

Student Perspectives on Traditional Versus Digital Learning: A Survey of Selected Universities

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a shift from traditional offline teaching to online learning. This change, driven by the urgent need for safety, led to a reversion. However, with the advent of vaccinations and medical advancements again the countries switched back to offline mode. However, the online learning experience during the pandemic prompted a reassessment of its effectiveness. To explore this, the author conducted an online survey using Google Forms, gathering responses from 345 participants. The respondents, comprising a diverse group from various universities of Delhi, included both genders, working and non-working individuals, as well as students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate studies from different income brackets. The findings indicated a general preference for offline learning, though online education was acknowledged for its distinct benefits. The authors advocate for a blended teaching approach, combining both online and offline methods equally, which could optimize the use of existing infrastructure.

Keywords: Online, Offline, Teaching Methodology

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Historically, education was conducted offline, with students traveling to Gurukuls in ancient times to learn. Over time, the system evolved to involve students residing at home or in hostels while attending educational institutions for face-to-face learning. The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a significant shift to online education due to global lockdowns, replacing traditional tools like chalkboards with digital platforms such as Google Classroom, Zoom, and Webex. Despite its ability to sustain education during challenging times, online learning cannot wholly replace offline methods. Both modes offer unique advantages and drawbacks. Online education provides accessibility, time flexibility, and cost-effectiveness but can lead to issues like eye strain and internet connectivity problems. Offline education fosters better interpersonal interactions and personal development but was hindered by pandemic-related concerns, travel time especially in metropolitans, infrastructure, etc .

Many institutions have since adopted a hybrid model to address evolving educational needs.

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to determine students' preferences for online versus offline learning. It was hypothesized that undergraduates would lean towards offline learning, while postgraduates, particularly those from IGNOU, would favor online methods.

The study aims at providing suggestions for the methodology to be used.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

An online survey was created to gauge student perceptions from different universities from Delhi; distributed via social media. An online survey was conducted among students from Delhi University, IGNOU, JNU, and other universities using Google forms. The diverse respondent pool included males and females, working and non-working individuals, and students across various income levels. The survey promised confidentiality and academic use of the data collected. The study sample consisted of 345 respondents.

1.4 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Such a study was conducted by Jasmine Paul and Felicia Jefferson, where they researched the effectiveness of online teaching for 8 consecutive years. They compared 548 students in the environmental science class: 401 traditional students and 147 online students. The study was on three levels: mode of instruction whether online or offline, gender, and class rank. The result was that there is No significant difference in the student performance between online and face-to-face F2F learners overall, with respect to gender, or with respect to class rank. Serkan Kaymak tried to find out whether there is a significant difference in the students' achievement between online and offline modes of instruction.

A total of 62 7th grade students from Nurorda School in Nur-Sultan Kazakhstan were selected, of which 39 students participated offline and 23 online. At the end of the five weeks, a final test covering all areas was administered. The mean scores were compared using an independent t-test. No significant difference was found and both methods were found to be equally effective.

In yet another study, *Dr Venugopal Narsingoju* has evaluated the real learning outcomes and difficulties of students. Responses were collected from students of different ages. The objective was that based on the data teachers can modify the teaching methodology.

Study concluded that there are maximum students who want offline classes.

Mahima Rohatgi (2021) used convenience sampling technique for performing research based on Exploratory data collected through Primary and Secondary sources from PAN India to find out barriers in success of online education and how online education can be made successful in future. They used Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling technique through SMART PLS 2 for analysing data. The outcome was that online teaching can be more effective by adding features like more practical classes, conducting quiz or poll, healthy discussion making syllabus more flexible by adding practical courses.

Midhat MuttaquiJ (2021) had Conducted survey on First Year MBBS Students of JNMC, AMU, Aligarh. in which they compared the performance of students of two batches.. The study explores the effectiveness of online teaching, the potential challenges and drawbacks.. The performance of offline mode students was found to be significantly better.

In another study by Ping Li, Hua Zhang and Sang-Bing Tsai (2021), they concluded that the internet-based scaffolding teaching model can improve students' reading performance in English. They compared the results before and after reading test items and found that students' scores improved in both classes. They also concluded that the reading performance of the mixed online and offline classes improved even more. They advocated the hybrid model. Their study found that the internet-based scaffolding teaching model can give students sufficient time for independent learning before class.

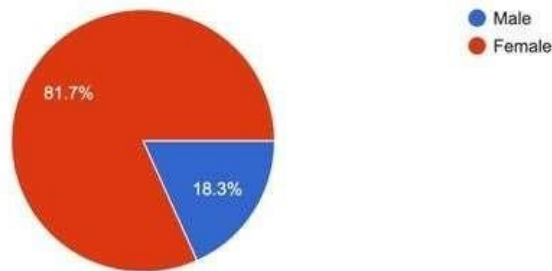
The only study which concluded that student's perception of online learning is relatively good is by *Jayavarsha.v (2021)*. The students wished to continue with online education due to its convenience of being accessible from anywhere and felt that the obstacles of online teaching can be worked upon. Total no of participants were 101. The female participants preferred online class as they are of the opinion that it results in better understanding of their subjects. Though 24.75% of female participants said that during online classes they cannot sit satisfactorily for the duration of the class.

Senthil Veerasamy & Susobhan Goswami Thiagarajar School of Management, Madurai, India (2023) in their article Is Online Learning Better than Offline Learning? have done empirical study and have used Statistical tools and methods such as descriptive analysis, independent t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) to compare the two methods. The research results show that a marginal positive influence can be demonstrated for offline learning and that there are no gender-specific differences in performance for online learning.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

Gender

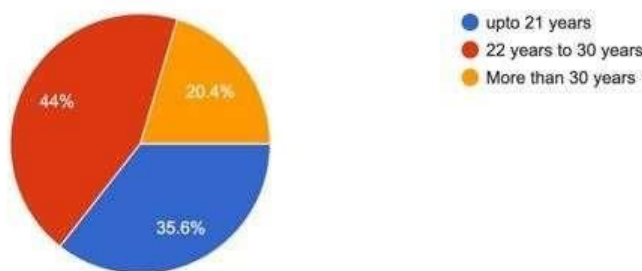
345 responses



Out of the 345 students who participated in the survey, 81% were females

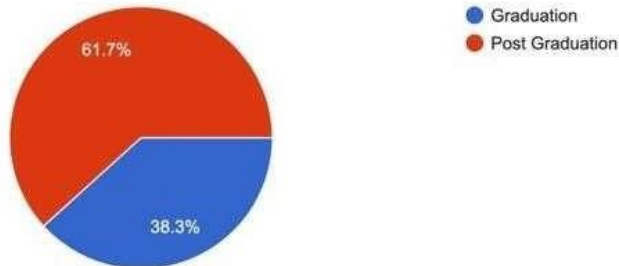
Age

343 responses



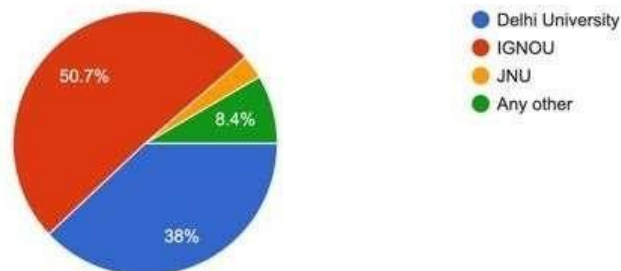
44% students were between the age group of 22 to 30 years

Pursuing/ Completed Degree
345 responses



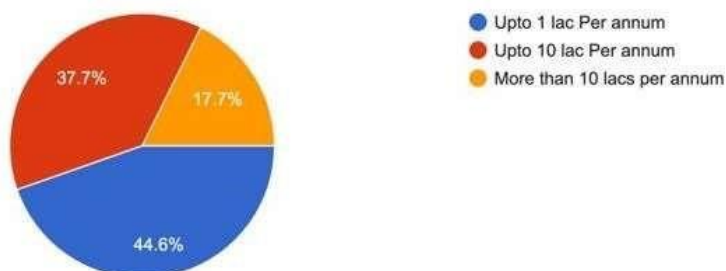
62% students were pursuing Post graduation

University
345 responses



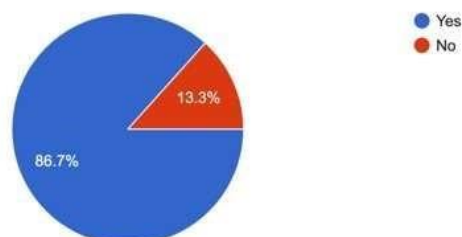
51% students belonged to Indira Gandhi Open University

Family income
345 responses

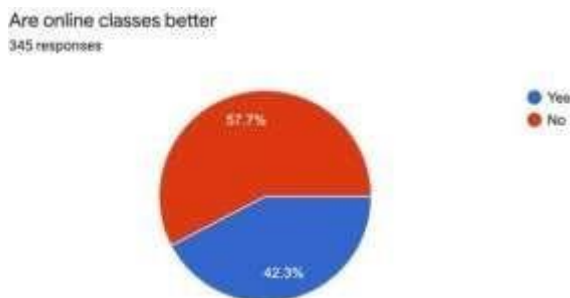


45% of students have family income of up to Rs1 lac per annum

Have you experienced both Offline & online classes
345 responses



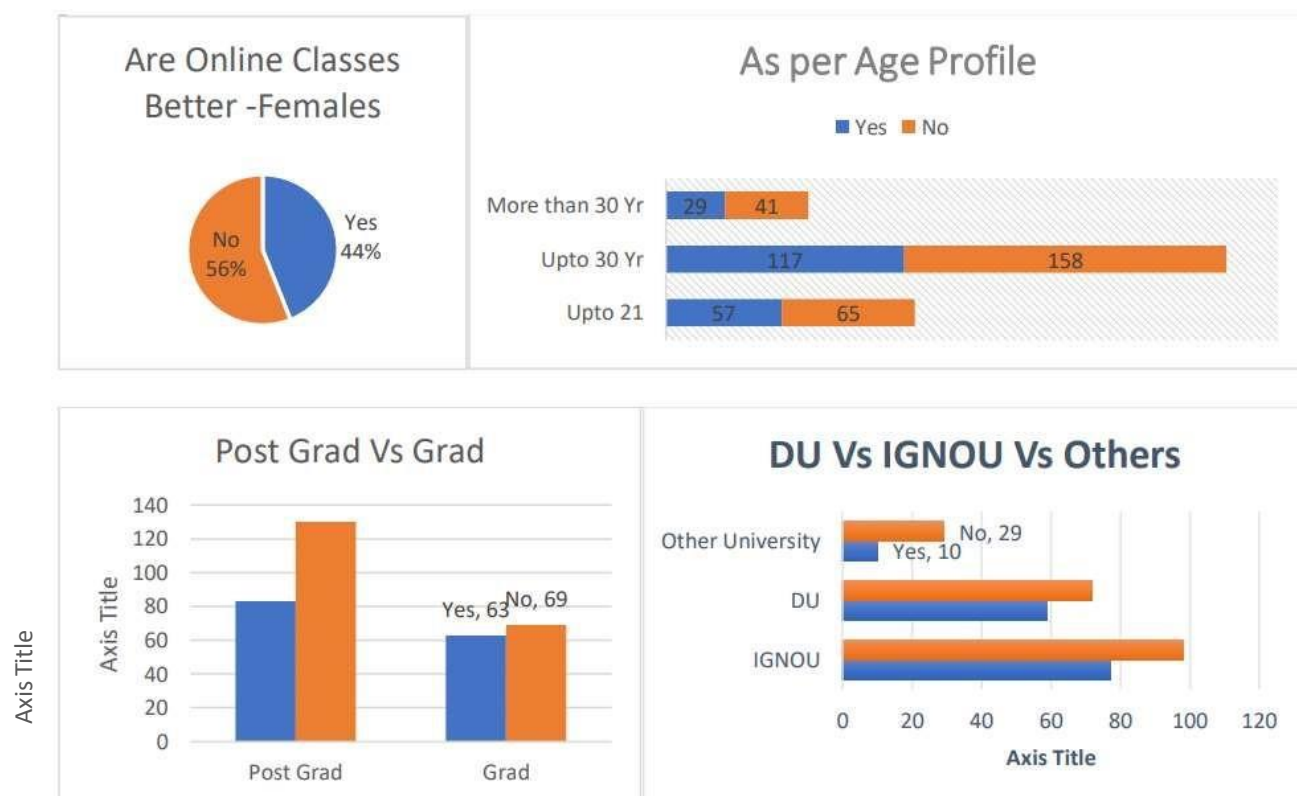
They were asked 10 questions regarding their experiences on Offline Vs Online teaching methods



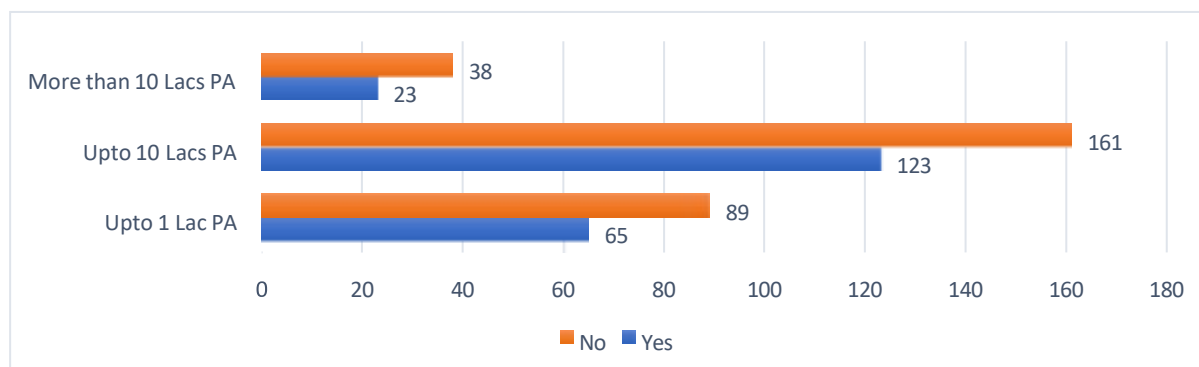
58% of the total respondents preferred Offline mode than Online mode

EFFECT OF DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE ON PREFERENCE FOR TEACHING METHODOLOGY

On analysing the data according to sex 56% of the females said Offline classes are better. Among those up to 21 years old, 53% preferred offline classes, while 59% of those over 30 years old favored offline learning. In the 21-30 year age group, 58.5% preferred offline classes.



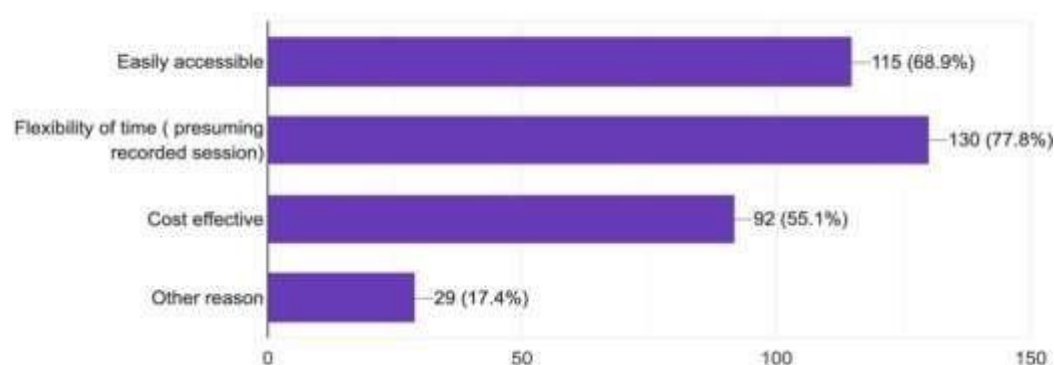
Interestingly, 61% of postgraduate students preferred offline classes, compared to 52% of undergraduates. 74% of students from other universities, such as JNU, preferred offline teaching, compared to 56% of IGNOU students and 55% of DU students.



58% students from Economically weaker section wanted offline teaching as compared to 62% students from more than Rs 10 lac earning families. However around 56.6 % students whose annual family income is between 1 lakh to 10 lakhs wish to be taught in offline mode.

If Yes, tick reasons (You may choose more than one)

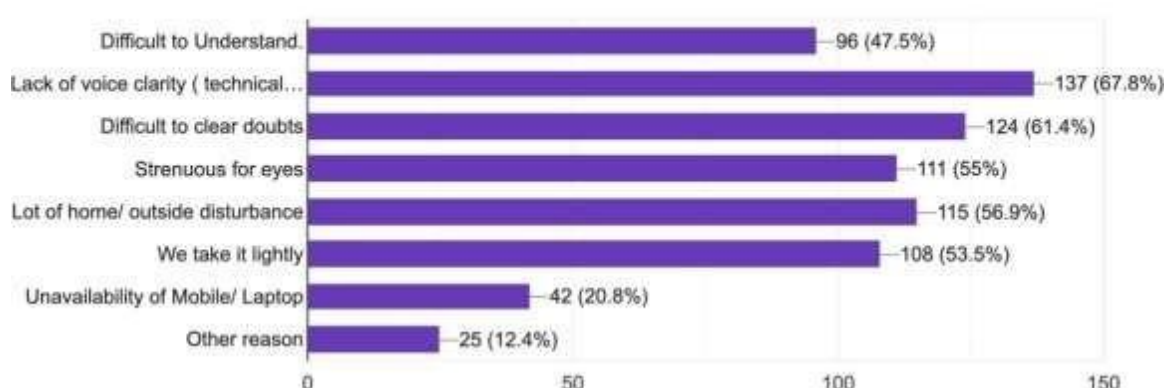
167 responses



When asked why they prefer online mode of education most of them were of the viewpoint that they prefer it due to flexibility of time and accessibility. Yet when asked to choose about reasons for not preferring online mode besides complaining about lack of voice clarity most of them also complained that it is difficult to understand, is strenuous for eyes, difficulty in clearing doubts, home disturbances and so and so forth as can be seen from the table below.

If No, tick reasons (You may choose more than one)

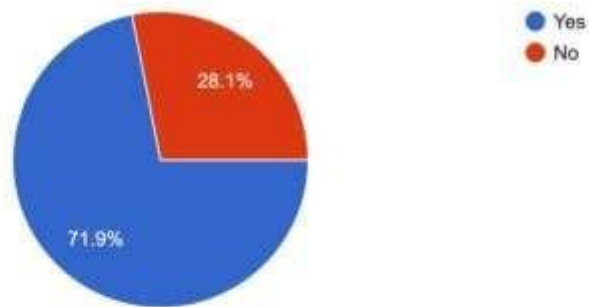
202 responses



97% of the respondents were of the viewpoint that understanding is better in face to face interaction.

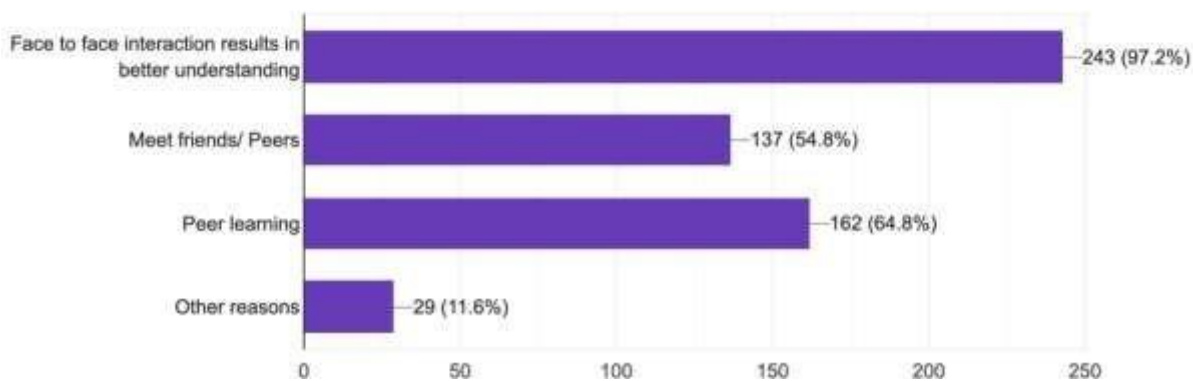
Are offline classes better

345 responses



If Yes, tick reasons (You can choose more than one)

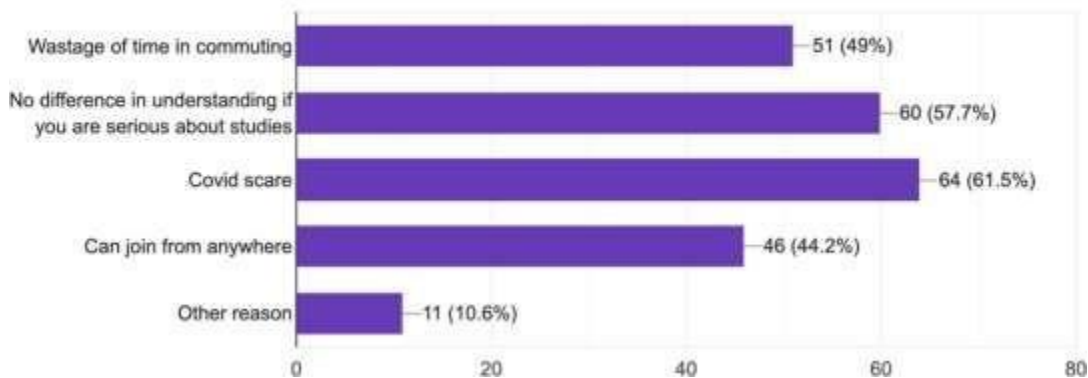
250 responses



Most of them felt that peer learning is better in offline classes. The respondents did not prefer offline classes due to mainly problem in commuting to the institution and 58% of them felt that there is not much difference in understanding if one is serious about studies the mode of teaching does not make any difference. This is depicted by the graph below.

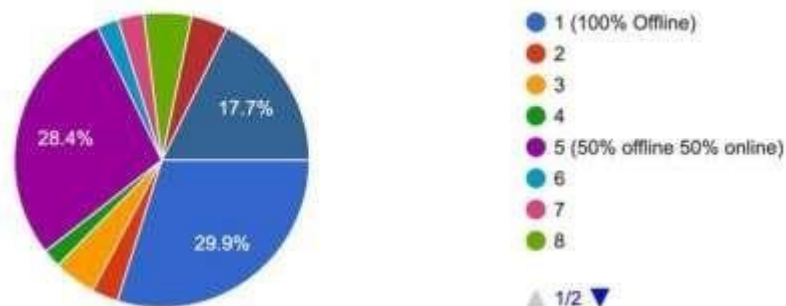
If No, tick reasons (You may choose more than one)

104 responses



Rate on scale of 1 to 10, 1 being 100% offline and 10 being 100% online

345 responses



On being asked about their preference on a scale of 10 almost 30 % respondents wanted the classes to be 100% offline. However 28% students wished to have classes 50% online and 50% offline.

1.7 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The online survey suggests that offline classes are generally preferred for better understanding, peer learning, and overall personality development. Nonetheless, the value of online classes, especially during pandemics like COVID-19, cannot be overlooked. Some respondents felt that online learning could be effective if approached seriously, offering significant time and resource savings. Most studies align with this view, except for Jayavarsha.v et al. (2021), who found online education to be more favorable in their survey of adolescents in Chennai.

The author recommends a blended teaching approach, with 50% online and 50% offline classes. The authors suggest that institutions/Government can adopt mixed methodology. Classes may be 50% online and 50% offline mode. This can result in the same infrastructure being used by two institutions. Students can also save substantial commuting time, allowing time for personal development.