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# An investigation into the Mental, Social and Physical impacts of online learning on the students at The University of The West Indies, St Augustine.

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## Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced many educational institutions worldwide to a mandatory online format. The sudden switch to online learning courses from traditional face-to-face classes has been noted to come at a great cost, especially concerning students. The effects of this sudden transition was noted both internationally and regionally especially regarding student internet accessibility and usage. However, this study attempts to delve into online learning's impacts on students' mental, social and physical health

## Objective

- 1. To examine the impact of online learning on the mental, social, and physical well-being of university students during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2. To evaluate the effectiveness of online learning on students' academic performances
- 3. To examine and compare the challenges and benefits associated with online learning versus traditional learning.

## Methodology

- A quantitative study was done utilizing an online questionnaire as the data collection instrument.
- The questionnaire was self-administered and distributed to the undergraduates of the University of the West Indies STA via the guild representative of the faculties and the TTMSA Instagram page.
- The data collected pertained to:
  - Demographics
  - The social, mental and physical impacts of the online learning platform on students.
- Chi-square, ANOVA, T-testing and Kendall's tau-b analysis was conducted using SPSS version 27.

## Results

Table 1.1 showing Descriptive Statistics on the Mental Impacts for a Scale of Increasing Severity from 1 to 10

Mental Impacts	Mean (M)	Median (Md)	Mode (Mo)	SD	SDE	Maximum	Minimum
Motivation (online)	4.13	3.00	3.00	2.514	0.253	10.00	1.00
Motivation (traditional)	7.03	8.00	8.00	2.323	0.233	10.00	1.00
Ability to concentrate	7.89	8.00	10.00	2.089	0.210	10.00	1.00
Difficulty Felt in Switch to Online Classes	6.80	7.00	7.00	2.312	0.232	10.00	1.00
Feelings of Anxiousness	7.32	8.00	10.00	2.303	0.231	10.00	1.00

Figure 1.4: Bar Chart Showing the Students' Agreement/Disagreement to the Statement that Online Classes Have Led to an Increase in their Perceived Stress Levels

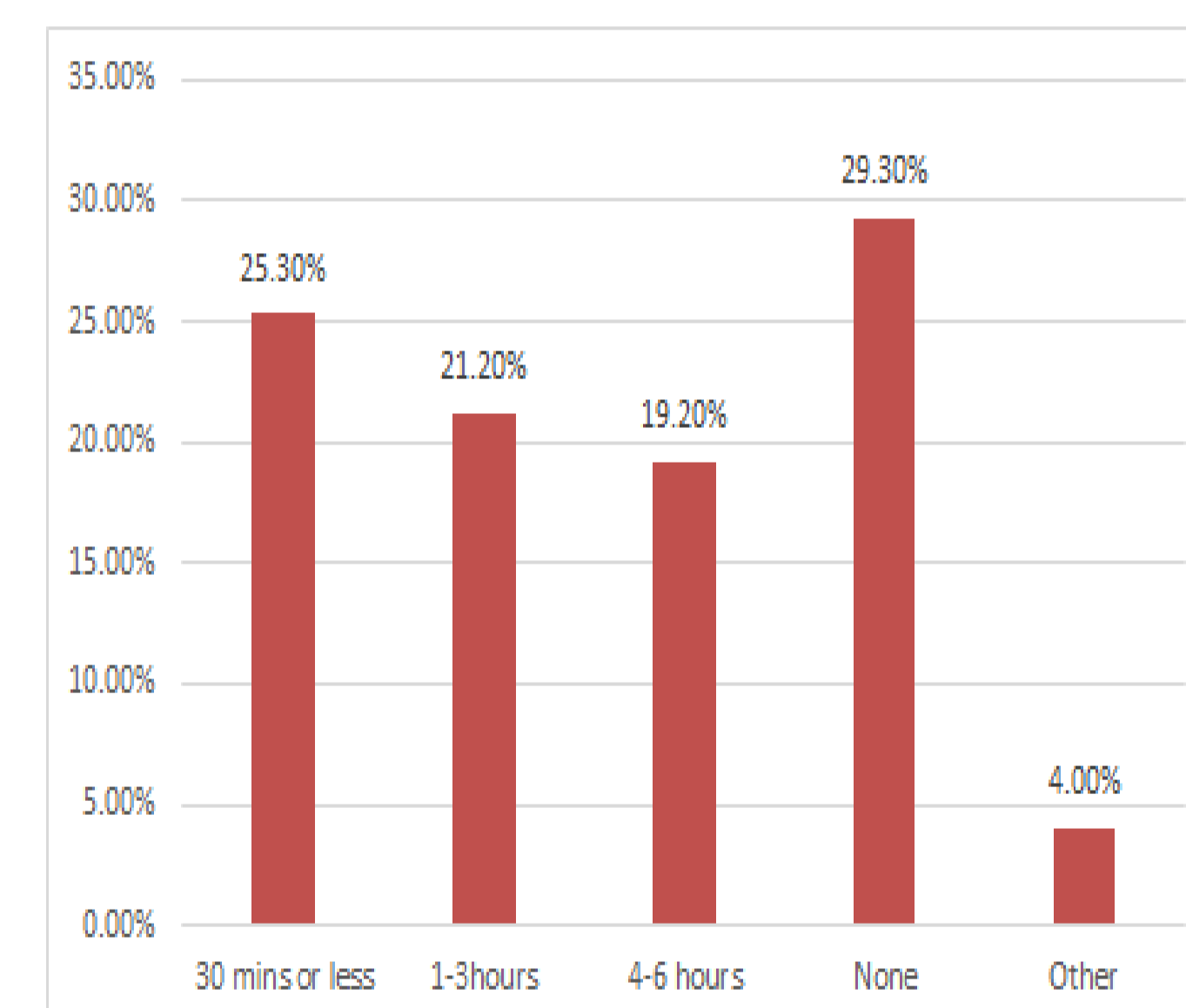
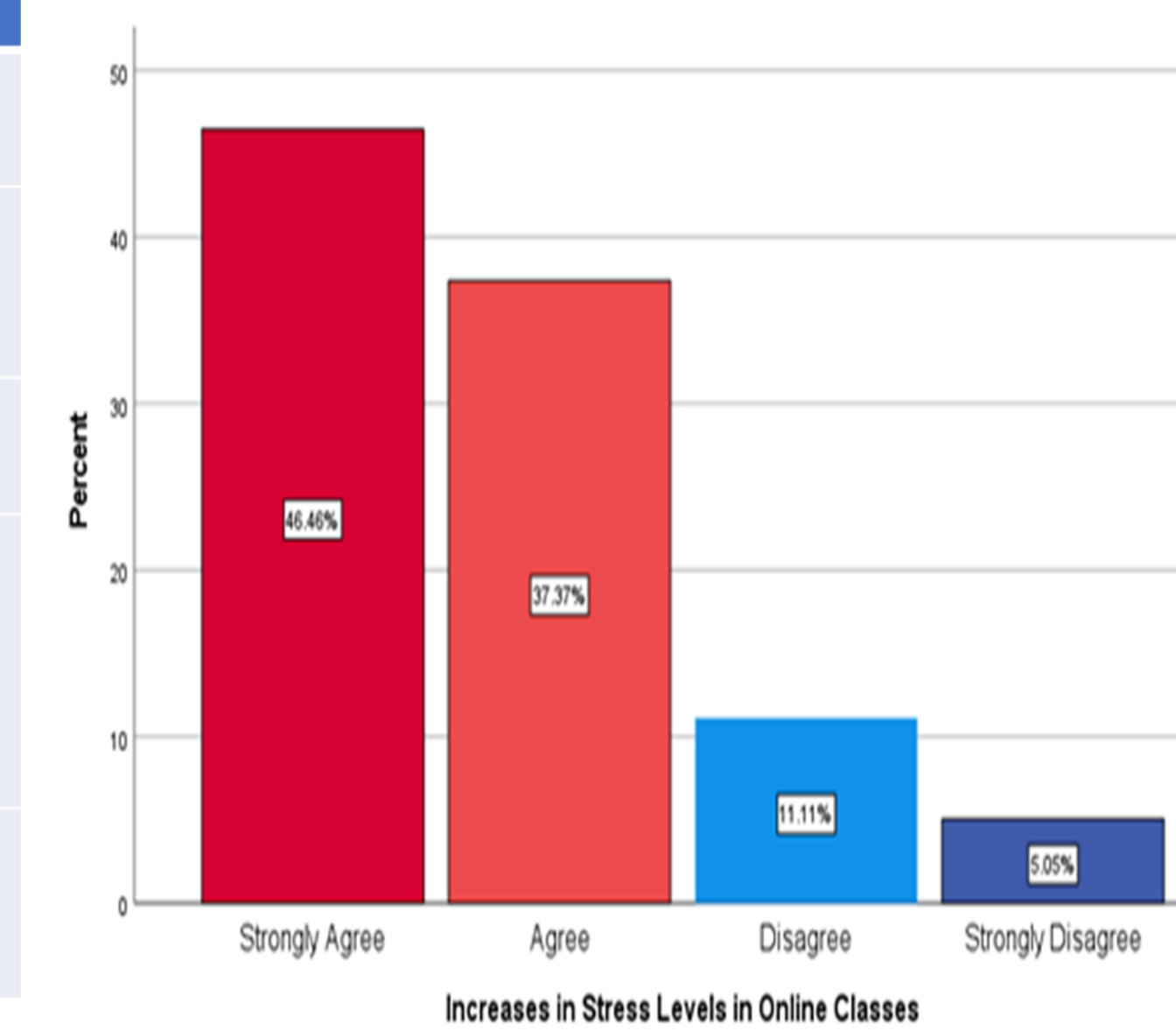


Figure 1.2 Showing the Average Time Respondents Spent Exercising per week During Online Classes

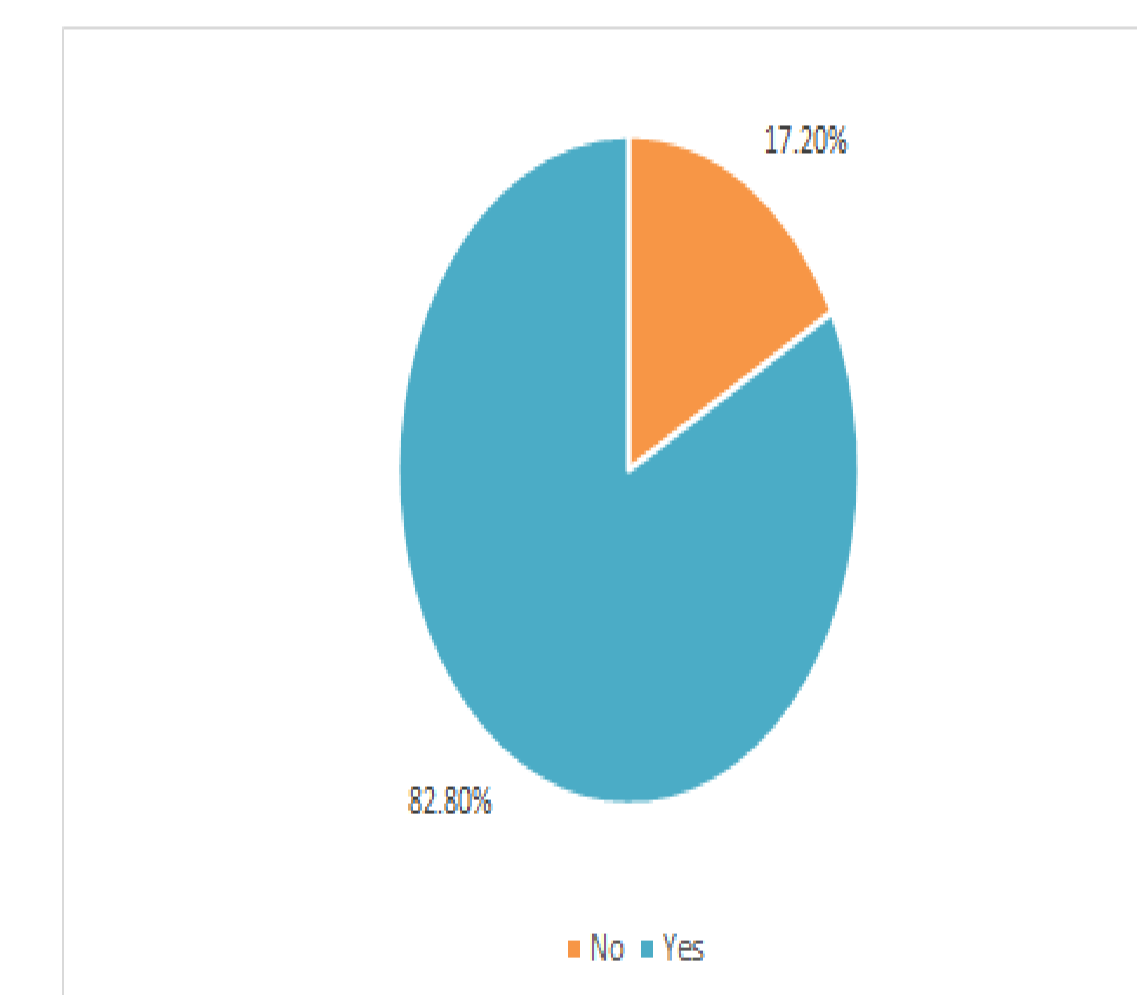
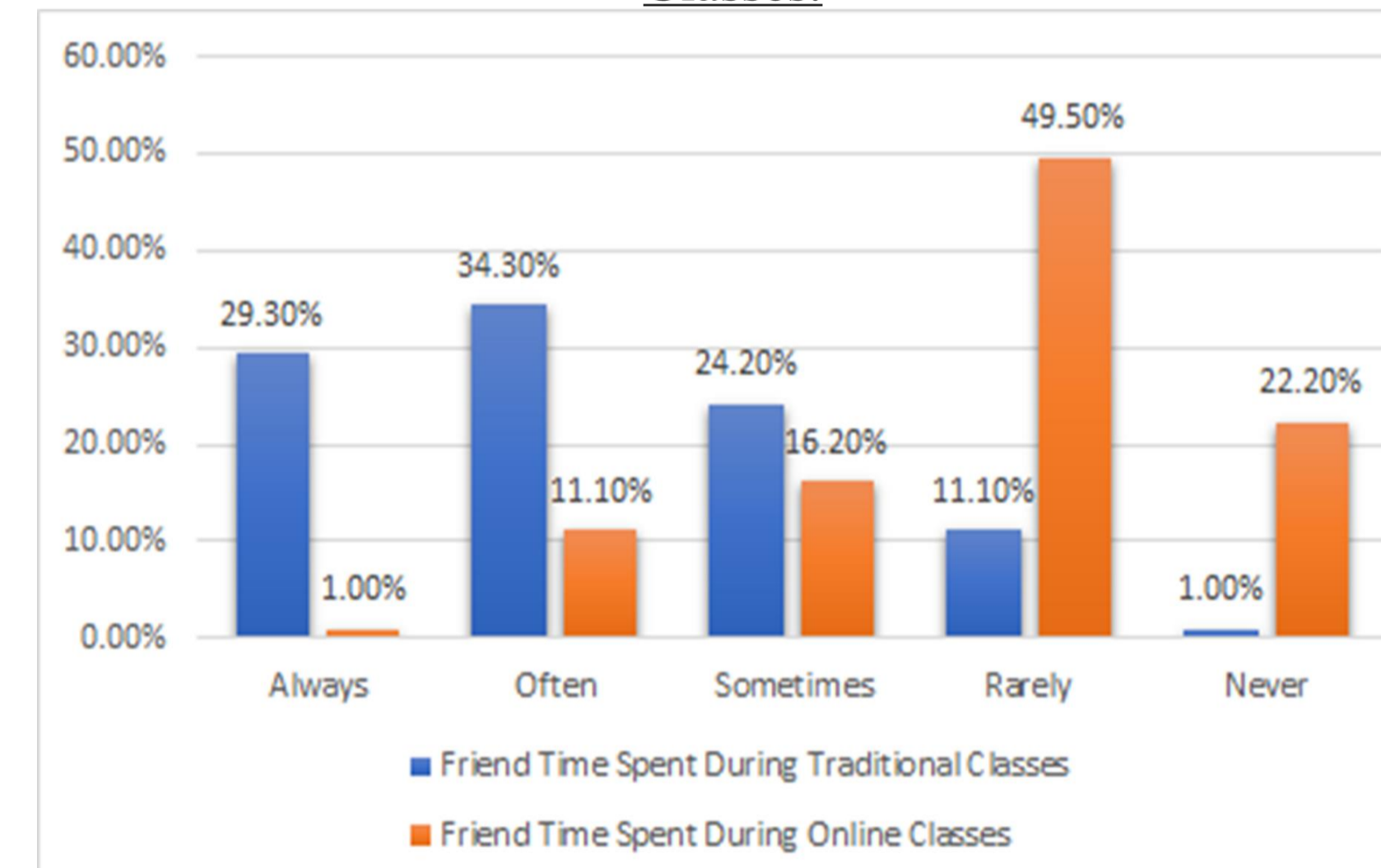


Figure 1.3: Showing Whether Students Noticed an Increase in Body Aches and Pains Since the Beginning of Online Learning.

Figure 1.6: Bar chart Showing a Comparison of Time Spent with Friends during Traditional Classes and Online Classes.



## Discussion

- Our study replicated findings of similar work., showing that students had increased anxiety and stress.
- Our study also found that students experienced decreased motivation to attend online lectures and complete online assignments and quizzes, which was consistent with other previous studies.

- The sedentary lifestyle ushered due to the transition to online learning significantly contributed to a decrease in physical activity. However, research show a positive correlation between extended device usage and both the body aches and vision changes that many students experienced.
- The switch from traditional learning to online learning caused a decrease in time spent with friends which socially impacted the students, agreeing with other studies.
- We found that the majority of students did not notice an improvement in their grades/understanding of the curriculum with online learning. This differs from similar studies, which found that online learning positively impacted their academic performance.

## Conclusion

Upon completing this study, participants experienced many changes in behaviours following adapting to online learning including reduction in sleep time and physical activity and an increase in body aches and need for visual aids. We also found positive aspects of the transition such as spending more quality time with family members and increased participation during online lectures.

We recommended that further research be done to explore how students enrolled in specific programmes of study with heavy practical components and efficiently complete their degrees.

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