A study of Perception and Attitude of Indian Consumers Toward Online Education

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Abstract

This study aimed at examining the attitude of Indian consumers especially students towards online education. The study mainly focused on knowing whether consumers prefer online education better than offline education. This study also comes in a wake of time when the whole world is battling with Covid-19 pandemic situation. A self-structured questionnaire was designed for data collection from a sample of 100 respondents which consists of 54 males and 46 females. This questionnaire consists of 19 sets of questions which were aimed to get inputs such as demographic information of respondents, awareness towards online education and its related platforms, preference of respondents regarding online education, challenges and benefits of online classes, cost factors etc. Findings of this study show that there is no concrete evidence that consumers only prefer online education because as in the further research it was found that people still think that human intervention plays a significant role in the field of education. However, it was found that consumers have a positive inclination towards online education platforms and believe that they can easily get access to it and can also get other advantages such as access to various certification courses. The government should organise workshops and seminars for creating awareness of online education among consumers and should include online education in the curriculum for students.

Keywords: Attitude; Indian Consumers; Education; Online Education; Offline Education; Respondents; COVID 19; Students; Govt.; Knowledge; Certification; EdTech; Study; Internet; Future; Learning; Challenges.

Introduction

Online Education: Introduction

Online education is a versatile learning delivery method that incorporates every form of learning that exists over the Internet. Online learning offers an opportunity for educators to meet students who may not be able to participate in a typical classroom curriculum and help students who choose to work on their own time and at their speed.

In most fields, the amount of distance learning and online degrees is high and is growing rapidly. There are also growing numbers of schools and institutions which offer online learning. Students seeking degrees through the online method must be careful to ensure that their course work is performed in an agency that is accredited and certified.

Reason for Contemplating Online Education:

Online education has become a viable and exciting method of guiding an international business society that operates on a 24/7 timetable (24 hours a day 7 days a week) as it offers tremendous flexibility for students.

Students can access information at any time and anywhere that would usually only be accessible in a conventional classroom with the expanded use of the Internet and computer technology. Research has shown students learn in an online classroom just as well as they do in the traditional classroom.

Pros & Cons of Online Education for Students:

Positive advantages of Online education:

- Students have flexibility in taking classes and working at their speed and time.
- Students face no commuting or parking hassles.
- Students learn to take responsibility for their education with knowledge at their disposal
- Students find it simple and convenient to send assignments
- Students are more likely to express their views and to discuss and debate.

Negative Effects of Online Education:

- Students will miss the face-to-face contact with the instructor.
- Students may find difficult to access to the requisite technology and due to minimal availability of technical support.
- Also, instructors and administrators may evolve negative attitude towards online educations due to non-understandability of the workload.

The differences between OFFLINE AND ONLINE EDUCATION:

In a traditional, offline, in-class setting, students are tied to set schedules, structured course loads, and limited, if any, flexibility in both the curriculum and learning environment.

In contrast, online learning offers a completely different experience. Online learning is one of the most flexible methods of study available today. Coursework and lectures can be taken from anywhere in the world and can sometimes be done at the learner's pace. But just because the delivery takes place online doesn't mean there is no social interaction.

Most online courses involve some form of a discussion forum for participating students to ask questions, debate challenging concepts, and other such interactions.

The benefits of offline learning:

There are several benefits to a traditional, classroom learning environment. For example, because classes are taken in person, it means students receive immediate feedback from classmates and/or lecturers. This is also the way most of us have attended school most of our lives, so we know what to expect.

Prospects of Online Education:

Online education is going to be prevalent for further coming days. Most students choose the online classroom because it offers flexibility in busy schedules. Students must become lifelong learners in today's world with the abundance of information and knowledge and online education plays a significant role in helping individuals access learner-centred and self-directed instruction.

More online education opportunities will become accessible with improved applications, hardware, and Internet access. students becoming more advanced with technology and seeking an education that suits their needs. Hence, the future of online education is very promising and will continue to expand.

Impact of COVID 19 on the perception of online education among Indian consumers:

It has been found that most of the schools, colleges and B schools including Universal Business School and many others have started online teaching and learning using a different online application to bridge the gap between teachers and students.

Govt of India is also allocating significant budget for the promotion of online education in India as students are not able to attend offline education due to lockdown. Due to that Govt. was able to close the major gap in the education sector without effecting the spared of COVID 19.

COVID 19 has made the perception and attitude of Indian consumers more positive towards online education.

Research Objectives

- To study the current market potential for online education in India
- To study the consumer's perception towards online and offline education

Research Methodology

Conceptual framework of the study

- In this research, a theoretical and simple framework is used to analyse consumer behaviour towards online and offline education, concerning their willingness to recommend it to others. Consumers usage decision is based on 3 key aspects i.e. the knowledge gained by the customer through it, challenges faced by the customer during the usage and attitude towards online and offline education.
- One of the main factors which influence the decision is to gain knowledge and usage about the online and offline education, their features as well as benefits. The customer's willingness to use also depends upon the benefits the mode of education provides. People's knowledge is influenced by the type and quality of information made available to them.
- The level of customer's education, customer's household size as well as educations features are some of the key factors which affect consumers prefer to use it.
- **primary data: -**The primary data is collected by the means of interview and survey. The survey was done through a structured questionnaire. Also, to collect more data and to know user views telephonic interaction.
- **Secondary data: -**The source of secondary data is journals, articles, research papers, online sites and websites of online and offline education website.
- **Sample size: -**The sample size for this research is one hundred users who were selected purely based on convenience and support the purpose of the study.
- **Sampling method: -**The method simple random sampling was used to collect the primary source of data based on the time available and respondents.
- **Statistical tools for analysis: -**SPSS and Excel research tools have been used to analyse the data.

Literature Review

To know the attitude towards e-learning, Naila et al. conducted a study on nursing students 120 Nursing Students participated in this quantitative and cross-sectional analysis. To test their attitudes towards E-learning, a questionnaire has been distributed to all students. The result demonstrated students' willingness to embrace e-learning and recognized their use in education. However, technological support and the difficulty of using

technology have been noted as limiting factors for adopting e-learning (al., 2016). In a study conducted by Patricia Bertea, it was observed that there is a link between the technological skills and the attitude of the students towards e-learning. Differences in attitude were noticed between the students hired and the unemployed (Bertea's, 2009). D.W. Sanders et al. In a biology course, Morrison-Shelter observed attitudes of undergraduate students towards the web-enabled learning components. The findings demonstrated a positive impact on critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills and learning for students (Morrison-Shelter, 2001). Suri & Sharma conducted a study to determine gender attitudes toward e-learning. A study of 477 students concluded that there is no significant link between the attitude of the class and the attitude of the students towards e-learning (Suri, 2013). Rhema et al. addressed students' perspectives and observations on the technology allowed learning from two Lybian universities. The effect of demographic characteristics, exposure to technology, learning technology use, technical skills and satisfaction with technology on the attitude of the students were studied. The findings suggested that demographic characteristics such as student locality gender disparities, current year of enrolment and age had no impact on the attitude of students towards e-learning. Students with exposure to technology were more propitious towards e-learning. Student competencies in technology are a major factor in attitudes towards e-learning (Rhema, 2014). Teachers play a crucial role in educational environments, and their understanding of e-learning affects the attitude of students towards e-learning. Krishnakumar & Rajesh assessed the attitude of higher education teachers towards e-learning. The study result showed a favourable attitude. There were variations in approach between teachers familiar with computers and technology as compared to technologically inexperienced teachers (K. M. Rajesh, 2011). A similar study was conducted in which Kisanga examined numerous factors which determine the attitude of teachers towards e-learning. The well-known model for embracing technology has been updated to incorporate factors such as gender, education and teaching experience as independent variables. In deciding attitude towards e-learning, the other factors gender, education, and teaching experience were found to be negligible (Dalton Hebert, 2016). Innovation on account of the individual front also affects on-line learning attitude. Özcan et al. investigated the impact of the degree of the imagination of individuals on the shift in approach to prior-service instructor e-learning. A scale of previous studies was used to assess the degree of innovation, the outcome of which places a person in one of the profiles of Innovators, Early Adopters, Early Majority and Laggards. Such teachers' attitude has been assessed using a specific scale and it has been found that there is a significant difference in their attitude towards online learning about the degree of creativity of the person (Özcan, 2016). The first systematic, thorough study and meta-analysis of online and offline learning goes back to 2008. Cook et al. selected 76 papers that contrasted internet-based and non-internet-based interventions and 130 papers for medical education learners that include no-intervention controls. This research concluded through a meta-analysis that internet-based interventions were correlated with positive effects relative to no interventions, but the effects and statistical heterogeneities were generally low relative to offline teaching (Cook DA, 2008). Scholars have laid down ingots of evidence showing that online and offline student performance is different based on student demographic characteristics (Huh, 2010). (Olson, 2002) found insufficient evidence in assessing student success based on student completion levels of materials to suggest that online or offline delivery is a factor affecting a student's completion of their course work. Some found lower student performance in online classes (e.g., (Trawick, 2010), while some found higher learning in an online environment. Comparing conventional and hybrid parts of Marketing Principles, (Priluck, 2004) did not notice any difference in results, but a substantial difference in student satisfaction. With the advent of Web-based technology in online education instructors has supplemented various courses ranging from putting syllabi, assignments on the web and other course materials to virtual simulations and assessment. If the students have adequate support available while web-based course delivery, then it is observed that students have positive attitudes in general towards it. (Cooper, 1999) As these courses are still mostly conventional, in that the students are in face-to-face interaction with the teacher and each other every week, the positive attitudes recorded by the students towards incorporating web elements into their courses are possibly due in part to their facility and fascination with technology in general and particularly with Internet.

Summary of Data Collection

Variable	Constructs	Frequency of respondents
Gender	Male	54
	Female	46
Age group	15 -17-year-old	2
	18 - 20-year-old	5
	21 - 23-year-old	64
	24 - 26-year-old	27
	27 - 29-year-old	2
Marital Status	Married	0
	Unmarried	100
Occupation	Student	63
	Self-employed	5
	Govt. employ	1
	Teacher	3
	Private employ	26
	Business Owner	1
	Others	1
Annual Income	None - 3,00,000	64
	3,00,001 - 5,00,000	20
	5,00,001 - 10,00,000	12
	10,00,001 - Above	4

Out of the sample population, 46 % were female and 54% were male.

From the age of 15 – 29years old. All were unmarried with different occupation. Among the respondents 30% were unemployed and other 70% were employed.

Analysis of Data:

Following are the responses of the respondents on important questions / issues related to online education:
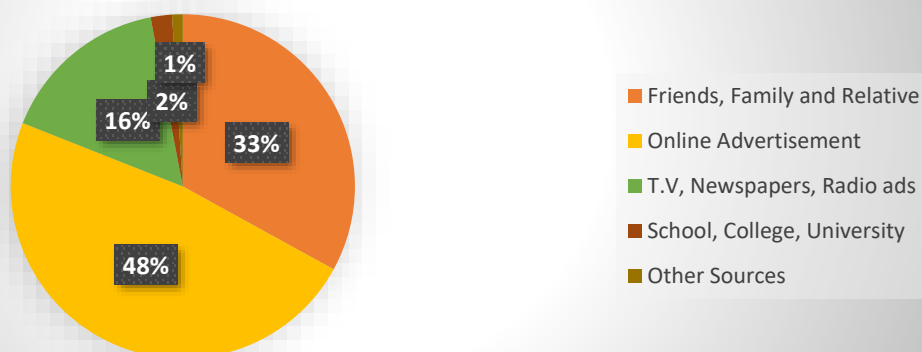
1.

Have you heard about online education?
100 responses
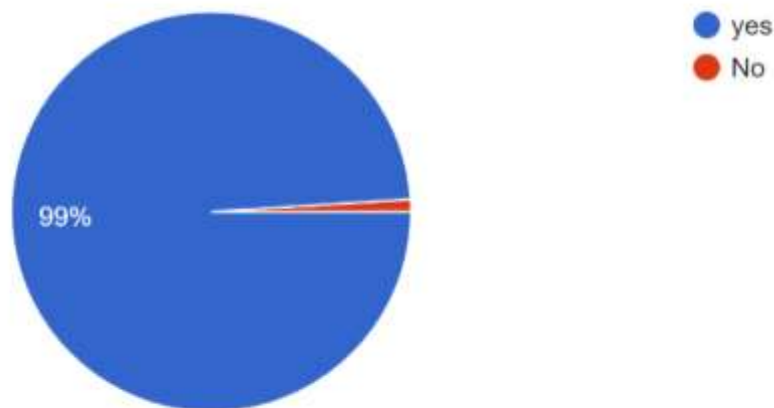
The above chart shows the level of awareness among the respondents about online education. Most of the respondents are aware of the concept of online education whereas there were only 1 % of the sample population that was unaware of it.

2.

The above chart shows that the respondent's source of awareness on online education as the majority is from the online advertisement of 48%, 33% from Friends, family and relative, 16% from T.V, Newspapers and radio ads, 2% from School, college and university and 1% from other sources.

3.

Have you ever used any online education application?

100 responses
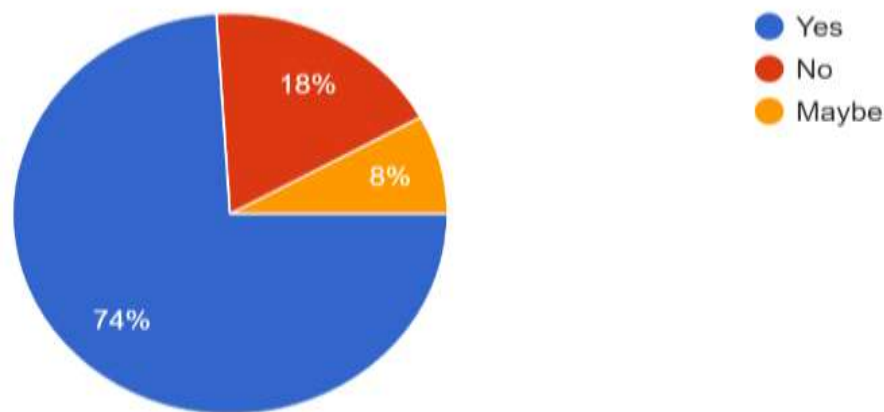
The above chart shows that the respondent's usage behaviour of online education as it shows that 74% of the respondents have used it whereas 18% haven't and remaining 8% are not sure whether they have used it or not which can be the main concern as the chances of the growth of online education are in the uprising.

4.
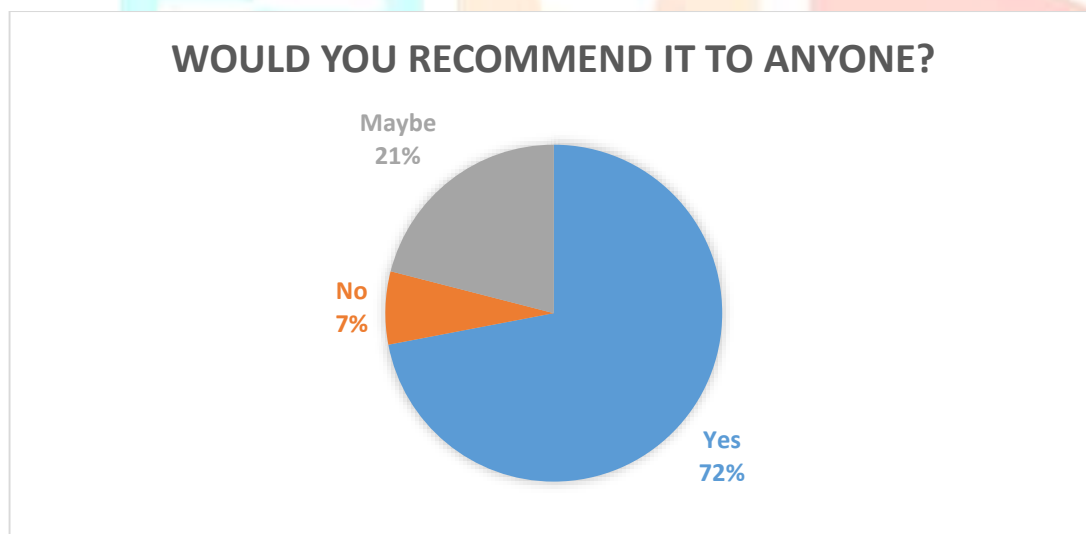
The above chart shows that the respondents would like to recommend the usage of online education to other or not as we got the result, we can see that 72% are happy and would like to recommend it to other but 7% are not and the main concern is of 21% where they are in either yes or no because they are not sure either whom they are recommending it to are of any benefit.

The online education Application/ site respondents know about

Sl no.	Online education application/ site	Respondent Know (out of 100)
1	UnfoldU – Best e-learning app	14
2	BYJU'S – The Learning App	59
3	Toppr	22
4	Meritnation	15
5	Unacademy	50
6	GradeUp	19
7	myCBSEGuide	17
8	TED	27
9	Khan Academy	22
10	Swayam	4
11	Coursera	6
12	The Gate Academy	1
13	YouTube	1
14	Exampur	1
15	EdYoda	1
16	Udemy	3
17	Coding Ninjas	1
18	Intellipaat	1
19	Zoom App	3
20	Others	3
21	None	2

From the above table, we can consider that EDTECH industry has come a long way in this age where a student is trying to be self-dependent rather than going to a coaching class or having a home tutor through this research we got to know about the popularity of some edtech companies which provides online education and the company with the highest popularity was Byju's where more than 50% of responders were known to the company. The other companies which are popular among the responders were Toppr, Coursera, Meritnation, Unacademy, Gradeup, Khan Academy, Udemy. These were some edtech companies which are popular among the Indians.

6.

How much time do you spend on online sites at one go?
100 responses
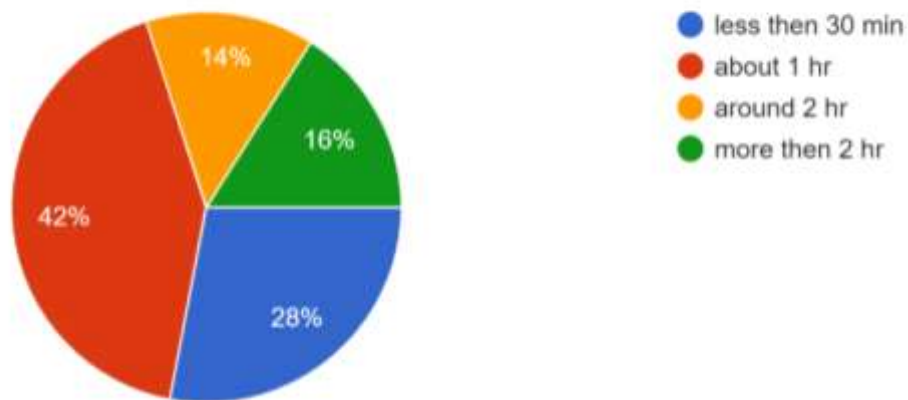
The above chart shows that the respondent's usage time of online education site/ application as the major is in 1hr time frame of 42%, then 28% are of less than 30min which can be part of concern because if the education site is not attractive it can't hold the respondent, 14% which is around 2hr and last the respondent who spends most time of 16%.
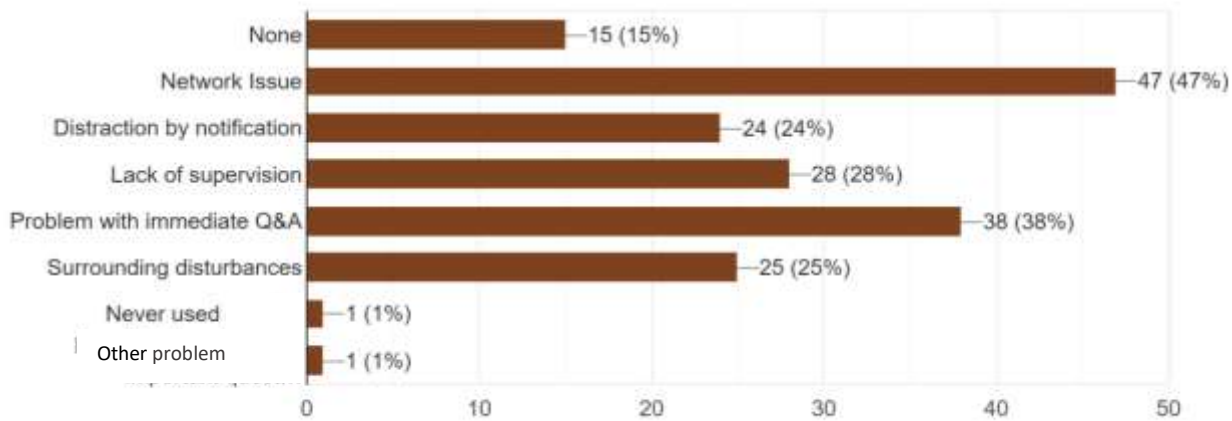
7.

Which is the better way of learning?
100 responses
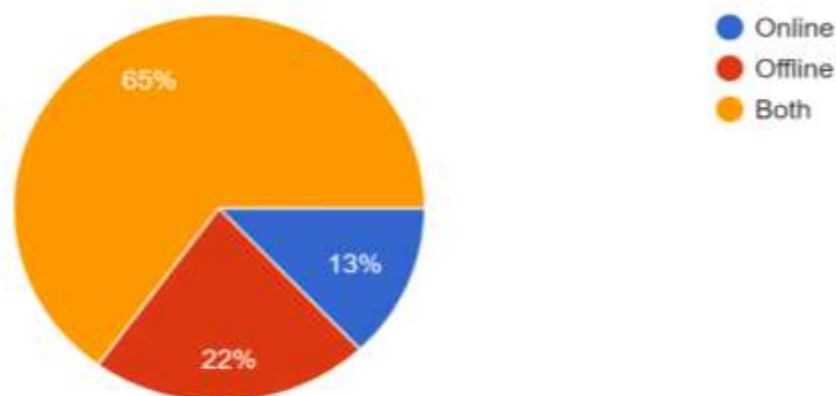
The above chart shows that the respondents are used to learning both ways as online and offline as due that the preference for it is 65%, but the real problem is that 22% still thinks that offline education is more suitable than 13% online education.
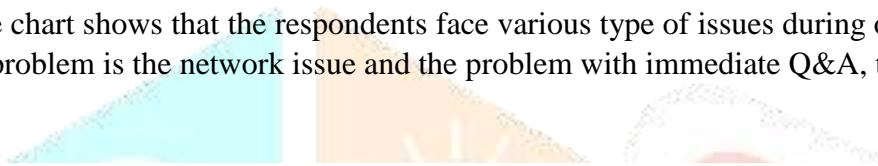
8.

What challenges do you face during the online study?
100 responses

The above chart shows that the respondents face various type of issues during online education in which the most common problem is the network issue and the problem with immediate Q&A, then there are other problems also.

From your point of view where do you think the pace of study is more online or offline? (1 means more toward online and 5 means more toward offline)
100 responses
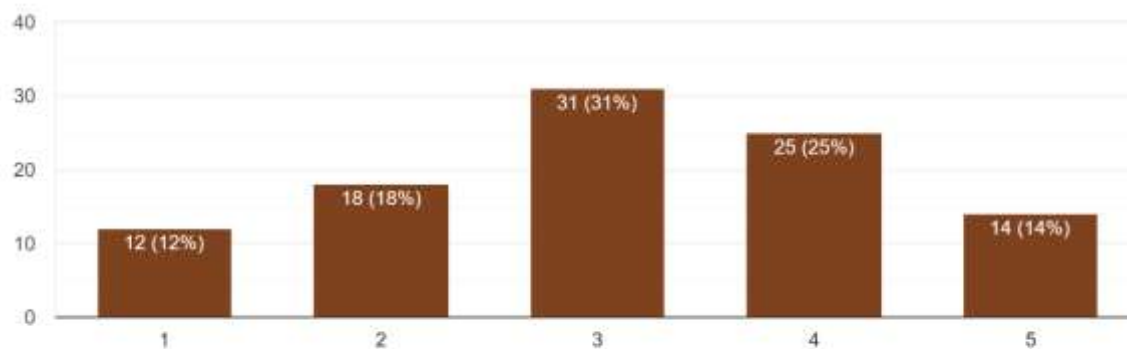
9.

The above chart shows that the respondents are more favourable toward the offline pace of study comparatively toward online as 31% of them think both have an equal pace of study wherein offline mode 25% think it's in a good pace and 14% think it's excellent wherein online mode 18% is good and 12% is excellent.

10.

Do you find Online education more interactive?

100 responses
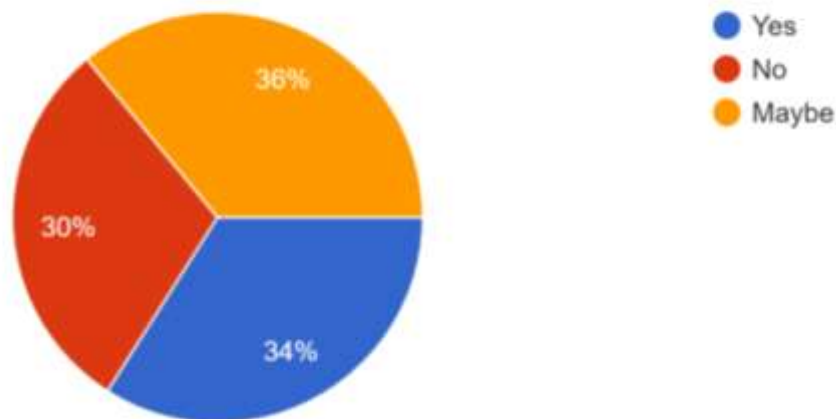
The above chart shows that the respondent's interactive toward online education. Mainly here 36% of the respondents feel interactive where 30% don't and 36% are either way which is not a good outcome as if the interactive toward the online education is this way then the prospect its curriculum must be made more interesting and attractive.
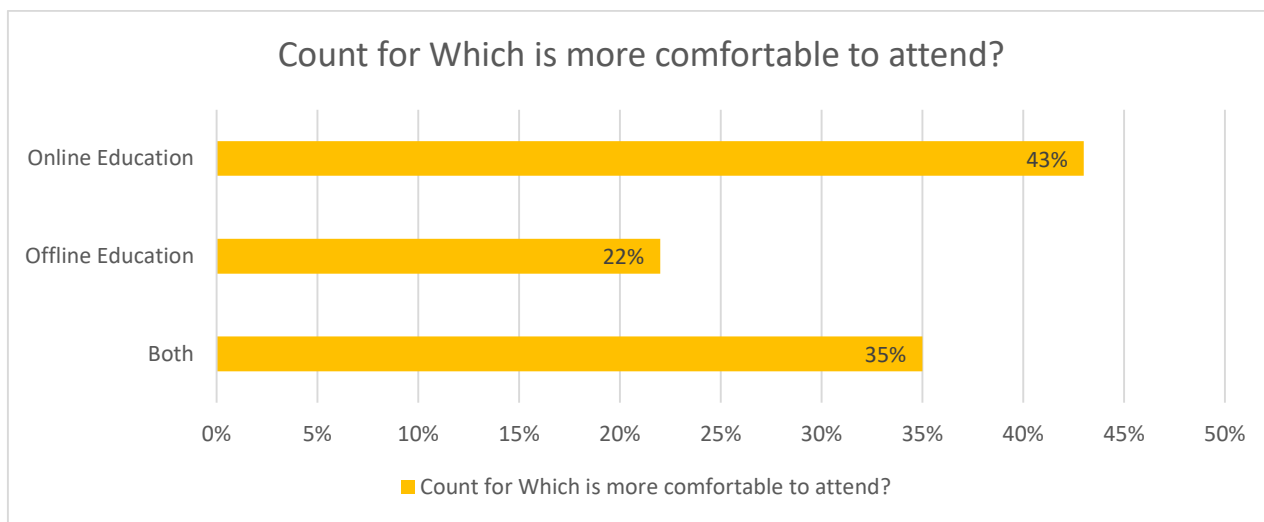
11.

Do you think online education provides more opportunities for certification than another medium?

100 responses
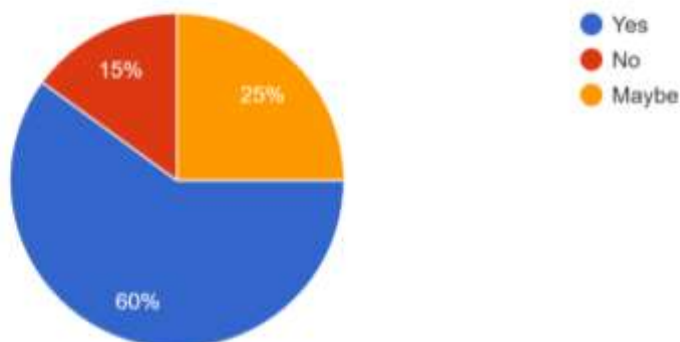
The above chart shows that the respondent's mentality toward the benefit of doing online education as 60% agrees that its easy to understand and get knowledge about the certification course whereas 15% disagree and remaining 25% are not sure about it.

12.

Count for Which is more comfortable to attend?

Online Education	43%
Offline Education	22%
Both	35%

■ Count for Which is more comfortable to attend?

The above chart shows that the respondent's adaptability toward the education providences as 35% are more comfortable with online education whereas 22% are with offline education and the remaining 43% thinks that both media is more comfortable.

13.

### Which is more costly compared to others?
100 responses

63% 16% 21%

- Online education
- Offline education
- Both
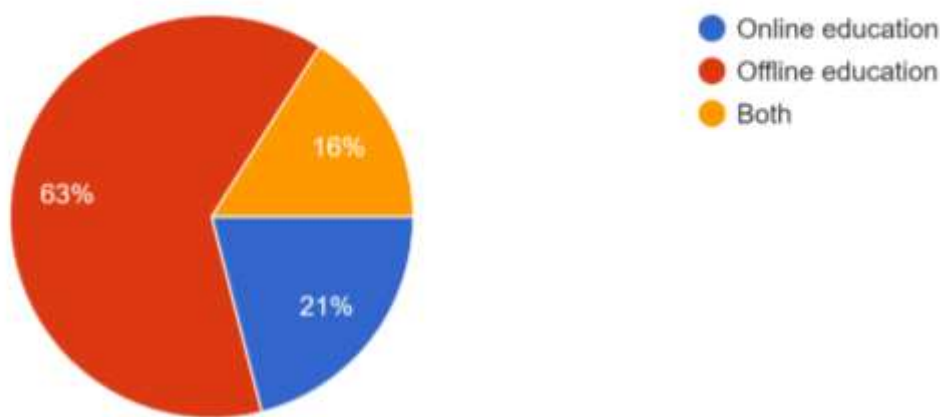
The above chart shows that the respondent's mindset, knowledge and the monetary value toward the education they preferred as the chart show that 63% think offline education is more costly compared to other whereas 21% think the inline study is more costly and the remaining 16% think both are equally expensive.

14.

How would you rate from online vs offline education?
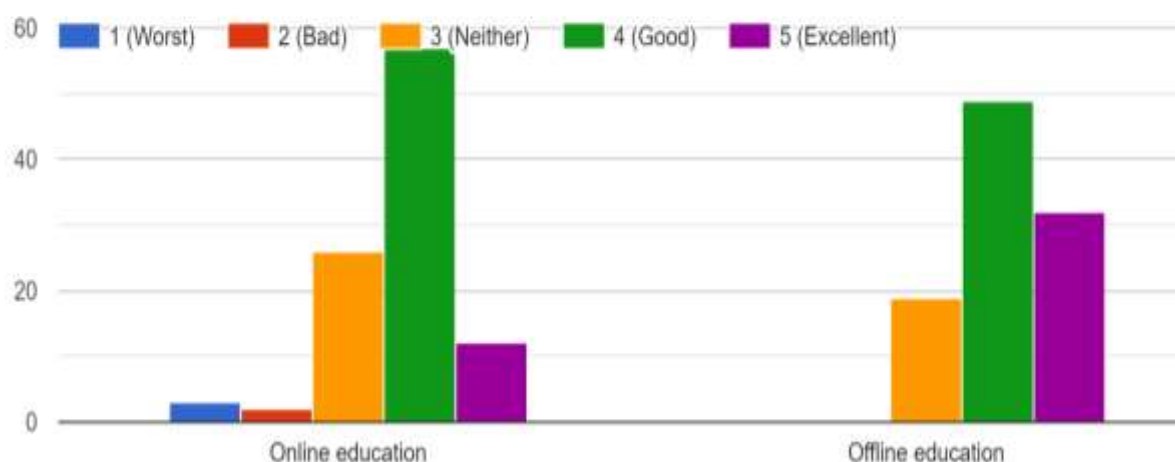
The above chart shows that the respondent's view toward the online vs offline education as in the chat it mentioned that **1= Worst, 2= Bad, 3= Neither, 4= Good, 5= Excellent.**

On that basis for the online education preference the outcome is good as the majority is in good (4), neutral (3), excellent (5), but also in bad (2) and worst (1).

Comparatively, for offline education, the result is different as all the marks are good, excellent or neutral, no bad or worst mark.

Which shows that people still think that offline is better than online education.

Findings

Through this research, we got a deep understanding about the perception and attitude of Indian consumers towards online education. The individuals who represent the data are mostly among the age group of 20 to 25. The major finding was that 99% of people know about online medium and are aware of the different companies which provide the online medium of study such as BYJU'S, COURSERA, UNACADEMY, JARO etc.

We also found that the online advertisement plays a major role in spreading knowledge about online education because most of the people got aware of online education through online advertisements we also found that people love to spend time on online studies as a large amount of audience said they spend more than 2 hours in one sitting and they would love to recommend the online education to others.

Through this research, we also got to know about the challenges faced by the respondent's while going on online for studies the biggest challenge in India is still the network issues that can be irritating and quite painful sometimes and most of the audience think likewise. Other than that consumer face challenges with immediate doubt solution of questions and lack of supervision is still a challenge that is faced by the consumers.

CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to understand the perception and attitude of Indian consumers towards online education compared to and offline education. We did this research among the individual which were in the age group of 15 to 30 and which had gone through both modes of learning experience online as well as offline. The

research included respondents from different cities and different occupations, though mostly students. The sample size was 100 with 54 males and 46 females.

This research throws light upon the big question in today's internet geek world that which is a better mode of learning online mode of education or offline mode of education. As we found out in this research that however people love to spend the time on online website enhancing their skills and knowledge they still think that only online education is not enough to gain all the knowledge you still need human supervision that is through offline education and that's why most of the responders think that both are a good platform to learn, However, online education wins the race in comfort because most people think that online education is more comfortable as they can study from wherever and whenever they want and the responses also show the consumer perception that the cost of offline education is more than online education in many cases and online education provides them certificates opportunities that are not available in offline education.

As India move towards a digital era and now the internet is becoming a part of our life whether it is a banking system, catering, apparels, etc. They all are using the internet for growth and now the internet is also part of education system most of the schools and colleges are using the internet for educational purposes and in near future, we will see a huge number of students using online mediums for studies over offline. After all, the new generation which is currently in school will have internet play a huge role in there upbringing thus they will always prefer the online mode over the offline because they will have a better connection to the online education.

COVID 19 has improved the perception and attitude of Indian consumers towards online education. Govt. of India has also realised and is going to invest a huge amount on online education. Findings of the research indicate that in future online education is going to be an integral part of the educational landscape of India and will complement the existing offline mode of education. Educational institutes which would integrate both modes of education effectively in order to deliver quality educational services will thrive and be successful amidst the competition. The speed with which they will be integrating and delivering quality educational services will be another differentiating factor among the successful and not so successful educational institutions.

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