alpha and has obtained a high validity value of 0.9 (Cronbach, 1951).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings on students' perceptions on the learning and application of oral presentation skills in both face-to-face and online modes, more specifically their preference in terms of which medium is more effective in the aspects of application of delivery skills, professionalism elements and for learning oral presentation skills as well as the challenges in delivering oral presentations in both face-to-face and online modes.

STUDENTS' PREFERENCES IN APPLYING PROPER DELIVERY ELEMENTS IN ORAL PRESENTATIONS

As delivery competence has been identified to cause anxiety (Tsang, 2020), the questions asked in the questionnaire are based on the delivery elements in the OP-MM Competence Framework, which are also the elements assessed in the English for Professional Communication (UHL2432) course such as eye contact, voice projection, the use of visual aids, gestures and postures as well as interactions with the audience (see Table 2).

TABLE 2. Delivery elements

Item	Virtual presentation (%)	Face-to-face presentation (%)
I would be able to apply appropriate and better eye contact with the audience during…	35.7	64.3
I would be able to avoid reliance on slides and avoid reading from notes better during …	32.6	72.4
I would be able to project my voice more clearly during…	58.9	41.4
I would be able to speak with more enthusiasm during…	61.6	38.4
I would be able to demonstrate confidence during…	51.8	48.2
I would be able to include better use of visual aids, graphics and slides during...	70.5	29.5
I would be able to integrate better technological tools for presentation during…	79.5	
I would be able to incorporate fluid gestures better during…		20.5
I would be able to have better control of physical movement, space and body positioning during…	41.1 38.8	58.9
I would be able to interact more effectively with the audience during…		61.2
I think I would get more feedback for the Q & A session during…	33.5	
I prefer to get feedback for Q & A sessions during…		66.5
I would be able to hold the audience's interest during…	38.4	
		61.6
	44.6	
	34.4	55.4
		65.6

The first item in Table 2 illustrates students' beliefs on the application of better eye contact during oral presentation delivery. They strongly believed that they can better engage with the audience through eye-contact in their oral presentations during face-to-face classes. They also claimed that the tendency for the reliance on reading the slides would be lesser during face-to-face

presentations. Even though they claimed that they are able to have better eye contact during face-to-face presentations, they (22 respondents) still faced problems in applying the skill. Some of the responses were "I face problems in making eye contact", "afraid to make eye contact" and "difficult to make eye contact". In addition, there were those who responded that having eye contact during presentations made them more nervous (R84, R79, R181) and easily forget their contents and scripts (R33, R82, R154). In fact, online presentations require the skill of looking into the webcam. The webcam is now the audience's eyes (Boldea & Sigmirean, 2020) that the online presenters would have to imagine speaking to it and therefore, they have to make eye contact with the webcam, or rather with the audience through the webcam. Ideally, it should allow the audience to feel as if the presenter is presenting to and engaging with them.

In terms of voice projection during presentations in both mediums, the students reported that they were able to project their voice better during online presentations and that they did it with more enthusiasm. This finding supports Boldea and Sigmirean (2020) who claimed that presenting online is more relaxed. Having a built-in speaker in their computers or headphones during online presentation facilitates them to have a clear voice and be heard by the audience. Unlike during face-to-face presentations, most of the time, the students were not supplied with a microphone and had to project their voice to the farthest corner of the classroom. Ten (10) respondents reported that they faced challenges in applying this skill during face-to-face presentations. Two (2) respondents (R104, R206) stated that they had a low volume and were afraid that the audience could not hear what they were presenting both in the classroom and during online presentations. This could be due to them mirroring their confidence. Marinho et al. (2017) found that students' pitch and softness in speech correlated to speech anxiety.

Visual aids help students to present their contents more clearly and effectively. Based on the findings, most students preferred virtual presentations as they claimed that their slides and graphics were better designed and more attractive images and videos could be embedded. Their preference for virtual presentations may also be attributed to them being the digital-savvy generations as virtual presentations offer them the opportunity to apply their advanced technological skills (Aryadoust, 2017; Al Natour & Woo, 2020).

Many research studies confirm the importance of non-verbal communication in oral presentations. Nevertheless, space allocation for virtual and face-to-face presentations may have effects on the gestures and postures of presenters. All the respondents in this study claimed that they were able to perform with better gestures and appropriate body language during face-to-face presentations with the exception of 10 respondents who highlighted their concerns over inappropriate body gestures portrayed during presentations. For instance, they might showcase some awkward gestures and postures due to their nervousness and lack of control (R84, R103). Similar findings were found by Tsang (2020) in which it was reported that some students portrayed their nervousness during oral presentations through trembling arms and hands. Besides, focusing too much on the contents of the presentation could make them forget about their gestures (R133, R44). On the other hand, due to space constraints, online presenters could not move freely and did not have the control of space and their positioning. However, the use of a different video camera can help capture presenters from far and thus, presenters would be able to apply appropriate gestures and postures.

Another element assessed in the oral presentation assessment is interaction with the audience. A majority of the students (66.5%) agreed that engaging the audience during their face-to-face presentations is more effective. In addition, holding the audience's interest during the presentation is another vital point for the success of one's presentations. A Question and Answer

(Q&A) session is normally a venue to check the presenters' overall understanding of the topic presented/ shared or to provide feedback for the topic. The respondents (61.6%) in this study agreed that feedback is better given during face-to-face presentations. Furthermore, feedback from peers is found to have helped improve the quality of students' presentation skills (Murillo-Zamorano & Montanero, 2018). However, the reverse is true, according to findings that were reported by Tsang (2020) regarding the audience's response. Audience response also included audience laughter which was reported to possibly affect the presenter's performance. It can be interpreted that feedback comes in various forms: verbal and psychological, given positively or negatively, could influence one's learning experience and achievements. Given the immense importance of feedback and audience reaction, great instructors should advise and train students, being the members of the audience, to show a positive attitude during their presentations, to reduce their presentation apprehension and produce a positive atmosphere. Online presentations in some ways are positive in that the presenters do not hear the audience's laughter, but on the other hand, this can be demotivating too, especially if the response is positive, but they do not hear it as the audience turns their microphones off. In this sense, Xu et al. (2021) are right in saying that having no face-to-face communication between presenters and audience makes it challenging for students to conduct oral presentations effectively.

PROFESSIONALISM ELEMENTS IN ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Table 3 illustrates students' reactions towards professionalism elements which are time management and appearance or attire. As time management is another vital point for presentation success, presenters must programme or schedule their presentation contents according to the time limit. In a workplace environment, time is very precious. Students reported that time limitation is better controlled during virtual presentations. It could be due to the fact that the presentation is recorded, and students can re-do the recording until they get the desired time. Another factor is having the clock embedded in the computer/tablet so that they are more alert to how much time they have. Even though a clock is usually put somewhere that is clearly seen by the presenter in the classroom, some of them (26 respondents) still found it difficult to adjust their presentation according to the time requirement.

TABLE 3. Professionalism elements

Item	Virtual presentation (%)	Face-to-face presentation (%)
I would be able to adhere to the time limit better during…	60.3	39.7
I would dress more appropriately during…	15.6	84.4

What is striking in the respondents' feedback is the difference between time management as a challenge in online and in-class presentation. Students reported that in the setting of online presentation, the internet strength plays a crucial role in their time management. With a steady internet connection, they are able to end in time by not having to repeat themselves should the connection be lost (R29, R49, R60, R84, R87, R89). The problem could be even more challenging if the presentation was a group presentation as assigning parts or roles would be more difficult (R22). This is in line with the findings by Mallillin and Daniel (2019) whereby 'management of time effectively in the oral presentation should be allocated on the task given among the members

of the group'. Some respondents felt strongly that in class presentations posed more challenges in terms of time management. Students believed that more time was needed to prepare for in-class presentations which could be due to logistics and the presenter's appearance (R51, R72, R87). Lastly, according to two respondents (R47, R90), managing time in a classroom presentation was difficult in terms of possible occurrences of unexpected events.

In addition, making the right impression matters greatly in the success of one's presentation. The students were aware that 'clothes maketh a man', and one of them expressed his concern that his attire or appearance did not catch his audience's attention (R154). This is in line with findings from Aryadoust (2017)'s study that peers (i.e., the audience) are more likely to be attracted to physically attractive presenters. Normally, a silent judgement will be done once the presenter appears to present and at times, the judgement is based on the presenter's attire or their appearance. Therefore, students claimed that their dressing will be more taken care of during face-to-face presentations. This could be due to the fact that during a face-to-face presentation, the audience will have a full view of the presenter, unlike during a virtual presentation, where the presenter can hide behind the camera in the sense that they could give the illusion of being appropriately attired.

However, wearing formal attire can cause presentation anxiety. One student (R181) reported that he "couldn't keep calm and present in class in front of the rest of the class, with formal attire, as it is very suffocating and it makes me more nervous". Many male engineering students are not used to wearing formal wear such as neckties and blazers, and hence, wearing formal attire can be stifling. Perhaps there were other underlying reasons, but this particular student attributed it to his appearance.

LEARNING AND INSTRUCTIONS OF ORAL PRESENTATION SKILLS

To explore how students perceived instructions on presentation skills, students were asked to report on their preference for the modes of teaching delivery. Table 4 shows that most of them preferred to have instructions on oral presentations conducted in face-to-face classes and that includes the explanations, activities, exercises, feedback, and interactions provided by the instructors.

TABLE 4. Instructions from instructors

Item	Virtual classes (%)	Face-to-face classes (%)
I prefer the explanations and instructions on oral presentation provided by course instructors via…	33.5	66.5
I prefer activities and exercises on oral presentation provided by course instructors via…	38.4	61.6
I prefer the teaching and learning materials on oral presentation provided by course instructors via…	44.6	55.4
I prefer the feedback given by course instructors on oral presentation via…	42.4	57.6
I prefer student-student (peer) and student-instructor interactions during	34.4	65.6

The findings were supported by the interviewees (R35, R38, R47, R98) in that having face-to-face classes helped them to comprehend the lessons better and having interactions with the teachers and classmates motivated them to improve their presentation skills. These results are

similar to the findings by Chung et al. (2020). Even though the respondents in their study were reported to be generally ready for online learning, they still prefer face-to-face instructions, regardless of their gender and level of study. However, pre-recorded PowerPoint slides with voice over were found to be helpful for these students (Chung et al., 2020). It is important to note that our UHL2432 students were also provided with pre-recorded PowerPoint slides with voice over as learning materials. In general, these findings suggest that apart from the learning materials and strategies provided by the instructors, it is also vital to provide emotional support for students during online learning. Developing students' self-efficacy through positive encouragement (Tsang, 2020) may help them to embrace the challenges faced during the Covid-19 pandemic. More training and practice opportunities as well as explicit, immediate and systematic feedback from teachers may provide motivation to students, hence improve their oral presentation performance.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study investigated undergraduates' preference of mediums in delivering oral presentations and the barriers in delivering presentations effectively. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, online learning has become an integral part of students' life around the world. This study reports mixed preferences by students after having experienced online learning for approximately 18 months. Despite facing certain barriers in delivering effective oral presentations in both mediums, students have started to embrace the flexibilities that both mediums offer. In terms of delivery competence, in particular eye contact, gestures and postures as well as interaction with the audience, most students believed that they applied these skills better during face-to-face presentations. It is also noteworthy to mention that students acknowledged how they demonstrated better delivery skills specifically in projecting their voice and developing their skills of using advanced technological tools in virtual presentations. However, face-to-face instructions on presentation skills are still preferred by most students. This is not surprising because it is hard to concentrate on online instructions especially when internet connection is weak and students have difficulty staying connected (Xu et al., 2021; Chung et al., 2020). Unless there are recordings made of the class, students would certainly miss a large part of the information that was conveyed. For online learning to be more effective, instructors must have recorded lessons that students could access on Google Classroom and YouTube.

While it is important to determine students' preferred medium of presentation in terms of their satisfaction in learning, the effectiveness of learning and students' actual performance in both mediums should also be considered in future research. It is hoped that the findings of this study will provide better insights to instructors in terms of designing appropriate and effective teaching materials and methodologies, with a specific focus on delivery skills and professionalism elements for both virtual and face-to-face academic oral presentations. The findings of this study clearly show that the elements in the OP-MM Competence Framework are key to effective oral presentations. As such, all oral presentation assessment rubrics should be aligned to the OP-MM Competence Framework to standardise assessment and evaluation practices which would lead to a better educational attainment for both students and stakeholders. However, this study had not focused on the *Knowledge* component of the framework. Therefore, future research could look into that aspect, particularly students' process of providing quality content in their presentations. Additionally, future research could also apply the OP-MM Competence Framework in their own oral presentation contexts to address the issue of oral presentation effectiveness or lack thereof.

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