

PROJECT REPORT

A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION OF **STUDENTS TOWARDS** **ONLINE V/S OFFLINE EDUCATION**

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Executive Summary

India holds a crucial place within the global education industry. India has one amongst the largest networks of higher education institutions in the world. However, there's still tons of potential for further development within the education system. The formal education in India still constitutes of traditional model i.e. the brick-and-mortar classes. Students need to attend schools and colleges to finish their education. But now, it is slowly opening up to online education.

For decades, intellectuals have debated which mode of education is superior. Some argue that online is superior while others say that online is not as effective as traditional face-to-face courses. Still others suggest that the amalgam of both (i.e., online blended with face-to-face lectures) might be the most desired and productive content delivery method for college students. However, students' perceptions towards online learning as compared to offline face-to-face learning have largely been overlooked. This research study intends to fill this void and explore the perception of college students that they have towards online education versus offline education.

The current pandemic has compelled all the educational institutes to go digital leaving no option for face to face education, in an attempt to slow the spread of covid-19.

A cross sectional study titled – A study on the perception of students towards online education v/s offline education was conducted using a self-administered structured questionnaire circulated to UG or PG course students. The questionnaire was pertaining to the perception that students hold towards online v/s offline education.

This research will try and study the perception that students hold towards online education and offline education. The research design used to carry out this particular research was by Exploratory and descriptive research design. A survey was conducted on an online medium through Google forms. College students of the age 18 years and above, pursuing UG or PG degrees from different states of the country were provided with the link of the form and asked to fill the questionnaire with honest reviews.

Introduction and Rationale

Education is the process of imparting or acquiring knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and in general of preparing oneself or others intellectually for a mature life. It is a teaching and learning system aiming to socialize individuals and maximize their development.

Online courses are defined as courses in which at least 80% of the content is delivered online without face-to-face meetings. Face-to-face courses are defined as a course where all content is delivered only in a traditional face-to-face setting. Face-to-face education is time and place dependent, while the online mode represents an augmented environment that enables individual users to exercise control over time, pace, place, and also the interaction with instructors as well as other students.

Scholars have continually discussed over which mode of education is superior. On the other hand, students' opinions towards online learning as compared to offline face-to-face learning have largely been overlooked.

This research study has attempted to identify the perception students hold towards online education and offline education and to understand their point of view as to which they feel is a better option for effective learning.

Objectives

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- To study the perception of students towards online education and offline education
- To investigate the preference of students towards the two modes of education
- To understand the advantages and disadvantages of online and offline education

Scope

This research study has attempted to identify the perception students hold towards online education and offline education and to understand their point of view as to which they feel is a better option for effective learning.

The research study was carried out on students from different states of the country for a period of 2 weeks.

Industry Profile

The Educational Services Industry consists of establishments that provide instruction and training on a large variety of subjects. These institutions, including schools, colleges, universities and training centres, are either privately or publicly owned. Private institutions could also be further classified as "for-profit" or "not-for-profit"

The key segments within the education industry include the consumers, the institutions and also the workers. The education industry has undergone many changes with time. The key trends in the education industry include the rise of online academies, the use of augmented and virtual reality and open-source textbooks.

The Indian Education Industry

The Indian education industry is poised for growth. This sector is changing rapidly with more private players entering the sector. The government is additionally taking many measures to enhance the standard of education in India.

Fifty percent of India's population is the youth. This means that the Indian education sector is large with a population of 1.13 billion. India has around 367 universities, 18,000 colleges, about half 1,000,000 teachers, and 11 million pupils. The private education industry is estimated to be between 20,000–25,000 crores. There are about 1,500 management institutes, 3,500 engineering institutes, and 1,200 medical colleges within the country.

India holds a crucial place within the global education industry. India has one amongst the largest networks of higher education institutions in the world. However, there's still tons of potential for further development within the education system.

The Indian Online Education System

The formal education in India still constitutes of traditional model i.e. the brick-and-mortar classes. Students have to attend schools and colleges to complete their education. But now, it is slowly opening up to online education or e-learning as it is also referred to otherwise.

E-learning has become an important method in education today, for its efficiency in providing education with lower costs, for ease of accessibility at anytime and anywhere and for overcoming many traditional educational problems, like lack of classrooms and a shortage of professors.

Online and traditional education share many qualities. Students are still required to attend class, learn the material, submit assignments, and complete group projects. While teachers, still got to design curriculums, maximize instructional quality, answer class questions, motivate students to learn, and grade assignments. Despite these basic similarities, there are many differences between both the modalities. Traditionally, classroom instruction is known to be teacher-centred and requires passive learning by the student, while online instruction is often student-centred and requires active learning.

With the advancement of technology, India has witnessed an enhanced acceptance of online education over a period of few years. Many students and professionals have joined different e-learning platforms within the past few years so as to boost their skills.

Emerging Trends in Indian Online Higher Education System

India has one amongst the largest education systems within the world. It mainly consists of three parts – university, college, and course. And, all parts of the higher education system are governed by the University Grants Commission and its professional councils.

According to KPMG report, online higher education in India is at an early stage of development and has witnessed emergence of different private universities offering UG and PG e-learning courses to students. However, as compared to graduation and diploma courses, the demand for online education is dominated by post-graduation courses like MBA and MCA.

Impact of Covid-19 on the Education Industry in India

Covid-19 has prompted experts to rethink the traditional mode of education. Digital education appears to be a viable solution to fill the void for classroom education while minimizing the possibilities of any infection to students until classes resume. More importantly, it has also brought the formerly peripheral issue of digital education in India to the centre stage. Going forward, digital education is probably going to be integrated into mainstream education. This will enable inclusive education by facilitating learning across diverse geographies in India. Moreover, it'll provide a chance for educators to come up with customized learning solutions for each student.

On the down side, the sudden shift to online learning with no proper planning, especially in countries like India where the backbone for online learning wasn't ready and therefore the curriculum was not designed for such a format, has created the risk of most of our students becoming passive learners and they may be losing interest due to low levels of attention span. Also, a large proportion of the student population may be left untouched due to the digital divide.

With the emergence of the net and new technologies, e-learning has become the promising solution for the colleges which are currently in an environment of intense change.

Literature Review

Online courses are defined as courses in which at least 80% of the content is delivered online without face-to-face meetings. Face-to-face mode is defined as a course where all content is delivered only in a traditional face-to-face setting. In addition to online and face-to-face learning courses, there are hybrid courses, which combine the advantages of face-to-face with the technology often utilized in online courses. 30-79% of the course is delivered online. Tseng and Chu (2010) studied the link between learning modes and outcomes in teaching economics courses. The authors discovered that the online platform is crucial for facilitating better learning performance and, thus, it had been superior to the conventional mode of education.

Moreover, Kartha (2006) compared the effectiveness of teaching modes in an undergraduate business statistics course that taught both in traditional mode and also in the online mode. The author noticed that the respondents who were enrolled in the online course were significantly less satisfied with the course, and also they expressed their preferences for the traditional approach to learning. In another study Cao (2011) examined MBA students' course satisfaction and observed that the respondents were less satisfied with online courses as compared to traditional face-to-face courses.

The discussions about the benefits and drawbacks of online learning versus traditional mode of education are supported by a range of parameters. Harasim (1989) and Talebain et al (2014) indicated that face-to-face education is time and place dependent, while the online mode represents an augmented environment that permits individual users to exercise control over time, pace, place, and also the interaction with instructors and other participants.

Moreover, the effectiveness and advantage of online learning relative to traditional face-to-face lectures are influenced by a number of things including, but not limited to, students' knowledge domain of course materials and their technical capabilities to navigate throughout the online course, course design complexity also the degree of difficulty of course assignments and time intensity.

Also, curriculum design, technology infrastructure and course quality were additional factors to consider, especially in developing countries. (Bhuasiri et al, 2012)

Research Methodology

Research Design:

A study was carried out on the perception of students towards Online education v/s Offline education. This research will try and study the perception that students hold towards online education and offline education, investigate the preference of students towards the two modes of education and understand the advantages and disadvantages of online and offline education.

The survey was conducted on an online medium through Google forms. Students were provided with the link of the form and asked to fill the questionnaire with honest reviews.

Convenience sampling method was followed for the survey.

- **Type of Research:** Exploratory + Descriptive research

Exploratory research, which is used to investigate a problem to have a better understanding of the existing problem, was done to obtain insights of the topic which also helped in choosing questions for the Descriptive research. Descriptive research, which is used to describe characteristics of a population being studied, was used to understand the target population using a structured questionnaire.

Sample Design

- **Sample size:** 107 respondents
- **Sampling units:** College students of the age 18 years and above, pursuing UG or PG degrees
- **Sampling Method:** Convenience sampling
- **Data collection Tool:** Survey
- **Research Instrument:** Structured questionnaire in the form of online Google Form

Data

- **Sources of Data:** Primary & Secondary Data

The information contained in this report is based upon both primary and secondary data research.

a) Primary Data Collection Method:

It was collected directly from students. The information collected was through a detail and structured questionnaire formed to suit the objectives of the study, containing information relating to online and offline education. The main method used in primary data collection is:

- Questionnaire

b) Secondary data Collection Method:

It was used mainly to support the primary data. Secondary data was collected through the internet. The secondary data sources are:

- Research Gate, Online learning survey, Science Direct, Training Magazine, India Brand Equity Foundation IBEF, Invest in India, Journals etc.

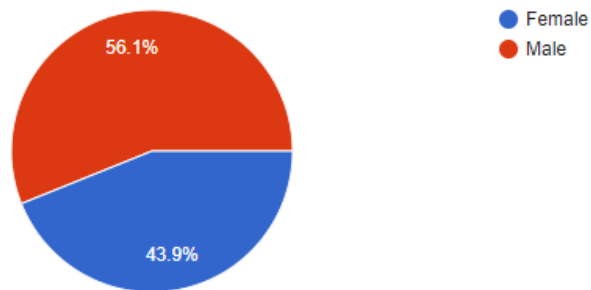
Analysis of Findings

- **Gender**

	A	B
Total Respondents	Male	Female
107	60	47

Gender

107 responses



Observation(Oi): It can be observed that out of 107 respondents, the number of male respondents are 60, and the number of female respondents are 47.

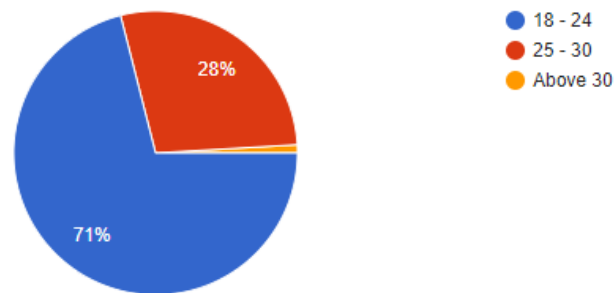
Findings(Fi): From the above observation, it can be seen that the number of male respondents are more as compared to female respondents.

- **Age**

	A	B	C
Total Respondents	18-24 years	25-30 years	Above 30 years
107	76	30	1

Age

107 responses



Observation(Oii): It can be observed that out of 107 respondents, 76 respondents belong to the age group of 18-24 years, 30 respondents belong to the age group of 25-30 years and 1 belongs to 30 years and above.

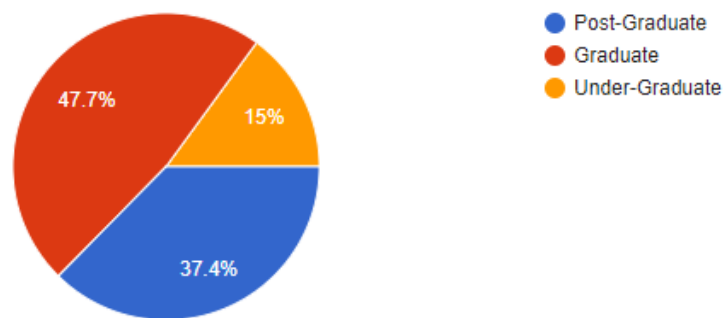
Findings(Fii): From the above observation, it can be seen that the number of respondents in the age group of 18-24 years is more followed by 25- 30 years.

- **Educational Qualification? (The one you're currently pursuing or have completed)**

	A	B	C
Total Respondents	Post-Graduate	Graduate	Under-Graduate
107	40	51	16

Educational Qualification (The one you are currently pursuing or have completed)

107 responses



Observation(Oiii): It is observed from the above chart that the number of postgraduate respondents are 40, the number of graduate respondents are 51 while there were 16 respondents who were under-graduate.

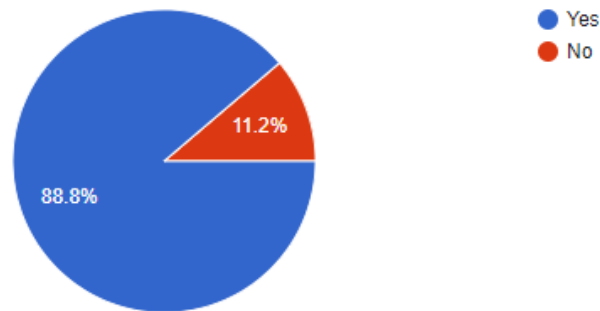
Findings(Fiii): From the above observation, it can be seen that most of the respondents were pursuing or had completed a graduate or post-graduate degree and a few of the respondents were pursuing under-graduate degrees.

1. Have you experienced any form of online education? (be it through college or any online courses you may have opted for on your own)

	A	B
Total Respondents	Yes	No
107	95	12

1. Have you experienced any form of online education? (be it through college or any online courses you may have opted for on your own)

107 responses



Observation(O1): It is observed that out of 107 respondents, 95 respondents have experienced online education and 12 respondents have not experienced online education.

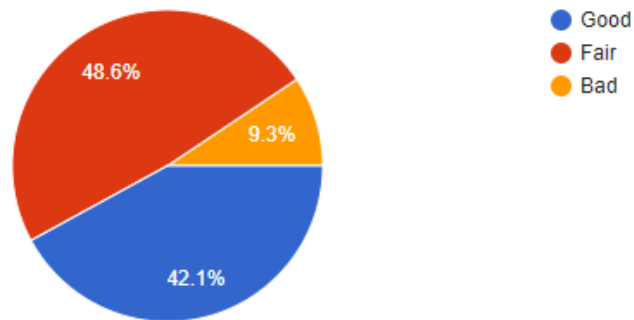
Findings(F1): From the above observation, it can be seen that most of the respondents have experienced online education.

2. How would you describe your experience?

	A	B	C
Total Respondents	Good	Fair	Bad
107	45	52	10

2. How would you describe your experience?

107 responses



Observation(O2): It is observed from the above chart that 52 respondents described their online learning experience as fair, while 45 described it as good and the remaining 10 said it was bad.

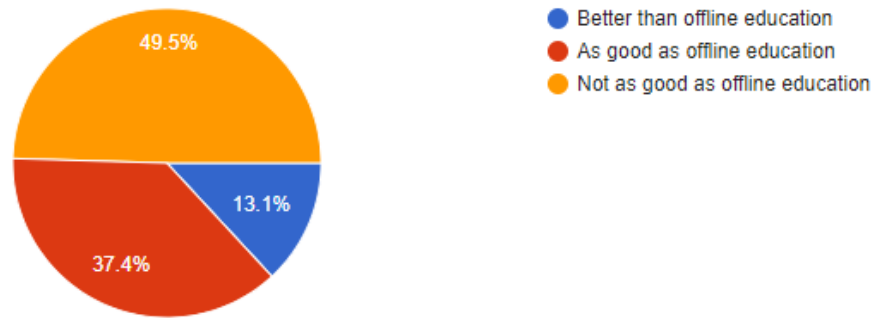
Findings(F2): From the above observation, it can be seen that most of the respondents found that their online learning experience was either fair or good while a few found it to be bad.

3. As a student, how does your experience of online educational programs compare with traditional offline programs?

	A	B	C
Total Respondents	Better than offline education	As good as offline education	Not as good as offline education
107	14	40	53

3. As a student, how does your experience of online educational programs compare with traditional offline programs?

107 responses



Observation(O3): When asked about comparing their online learning experience with offline, it was observed that 53 respondents claimed it was not as good as offline education, whereas 40 respondents claimed it to be as good as offline education and few others claimed it was better than offline education.

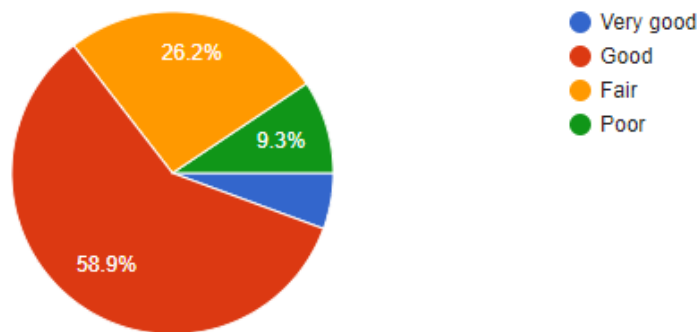
Findings(F3): From the above observation, it can be noted that a majority of the respondents found that their experience of online educational programs was not as good as offline education while some found it to be just as good as offline education.

4. How would you rate the overall quality of the online education you received?

	A	B	C	D
Total Respondents	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
107	6	63	28	10

4. How would you rate the overall quality of the online education you received?

107 responses



Observation(O4): It can be observed that 63 respondents rated the overall quality of online education as good, 28 rated the quality as fair, 10 rated it poor and 6 respondents rated the online education quality as very good.

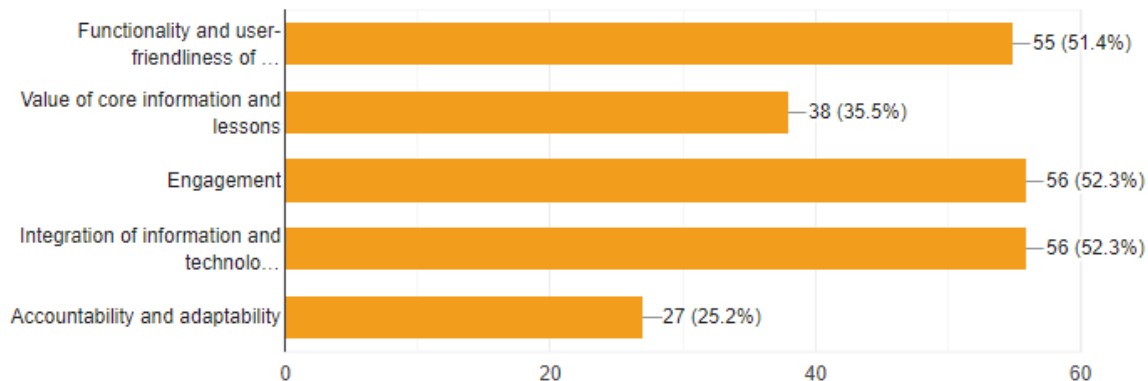
Findings(F4): It can be noted that most of the respondents choose to rate the quality of online education as good, followed by fair.

5. What do you think are the important factors determining the quality of online education? (can select more than one)

	A	B	C	D	E
Total Respondents	Functionality and user-friendliness	Value of core information and lessons	Engagement	Integration of information and technology	Accountability and adaptability
107	55	38	56	56	27

5. What do you think are the important factors determining the quality of online education?
(can select more than one)

107 responses



Observation(O5): When asked to name the important factors determining the quality of online education, it was observed that:

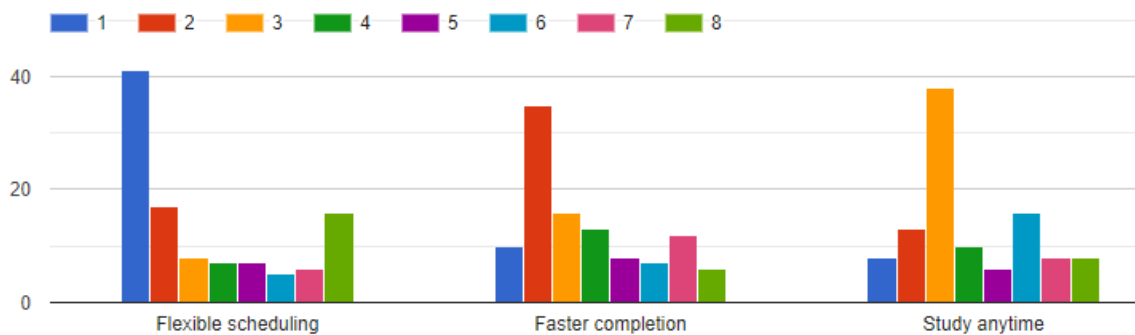
- 56 respondents selected the integration of information and technology.
- 56 respondents selected engagement.
- 55 respondents selected functionality and user-friendliness.
- 38 respondents selected value of core information and lessons.
- 27 respondents selected accountability and adaptability.

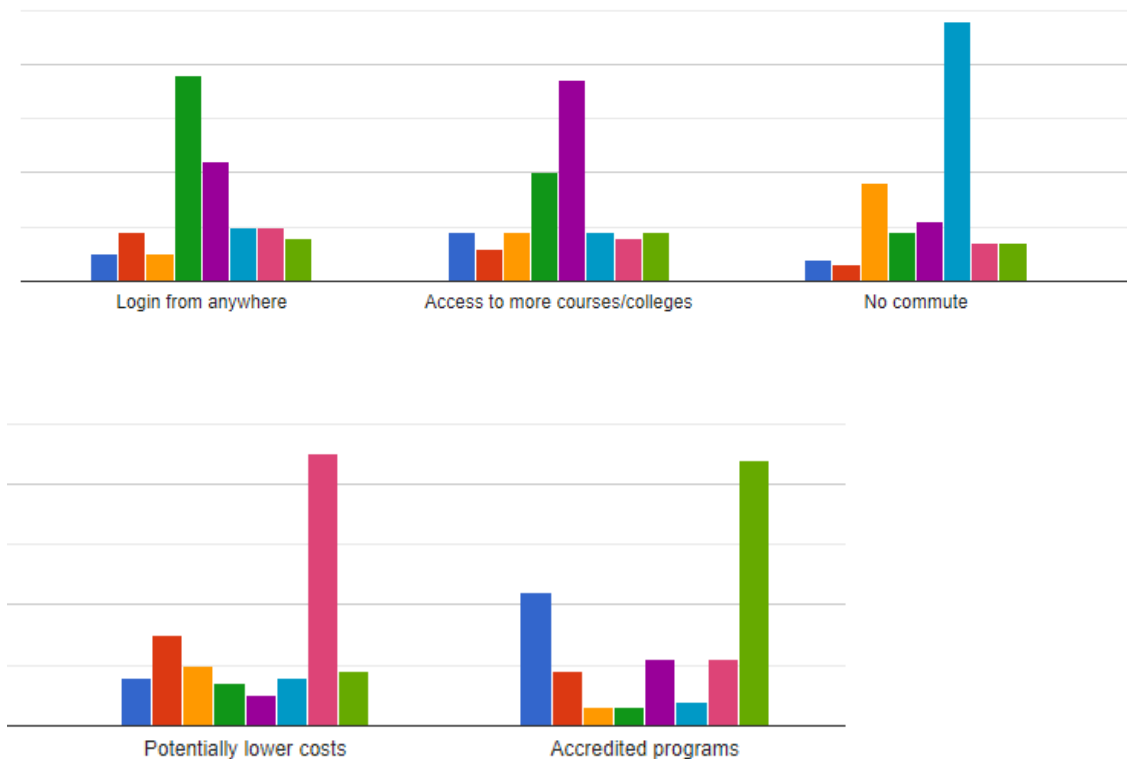
Findings(F5): From the above observation, it can be seen that most of the respondents chose integration of information and technology, engagement, followed by functionality and user-friendliness, value of core information and lessons and lastly accountability and adaptability.

6. Rank the following factors in order of their importance that would lead you to choose online educational programs rather than traditional in-class educational programs.

		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Total Respondents	Rating	Flexible scheduling	Faster completion	Study anytime	Login from anywhere	Access to more courses/colleges	No commute	Potentially lower costs	Accredited programs
107	1	41	10	8	5	9	4	8	22
	2	17	35	13	9	6	3	15	9
	3	8	16	38	5	9	18	10	3
	4	7	13	10	38	20	9	7	3
	5	7	8	6	22	37	11	5	11
	6	5	7	16	10	9	48	8	4
	7	6	12	8	10	8	7	45	11
	8	16	6	8	8	9	7	9	44

6. Rank the following factors in order of their importance that would lead you to choose online educational programs rather than traditional in-class educational programs (Note: Two factors can not have the same rank)





Observation(O6): The ratings of the respondents are calculated as weighted average score:

- Flexible scheduling is rated as 3.38
- Faster completion is rated as 3.68
- Study anytime is rated as 4.05
- Login from anywhere is rated as 4.61
- Access to more colleges is rated as 4.62
- No commute is rated as 5.12
- Potentially lower cost is rated as 5.19
- Accredited program is rated as 5.31

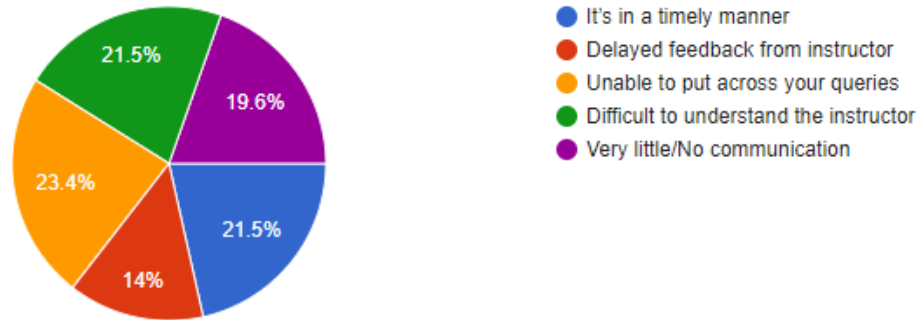
Findings(F6): It can be seen that majority of the respondents rated flexible scheduling as the most important factor that would lead them to choose online educational programs rather than traditional offline programs followed by faster completion, study anytime, login from anywhere, access to more colleges, no commute, potentially lower cost and lastly accredited programs in the following order of importance. As the lowest weighted average score is the highest rated.

7. As a student, how do you feel about the communication between yourself and the instructor in an online educational program?

	A	B	C	D	E
Total Respondents	It's in a timely manner	Delayed feedback from instructor	Unable to put across your queries	Difficult to understand the instructor	Very little/ No communication
107	23	15	25	23	21

7. As a student, how do you feel about the communication between yourself and the instructor in an online educational program?

107 responses



Observation(O7): It can be observed that 25 respondents said that they were unable to put across their queries when asked about the communication between them and the instructor in an online education. 23 respondents said it is in a timely manner, another 23 respondents said that it was difficult to understand the instructor, 21 respondents said that there was very little or no communication and 15 respondents said that the feedback from the instructor was delayed.

Findings(F7): It can be seen that most of the respondents felt that the communication between them and the instructor was not that great and only a few felt that it was in a timely manner.

8. Please rate the effectiveness of online learning compared to meeting regularly in a classroom setting on a scale of 1-5.

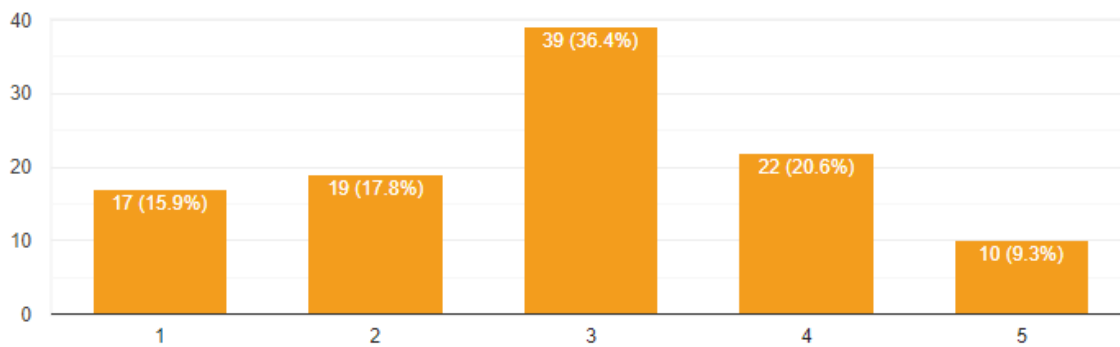
(1 - Online is much more effective, 2 - Somewhat more effective, 3 - Equally effective, 4 - Somewhat less effective, 5 - Much less effective)

a) Offering convenience

	A	B	C	D	E
Total Respondents	Rating 1	Rating 2	Rating 3	Rating 4	Rating 5
107	17	19	39	22	10

a) Offering convenience

107 responses



Observation(O8a): It is observed that 39 respondents rated convenience offered by online learning as compared to offline learning as 3 (i.e. equally effective), 22 respondents rated it as 4 (i.e. somewhat less effective), 19 respondents rated as 2 (i.e. somewhat more effective), 17 respondents rated as 1 (i.e. much more effective) and 10 respondents rated as 5 (i.e. much less effective)

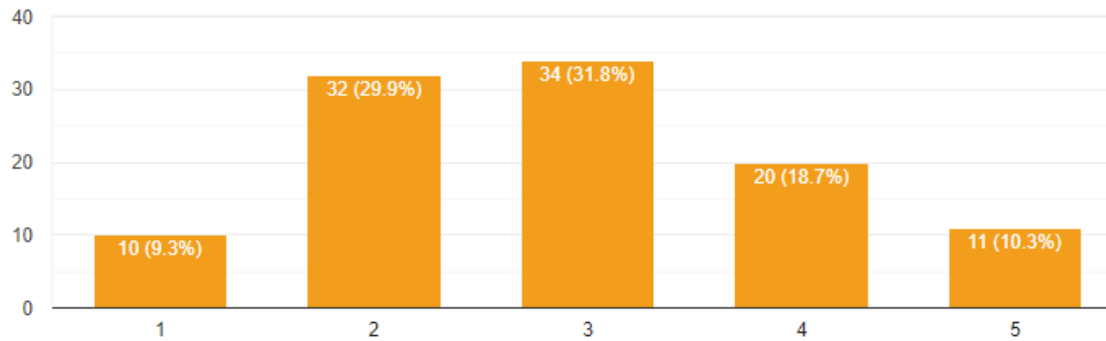
Findings(F8a): It can be concluded that a majority of the respondents rated 'offering convenience' as 3, which is online learning is equally as effective as offline learning.

b) Meeting individual learning needs

	A	B	C	D	E
Total Respondents	Rating 1	Rating 2	Rating 3	Rating 4	Rating 5
107	10	32	34	20	11

b) Meeting individual learning needs

107 responses



Observation(O8b): It is observed that 34 respondents rated meeting individual learning needs by online learning as compared to offline learning as 3 (i.e. equally effective), 32 respondents rated as 2 (i.e. somewhat more effective), 20 respondents rated it as 4 (i.e. somewhat less effective), 11 respondents rated as 5 (i.e. much less effective) and 10 respondents rated as 1 (i.e. much more effective)

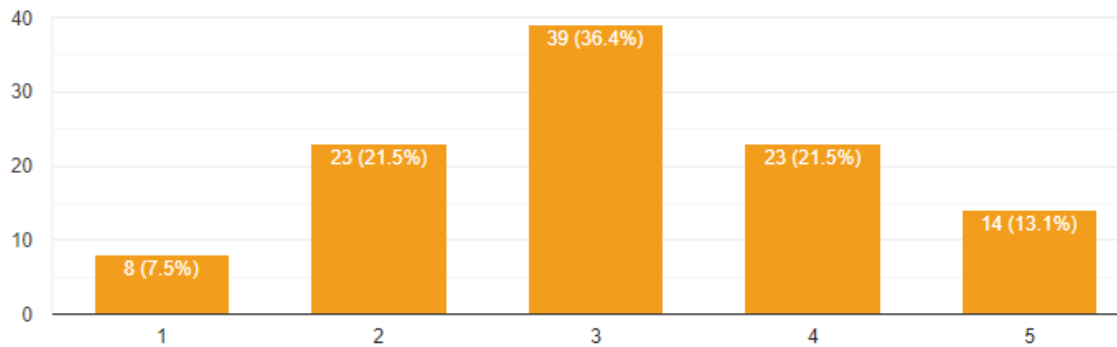
Findings(F8b): It can be concluded that a majority of the respondents rated ‘meeting individual learning needs’ as 3, which is online learning is equally as effective as offline learning. Followed by 2, which is online learning is somewhat more effective than offline learning.

c) Contributing to effective communication in the class

	A	B	C	D	E
Total Respondents	Rating 1	Rating 2	Rating 3	Rating 4	Rating 5
107	8	23	39	23	14

c) Contributing to effective communication in the class

107 responses



Observation(O8c): It is observed that 39 respondents rated contributing to effective communication in the class by online learning as compared to offline learning as 3 (i.e. equally effective), 23 respondents rated as 2 (i.e. somewhat more effective), 23 respondents rated it as 4 (i.e. somewhat less effective), 14 respondents rated as 5 (i.e. much less effective) and 8 respondents rated as 1 (i.e. much more effective)

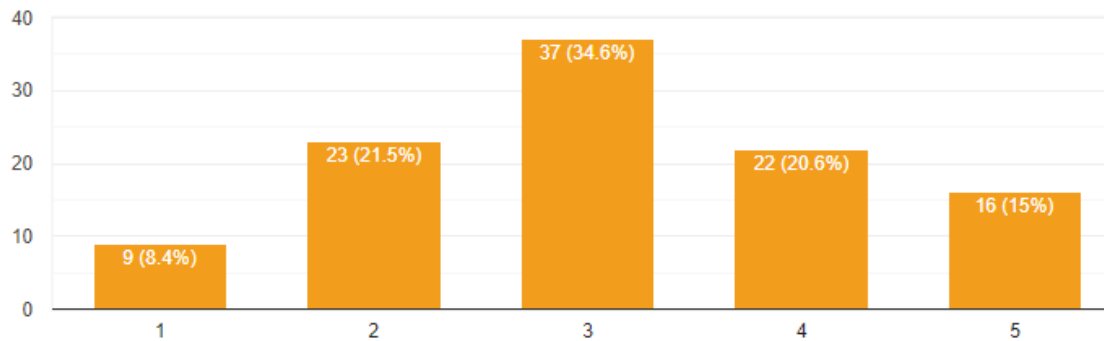
Findings(F8c): It can be concluded that a majority of the respondents rated 'contributing to effective communication in the class' as 3, which is online learning is equally as effective as offline learning.

d) Increasing your sense of community with the instructor and fellow students

	A	B	C	D	E
Total Respondents	Rating 1	Rating 2	Rating 3	Rating 4	Rating 5
107	9	23	37	22	16

d) Increasing your sense of community with the instructor and fellow students

107 responses



Observation(O8d): It is observed that 37 respondents rated increasing your sense of community with the instructor and fellow students by online learning as compared to offline learning as 3 (i.e. equally effective), 23 respondents rated as 2 (i.e. somewhat more effective), 22 respondents rated it as 4 (i.e. somewhat less effective), 16 respondents rated as 5 (i.e. much less effective) and 9 respondents rated as 1 (i.e. much more effective)

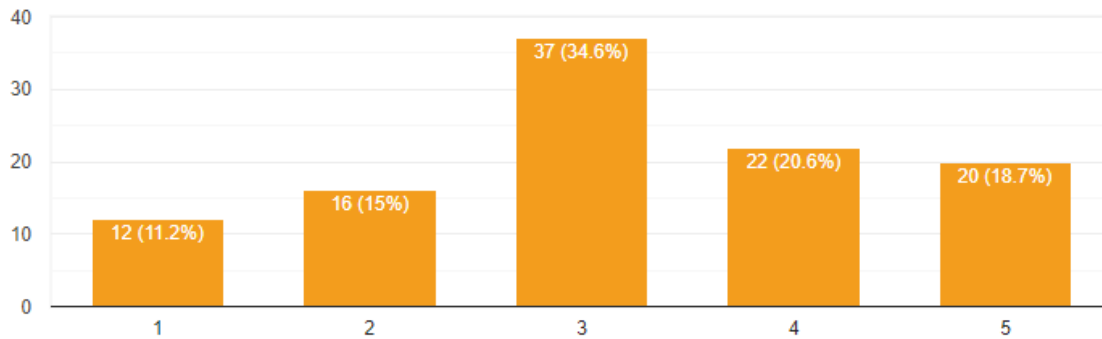
Findings(F8d): It can be concluded that a majority of the respondents rated 'increasing your sense of community with the instructor and fellow students' as 3, which is online learning is equally as effective as offline learning.

e) Promoting greater student participation

	A	B	C	D	E
Total Respondents	Rating 1	Rating 2	Rating 3	Rating 4	Rating 5
107	12	16	37	22	20

e) Promoting greater student participation and interaction

107 responses



Observation(O8e): It is observed that 37 respondents rated promoting greater student participation and interaction by online learning as compared to offline learning as 3 (i.e. equally effective), 22 respondents rated it as 4 (i.e. somewhat less effective), 20 respondents rated as 5 (i.e. much less effective), 16 respondents rated as 2 (i.e. somewhat more effective) and 12 respondents rated as 1 (i.e. much more effective).

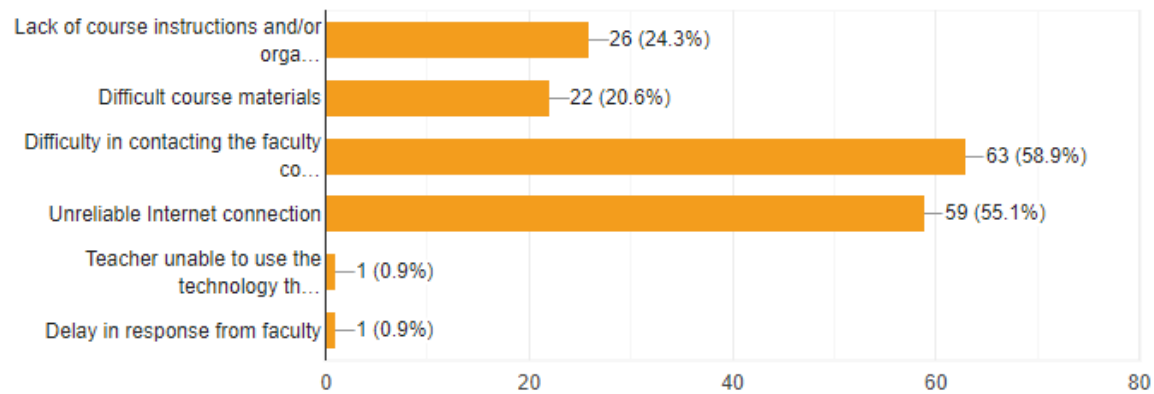
Findings(F8e): It can be concluded that a majority of the respondents rated 'promoting greater student participation and interaction' as 3, which is online learning is equally as effective as offline learning.

9. What are the problems you encountered while learning online? (can select more than one)

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Total Respondents	Lack of course instructions and/or organization	Difficult course materials	Difficulty in contacting the faculty concerned	Unreliable Internet connection	Teacher unable to use technology	Delayed feedback from faculty
107	26	22	63	59	1	1

9. What are the problems you encountered while learning online? (can select more than one)

107 responses



Observation(O9): When asked about the problems encountered while learning online, it was observed that

- 63 respondents said they faced difficulty in contacting the faculty concerned
- 59 respondents said they faced unreliable Internet connection
- 26 respondents said they faced lack of course instructions and/or organization
- 22 respondents said they faced difficult course materials
- 1 respondent said the teacher was unable to use technology
- 1 respondent said they faced delayed feedback from faculty

Findings(F9): From the above observation, it can be seen that most of the respondents faced difficulty in contacting the faculty concerned, unreliable internet connection and lack of course instructions and organization along with few other problems.

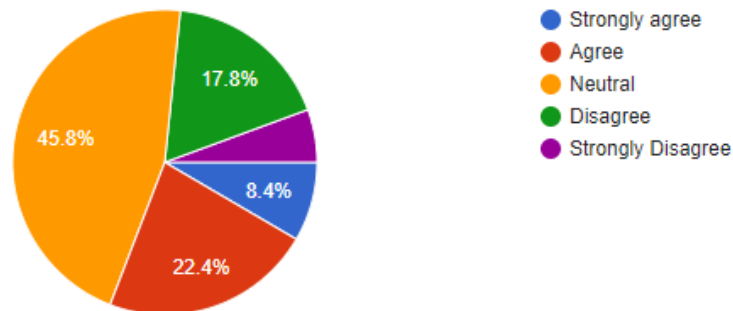
Rate the following statements

10. Online courses are easier to complete than in-class, face-to-face courses.

	A	B	C	D	E
Total Respondents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
107	9	24	49	19	6

10. Online courses are easier to complete than in-class, face-to-face courses?

107 responses



Observation(O10): It can be observed that 49 respondents rated the above statement as neutral, 24 respondents agreed with the statement, 19 respondents disagreed, 9 respondents strongly agreed and 6 respondents strongly disagreed.

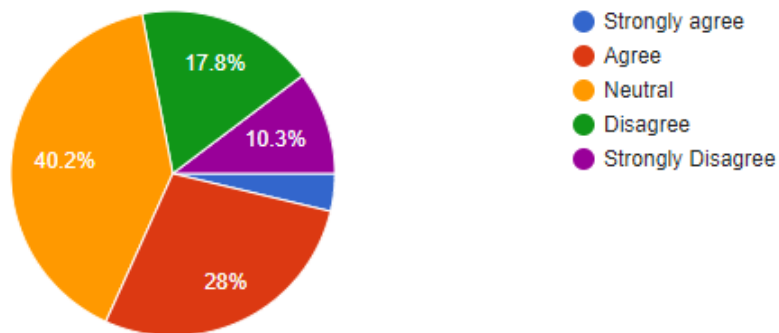
Findings(F10): It can be seen that most of the respondents rated the statement ‘Online courses are easier to complete than in-class, face-to-face courses’ as neutral i.e. neither agree nor disagree.

11. It is easier to achieve better performance (higher grades) in online courses than in face-to-face classes.

	A	B	C	D	E
Total Respondents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
107	4	30	43	19	11

11. It is easier to achieve better performance (e.g., higher grades) in online courses than in face-to-face classes?

107 responses



Observation(O11): It can be observed that 43 respondents rated the above statement as neutral, 30 respondents agreed with the statement, 19 respondents disagreed, 11 respondents strongly disagreed and 4 respondents strongly agreed.

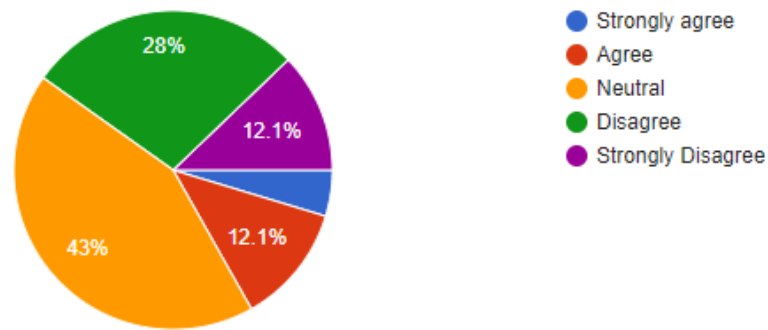
Findings(F11): It can be seen that most of the respondents rated the statement 'It is easier to achieve better performance (higher grades) in online courses than in face-to-face classes' as neutral i.e. neither agree nor disagree.

12. I believe that I learned more in an online teaching environment than a comparable face-to-face classroom setting.

	A	B	C	D	E
Total Respondents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
107	5	13	46	30	13

12. I believe I learned more in an online teaching environment than a comparable face-to-face classroom setting

107 responses



Observation(O12): It can be observed that 46 respondents rated the above statement as neutral, 30 respondents disagreed with the statement, 13 respondents agreed, 13 respondents strongly disagreed and 5 respondents strongly agreed.

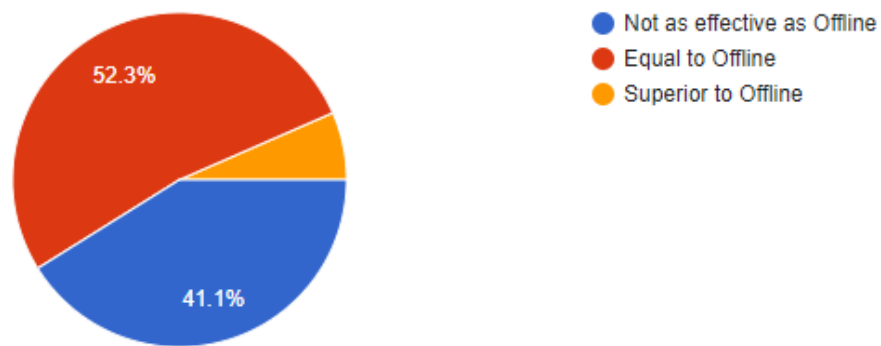
Findings(F12): It can be seen that most of the respondents rated the statement 'I believe that I learned more in an online teaching environment than a comparable face-to-face classroom setting' as neutral i.e. neither agree nor disagree.

13. I believe learning online compared to offline face-to-face learning environment is:

	A	B	C
Total Respondents	Not as effective as offline	Equally effective to offline	Superior to offline
107	44	56	7

13. I believe learning online compared to offline face-to-face learning environment is:

107 responses



Observation(O13): It can be observed from the above chart that, when asked to compare online learning to offline face-to-face learning, 56 respondents said it was equal to offline learning, 44 respondents said it was not as effective as offline learning and 7 respondents said it was superior to offline learning.

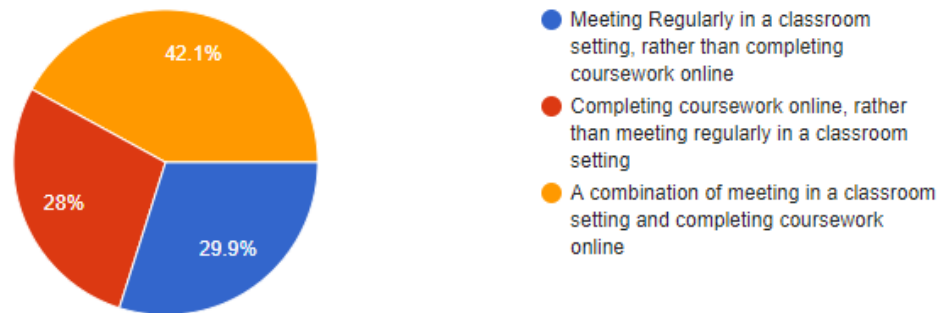
Findings(F13): It can be noted that a majority of the respondents believed that online learning is equal to offline learning while some believed it was not as effective as offline learning.

14. Overall students prefer, or believe they would prefer

	A	B	C
Total Respondents	Meeting Regularly in a classroom setting, rather than completing coursework online	Completing coursework online, rather than meeting regularly in a classroom setting	A combination of meeting in a classroom setting and completing coursework online
107	32	30	45

14. Overall students prefer, or believe they would prefer

107 responses



Observation(O14): As observed, 45 respondents prefer a combination of meeting in a classroom setting and completing coursework online, 32 respondents prefer meeting regularly in a classroom setting rather than completing coursework online and 30 respondents prefer completing coursework online rather than meeting regularly in a classroom setting.

Findings(F14): As noted from the observation, most of the students prefer a combination of meeting in a classroom setting and completing coursework online.

Major Findings

- Through the study, it was noted that most of the respondents agreed that learning online was equally as effective as learning offline.
- Although the quality of online education was good, majority of respondents said their online education experience was not as good as offline.
- The important factors determining the quality of online education are integration of information and technology, engagement, followed by functionality and user-friendliness, value of core information and lessons and lastly accountability and adaptability.
- The advantages of online education over offline education are – flexible scheduling, faster completion, study anytime, login from anywhere, access to more courses & colleges, no commute, lower cost and accredited programs.
- The disadvantages of online education over offline education are – difficulty in contacting the faculty, delayed feedback, unreliable internet connection, lack of course instructions & organization, difficult course material and the inability of the teacher to use technology.
- Most respondents preferred a combination of meeting in a classroom setting and completing coursework online, while the rest were almost equally divided with their preference for either only offline mode or only online mode of education.

Conclusion

Over the past months, most institutions have decided to go for online learning so as to slower and stop the spread of the virus. Going forward, online education is likely to be integrated into mainstream education. It will also provide an opportunity for educators to come up with customized learning solutions for students. This study has intended to explore the perception of students towards online education as compared to offline education. After arranging, analysing and interpreting the data, the following are the conclusions:

- Respondents in this study were almost equally divided with their preference for online or offline mode of education but a majority of them chose a combination of the two.
- Therefore, both online & offline education was perceived positively for their respective advantages.
- The advantages of online education over offline education are – flexible scheduling, faster completion, study anytime, login from anywhere, access to more courses & colleges, no commute, lower cost and accredited programs.
- The disadvantages of online education over offline education are – difficulty in contacting the faculty, delayed feedback, unreliable internet connection, lack of course instructions & organization, difficult course material and the inability of the teacher to use technology.

Limitations

- Time constraints – As students we have deadlines to submit the project within a particular time frame. If a longer time period was available, the study would be more accurate.
- Smaller sample size – Due to time constraints and the current pandemic situation the sample size remained small.
- Unwillingness of respondents to fill the form – Not all respondents were willingly ready to fill the provided questionnaire form. Some hesitated and had to be persuaded.
- The responses measured could be an outcome of an emotional state of mind as all of a sudden, students are made to stay in their homes and attend online classes while missing their normal face to face lectures due to the pandemic.
- Sampling technique – Convenience sampling was used to collect the responses. If a different sampling technique had been chosen, the results could be different.

Recommendations/Suggestions

In a developing country like India, the sudden shift to online learning without any planning, where the backbone for online learning was not ready and the curriculum was not designed for such a format, has created the risk of most of our students becoming passive learners and they may be losing interest. Also, a large proportion of the student population may be left untouched due to the digital divide. In such a situation, the government and educational institutions should first prepare and equip themselves well with the required infrastructure and technology, while also providing the disadvantaged students with the devices and tools required to connect online.

Appendix

Questionnaire

Gender

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

Age

- 18-24
- 25-30
- Above 30

Educational Qualification (The one you are currently pursuing or have completed)

- Post-Graduate
- Under-Graduate
- Graduate

1. Have you experienced any form of online education? (be it through college or any online courses you may have opted for on your own)
 - Yes
 - No
2. How would you describe your experience?
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Bad
3. As a student, how does your experience of online educational programs compare with traditional offline programs?
 - Better than offline education
 - As good as offline education
 - Not as good as offline education
4. How would you rate the overall quality of the online education you received?
 - Very good
 - Good
 - Fair
 - Poor

5. What do you think are the important factors determining the quality of online education?
(can select more than one)

- Functionality and user-friendliness of online tools and materials
- Value of core information and lessons
- Engagement
- Integration of information and technologies
- Accountability and adaptability

6. Rank the following factors in order of their importance that would lead you to choose online educational programs rather than traditional in-class educational programs?

- Flexible scheduling
- Faster completion
- Study anytime
- Login from anywhere
- Access to more colleges
- No commute
- Potentially lower costs
- Accredited programs

7. As a student, how do you feel about the communication between yourself and the instructor in an online education program?

- In a timely manner
- Delayed feedback from instructor
- Unable to put across your queries
- Difficult to understand the instructor
- Very little/No communication

8. Please rank the effectiveness of online learning compared to meeting regularly in a classroom setting on a scale of 1-5

(1-online is much more effective, 2- Somewhat more effective, 3- Equally effective, 4- Somewhat less effective, 5- Much less effective)

a) Offering convenience

- Online is or might be much more effective
- Online is or might be somewhat more effective
- Online is or might be equally effective
- Online is or might be somewhat less effective
- Online is or might be much less effective

b) Meeting individual learning needs

- Online is or might be much more effective
- Online is or might be somewhat more effective
- Online is or might be equally effective
- Online is or might be somewhat less effective
- Online is or might be much less effective

c) Contributing to effective communication in the class

- Online is or might be much more effective
- Online is or might be somewhat more effective
- Online is or might be equally effective
- Online is or might be somewhat less effective
- Online is or might be much less effective

d) Increasing your sense of community with the instructor and fellow students

- Online is or might be much more effective
- Online is or might be somewhat more effective
- Online is or might be equally effective
- Online is or might be somewhat less effective
- Online is or might be much less effective

e) Promoting greater student participation and interaction

- Online is or might be much more effective
- Online is or might be somewhat more effective
- Online is or might be equally effective
- Online is or might be somewhat less effective
- Online is or might be much less effective

9. What are the problems you encountered while Learning Online? (can select more than one)

- Lack of course instructions and/or organization
- Difficult course materials
- Difficulty in contacting the faculty concerned
- Unreliable Internet connection
- Other problems

Rate the following statements

10. Online courses are easier to complete than in-class, face-to-face courses?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

11. It is easier to achieve better performance (higher grades) in online courses than in face-to-face classes?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

12. I believe that I learned more in an online teaching environment than a comparable face-to-face classroom setting.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

13. I believe learning online compared to offline face-to-face learning environment is:

- Not as effective as offline
- Equal to offline
- Superior to offline

14. Overall students prefer, or believe they would prefer

- Meeting Regularly in a classroom setting, rather than completing coursework online
- Completing coursework online, rather than meeting regularly in a classroom setting
- A combination of meeting in a classroom setting and completing coursework online
- Other

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