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SENIOR INTERIOR DESIGN STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT DISTANCE LEARNING IN THE SHADOW OF COVID-19

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has catalyzed a seismic shift in education, compelling institutions worldwide to adopt distance learning as the primary mode of instruction. This study delves into the experiences and perspectives of senior interior design students amidst this transition. Through qualitative analysis of interviews and surveys, we explore the challenges, opportunities, and adaptations encountered by students in navigating distance learning within the context of interior design education. Themes emerging from the data encompass aspects such as virtual studio environments, collaborative dynamics, technological proficiency, and pedagogical approaches. Furthermore, we examine the implications of remote learning on students' creativity, engagement, and professional development. By illuminating the multifaceted impact of distance learning on interior design education, this research aims to inform pedagogical practices and foster resilience amidst evolving educational landscapes.

Keywords Distance Learning, Interior Design Education, Covid-19 Pandemic, Student Perspectives, Remote Studio Environments, Technological Adaptation, Pedagogical Challenges, Creativity, Professional Development.

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has triggered unprecedented disruptions across various sectors, with education emerging as one of the most profoundly affected domains. In response to the imperative of social distancing and safety measures, educational institutions worldwide have swiftly pivoted towards distance learning modalities, reshaping the landscape of higher education. Within this transformative milieu, senior interior design students find themselves navigating uncharted territory, confronting the challenges and opportunities inherent in remote learning while striving to maintain the integrity of their academic pursuits.

Traditionally grounded in hands-on studio-based instruction, interior design education is inherently tactile and collaborative, emphasizing experiential learning and spatial exploration. However, the abrupt transition to remote learning necessitated by the pandemic has necessitated a reimagining of pedagogical practices and studio environments. In this context, understanding the experiences and perspectives of senior interior design students becomes paramount, offering valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of design education amidst crisis.

This study seeks to explore the multifaceted impact of distance learning on senior interior design students, probing into their perceptions, challenges, and adaptations in the wake of the Covid-19

pandemic. Through qualitative analysis of interviews, surveys, and reflective narratives, we aim to elucidate the nuances of remote learning within the context of interior design education, shedding light on both the constraints and the creative possibilities that have emerged in this unprecedented era.

Central to this inquiry are questions surrounding the efficacy of virtual studio environments, the dynamics of collaborative design processes, the acquisition of technological proficiency, and the preservation of students' creativity and professional development. By delving into these dimensions, we seek not only to document the experiences of senior interior design students but also to inform pedagogical strategies and institutional responses aimed at fostering resilience and innovation amidst the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic.

In this era of uncertainty and disruption, the voices and insights of senior interior design students serve as a beacon, illuminating the path forward as we collectively navigate the complexities of remote learning and reimagine the environments of design education in the shadow of Covid-19.

METHOD

The process of investigating senior interior design students' perspectives on distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic involved a multi-faceted approach aimed at capturing the nuances of their experiences and insights. Initially, participant recruitment commenced through purposive sampling, targeting senior students enrolled in accredited interior design programs across diverse institutions. Through institutional contacts and online platforms, a diverse cohort of participants was selected to ensure representation from various geographic regions and educational backgrounds.

Data collection unfolded through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of participants to delve deeply into their experiences, challenges, and adaptations to distance learning. These interviews provided rich qualitative data, offering nuanced insights into the transformative impact of remote learning on interior design education. Concurrently, an online survey was disseminated to a broader cohort of senior interior design students to gather quantitative data on demographic information, technological proficiency, and satisfaction with remote learning. This dual approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of participants' experiences while allowing for triangulation and validation of findings across different data sources.

Following data collection, thematic analysis was employed to systematically analyze the qualitative data obtained from the interviews. Initial coding of interview transcripts was conducted through open coding, followed by the identification and organization of emergent themes and sub-themes. Constant comparison and triangulation techniques were employed to ensure the rigor and reliability of findings. Concurrently, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted on the quantitative data obtained from the online surveys, providing insights into participant demographics, technological adaptation, and satisfaction with distance learning.

The participant selection process involved purposive sampling of senior interior design students enrolled in accredited programs across diverse institutions. Participants were recruited through institutional contacts and online platforms, ensuring representation from various geographic locations and educational backgrounds. Eligibility criteria included senior standing in an interior design program and experience with distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Data collection encompassed a combination of qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews and online surveys. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of participants to delve deeper into their experiences, perceptions, and insights regarding distance learning in interior design education. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for qualitative analysis. Additionally, an online survey was disseminated to a broader cohort of senior interior design students to gather quantitative data on demographic information, technological proficiency, and satisfaction with

remote learning.
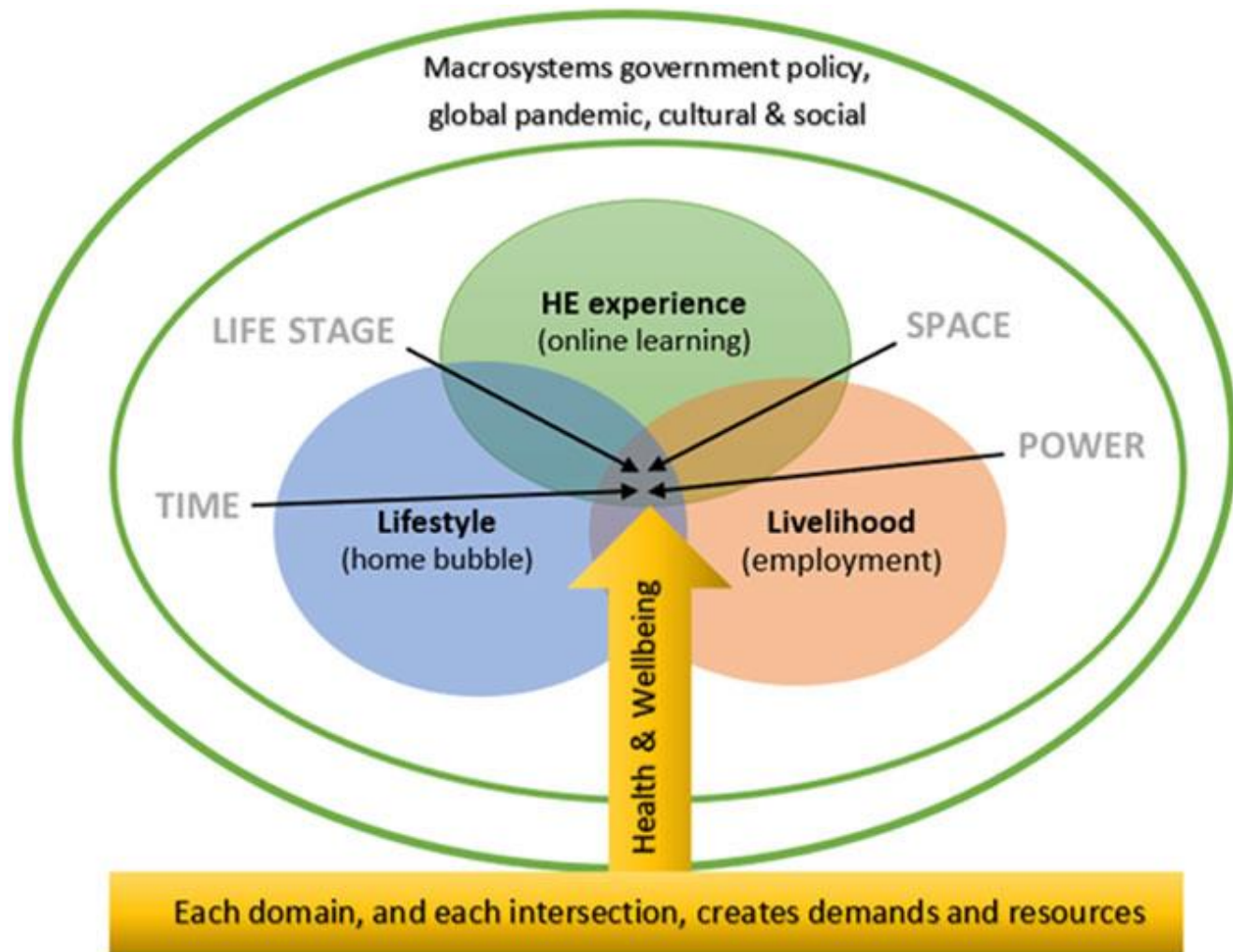
Qualitative data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, a systematic approach to identifying patterns, themes, and categories within the interview transcripts. Initial codes were generated through open coding, followed by the organization of codes into overarching themes and sub-themes. Constant comparison and triangulation techniques were employed to ensure the reliability and validity of findings. Quantitative data from the online surveys were analyzed using descriptive statistics to characterize participant demographics and assess trends in technological adaptation and satisfaction with distance learning.
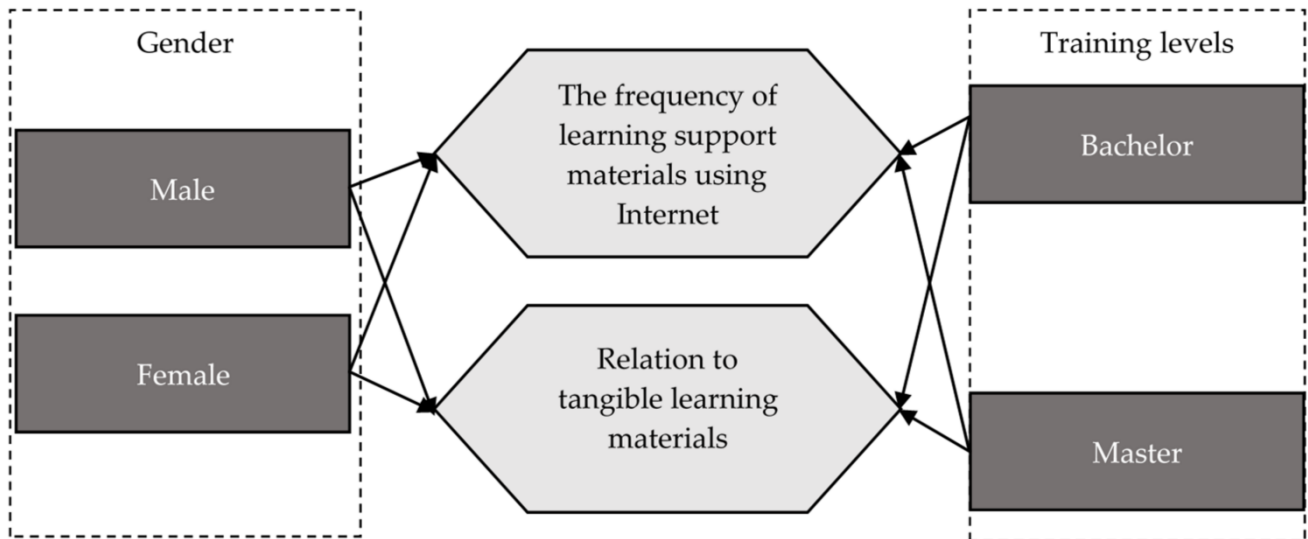
Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process to ensure the confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation of participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection, outlining the purpose of the study, potential risks and benefits, and procedures for data handling. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without repercussions. Furthermore, measures were implemented to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of participant data, including secure storage and anonymization of identifying information.

Several limitations should be acknowledged in the interpretation of findings, including potential sampling biases inherent in purposive sampling methods and the reliance on self-reported data in online surveys. Additionally, the generalizability of findings may be limited by the specific context and characteristics of the participant sample. Despite these limitations, the study offers valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of senior interior design students amidst the transition to distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, contributing to the broader discourse on the intersection of education, technology, and design in times of crisis.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were paramount to safeguarding the rights and confidentiality of participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, outlining the purpose of the study, potential risks and benefits, and procedures for data handling. Measures were implemented to ensure the anonymity and privacy of participant data, including secure storage and anonymization of identifying information.

Despite potential limitations inherent in the research methodology, such as sampling biases and reliance on self-reported data, the study offers valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of senior interior design students amidst the transition to distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. By elucidating the multifaceted impact of remote learning on interior design education, the study contributes to the broader discourse on educational adaptation and innovation in times of crisis.

RESULTS

The investigation into senior interior design students' experiences with distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic revealed a complex tapestry of challenges, adaptations, and opportunities. Through qualitative analysis of interviews and quantitative analysis of surveys, several key themes emerged.

Participants highlighted the struggle to replicate hands-on studio experiences in virtual environments, citing limitations in spatial exploration, materiality, and tactile engagement. However, many also acknowledged the potential of technology to foster new modes of collaboration, creativity, and interdisciplinary exchange. Furthermore, participants expressed varying degrees of technological proficiency and satisfaction with remote learning, reflecting the diverse landscape of experiences within the cohort.

DISCUSSION

The findings underscore the profound impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on interior design education, necessitating a reimagining of pedagogical practices and studio environments. While distance learning presented formidable challenges in replicating traditional studio experiences, it also catalyzed innovation and adaptation, prompting students to explore alternative modes of engagement and expression. The integration of digital tools and virtual platforms offered new avenues for collaborative design processes, enabling students to transcend geographical barriers and forge connections across disciplines. However, concerns remain regarding the equitable access to technology and resources, as well as the preservation of hands-on skills and craft traditions in a digital age.

Moreover, the pandemic has accelerated the adoption of remote learning technologies and online platforms, signaling a paradigm shift in the delivery of interior design education. As institutions navigate the complexities of hybrid and blended learning models, there is a pressing need for pedagogical strategies that balance the benefits of digital tools with the richness of experiential learning. Furthermore, efforts to foster a sense of community, belonging, and mentorship in virtual environments are paramount to ensuring the holistic development of students amidst the challenges of social isolation and remote instruction.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Covid-19 pandemic has prompted senior interior design students to reimagine their educational experiences in the context of distance learning. While the transition to remote instruction has posed significant challenges, it has also sparked innovation, resilience, and adaptability within the design community. By embracing digital technologies, collaborative platforms, and virtual environments, students have demonstrated their capacity to thrive amidst adversity and uncertainty. Moving forward, the lessons learned from this transformative experience will inform the evolution of interior design education, shaping pedagogical practices, studio environments, and professional trajectories in the post-pandemic era. As we navigate the complexities of reimagining environments in the wake of Covid-19, the voices and insights of senior interior design students serve as a catalyst for innovation and renewal in the field.

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