



PERCEPTION AND DIFFICULTIES TOWARDS ONLINE CLASSES DURING PANDEMIC AMONG 1st YEAR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS OF A PRIVATE DENTAL INSTITUTION

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ABSTRACT :

Background: Online education helps the students through the google meets and zoom meeting and through the online lectures and the discussion sessions and benefitted through chat boxes and on the other side it affects the students mental health and leads to brain disorders.

Aim: To analyse the perception and difficulties towards online classes during pandemic among undergraduate students in a private dental institution

Materials and Methods: A total of 98 undergraduate dental students from a private institution participated in the study. A questionnaire was circulated among the first year undergraduate dental students. Only completely filled forms were taken in for analysis. The data was transferred to SPSS version 5. Descriptive statistics like frequency and percentage was used, chi square test was done for inferential statistics.



Results: Out of 99 Participants, all of them preferred in person coaching and about 82.83% felt excessive screen time affects their mental health. About 81.82% felt, their quality of sleep is lost due to the new normal in teaching learning process. At the same time 76.7% felt individual attention and interaction between student and teacher is better during online lectures.

Conclusion: Based on the aims and objectives of the study, it can be concluded that, even though students have adapted to the unavoidable, and are gaining out of the new teaching platform; considerations in terms of screen time and attention span and overall health of students must be considered.

KEY WORDS: COVID-19, E-learning, face to face teaching, perceptions, innovative analysis

INTRODUCTION:

The pandemic which started in 2019, is still a cause for panic and apprehension among the public, across nations worldwide. Keeping aside the health effects and life threatening nature of the pandemic, it has largely altered the way we look at occupation, recreation, quality of life and most importantly the education system. The price every child and teacher has to pay in terms of accommodating a new mode of teaching and learning is very high. Most of the time both the parties work well out of their comfort zone, just to keep in track of their curriculum.

As with any branch in medicine, dentistry has also faced a lot of hardships, in terms of academics and clinical skill training. Though there is a wide variety of online platforms and apps to help with the online classes during lockdown. A massive opening of online classes and the live lectures helped the school students and the college students through the google meet and zoom(1). Through google meet and the zoom, students helped in the problem solving way and they starts to learn programming and designing and they are aware of the activities and the online activities and the projects attracts the students and helps to learn in the good ways. On the other side, students lost their health and affected by social effects through online education(2). Online



education platforms, video conferencing and the social media attracts the students. For easy learning and the easy understanding methods teachers used slideshows during the class enabling the chat boxes and unmuting yourself for any doubt clarification are much more helpful to the students(3). Online education is a type of innovative strategies which continuity of the online education system. On the other hand, the student's online education system affects mental health and there is not enough time to reflect the strategies associated with technologies(3,4). Students feel that physical education is much better than online education. Students lack the studies through the online assessment and the online tools, so that they won't be able to concentrate properly in the online classes. In some students face to face interaction interacts to learn through online education(5). After a certain period, students miss their peers, classrooms, library, laboratories, playgrounds in schools and colleges.

Most of the students do not have access to high speed or reliable internet services and are thus struggling with online learning. All those questions prompted the recent study and investigation to explore the students and the perception towards the quality of online education.(6). Our team has extensive knowledge and research experience that has translate into high quality publications(7–15),(16),(17),(18,19),(20),(21),(22–26) This research suggests that online learning has been shown to increase the retention of the information and it takes less time for their families.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Study Design: A cross sectional questionnaire survey

Study Setting: Undergraduate students in a private dental institution in Chennai

Sample Size: 99 first year undergraduate dental students



Sampling and Scheduling: The whole of first year BDS students were taken in to the study, but only fully entered forms were taken into analysis, ending up with 99 of 106 responses.

Survey Instrument: A pre tested and validated questionnaire was used to measure the baseline knowledge, attitude and practice regarding the pandemic and alternative therapies for the same.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: All those who were willing to participate were included in the study.

Ethical clearance: Prior to the start of the study, ethical clearance was obtained from the institution ethical committee of Saveetha university.

Statistical Analysis: The responses from the google sheet were transferred into excel and were then exposed to SPSS software, version 25. Descriptive statistics was done using frequency and percentage. Inferential statistics was done using Chi square test. Interpretation was based on a p value less than 0.05, which was considered statistically significant. Comparisons were done between independent variables like age, gender, occupation and responses towards perception and difficulties regarding online teaching by the participants.

RESULTS:

Out of the 99 study participants 52 were females and 47 were males. Most of the participants (40%) were 18- 19 years old, followed by 60% who were in the 20 year age group. When asked about the perceptions regarding online class, the students felt that, Learning was found to take place better in physical classrooms (84.85%) than online classes (14.14%). Physical classroom exam (78.79%) was found to be better and relatable than the online classroom exam (20.20%). 78.79% of them felt online education will affect the students mental health.

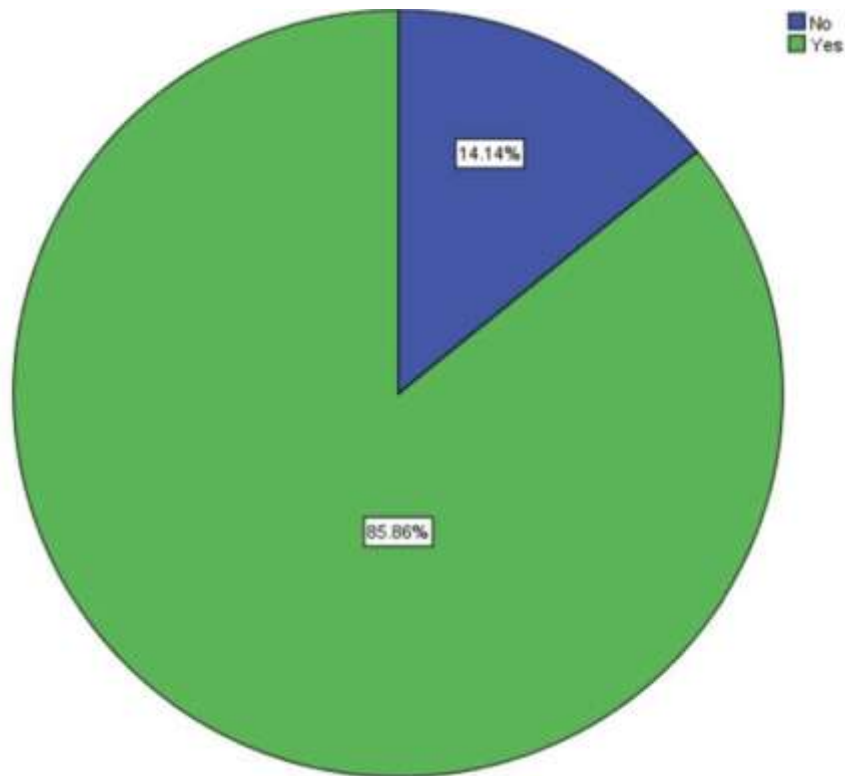


Figure 1 denotes the responses related to online classes being a better platform for learning. Green (85.86%) denotes the percentage of students who felt comfortable with online classes. And blue (14.14%) denotes the minor percentage who were not comfortable with the online learning platforms.

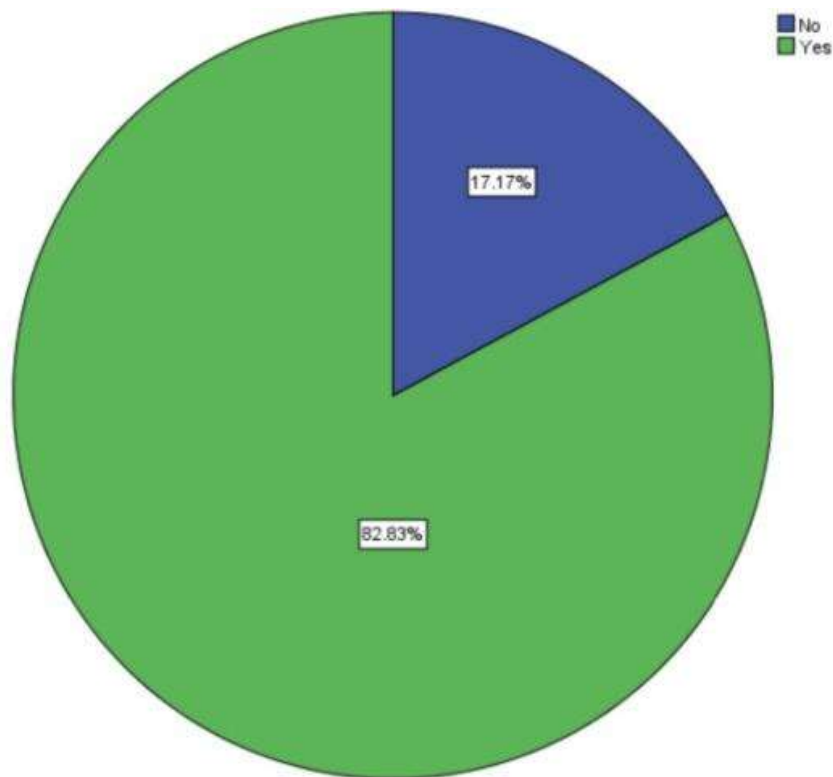


Figure 2 denotes the responses related to excessive screen time causing stress and affecting sleep and also causing major brain disorders. Green (82.83%) denotes the percentage of the students who are affected by stress and sleep and causing major brain disorders and Blue(17.17%) denotes the percentage of the students who are comfortable with online classes.

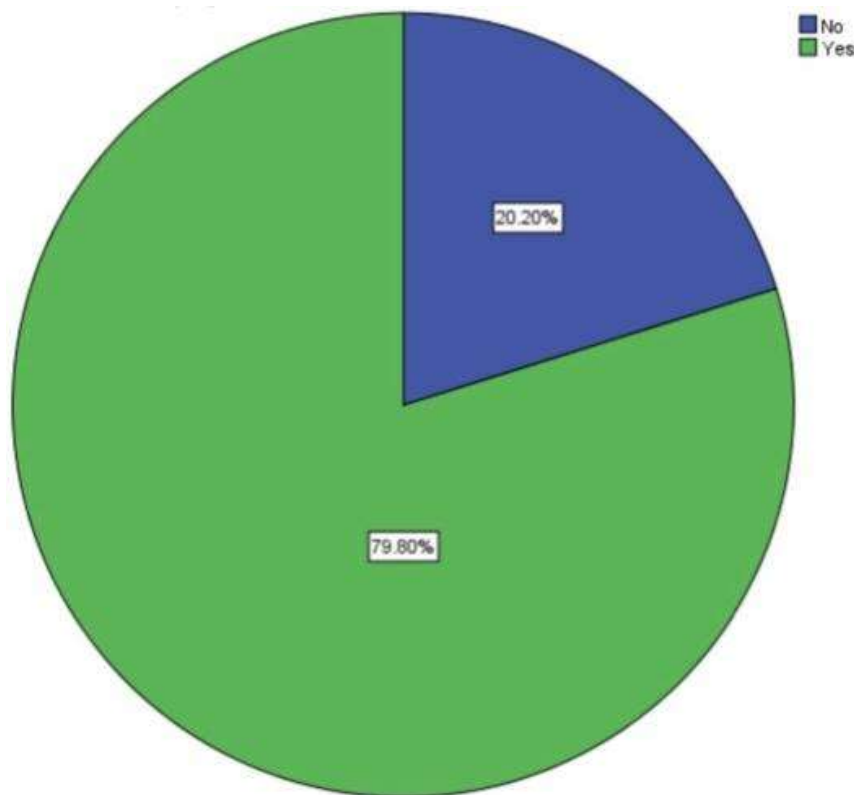


Figure 3 denotes the responses related “Physical classroom exam is better than the online exam”. Green (79.80%) denotes the percentage of the students who felt physical classroom exams are better than online classroom exams and Blue (20.20%) denotes the percentage of the students who felt online classroom exams are better than physical classroom exams.

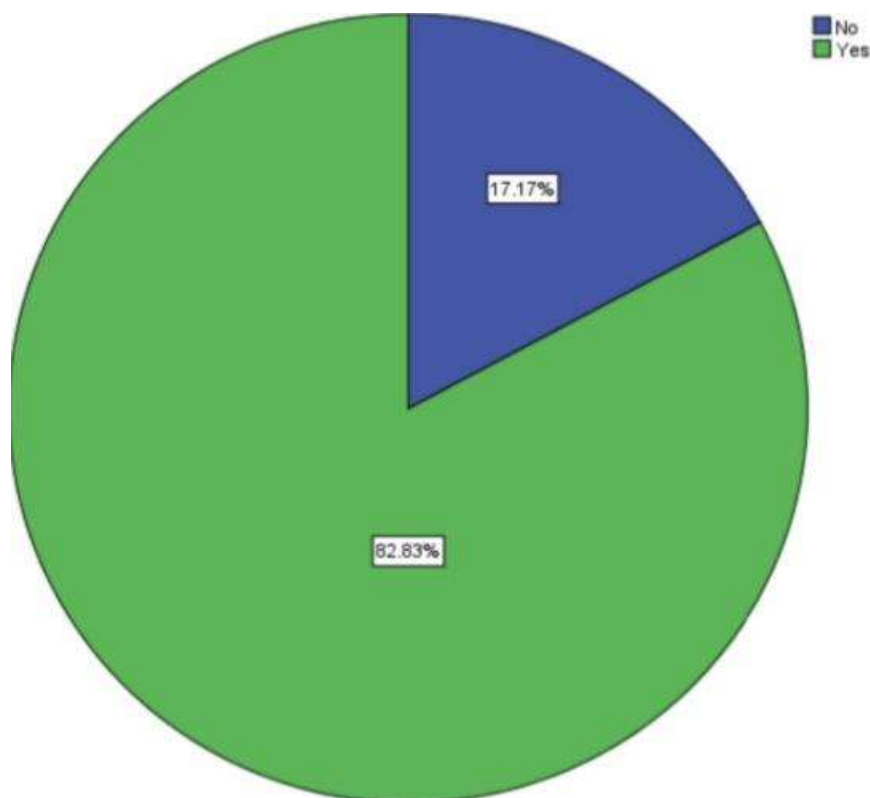


Figure 4 denotes the percentage of participants, “Online education leads to major brain damage and major brain disorders”. Green(82.83%) denotes the percentage of the students who felt that



online education leads to the major brain damage and major brain disorders and Blue(17.17%) denotes the percentage of the students who are comfortable with the online education.

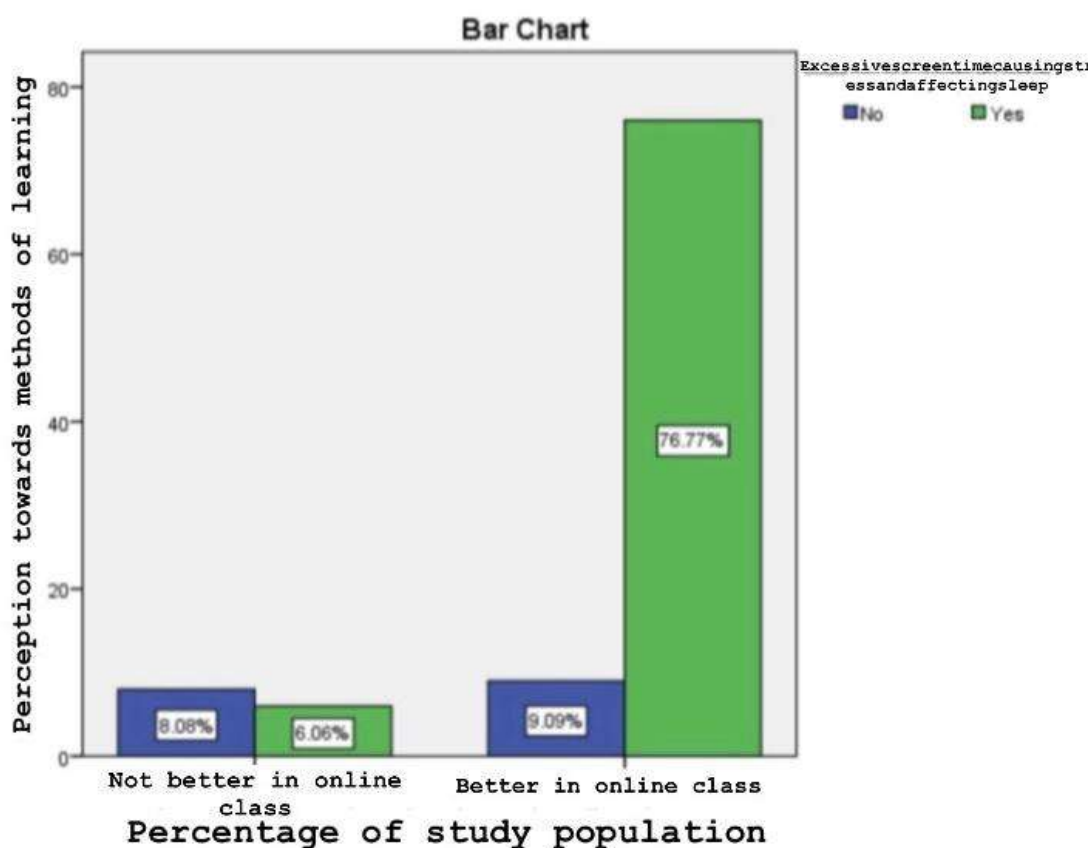


Figure 5: The bar chart represents, “Learning is better in physical class than online class” and “Excessive screen time causes stress and affects sleep”. x axis represents the percentage of the study population and the Y axis represents the perception towards the methods of learning. Green colour denotes the participants who felt difficulties in the online education system and the Blue colour denotes the participants who are comfortable with the online education system. The



participants felt learning better in online class(76.77%) and also they felt it also affects sleep and causes stress and also causes major brain disorders (9.09%). This result was found to be statistically significant (Chisquare P value is 0.033).

DISCUSSION:

This pandemic has changed the way we perceive or face so many challenges in life. Education and career building is not an exemption to this scenario. This study was carried out with an attempt to get a complete picture regarding online classes and its difficulties from fresher undergraduate students of a private dental institution in chennai. It was found that the majority of students preferred physical classes rather than online classes. Similar results were observed in a study done on medical students, Rajasthan. (27).

A major concern regarding Online education is that it affects the students mental health and also the daily lifestyle. Excessive screen time is thought to cause stress and affects sleep. And students feel online education exposes the digital divide among the students, similar results were observed in a survey done on 377 dental and medical graduates (28). These similar findings serve as a proof for the external validity of the study results.

From the students' view point, online assessment creates more anxiety than the normal forms of assessment and the online education leading to major brain damage. And also Online education leading to phobia when the internet connectivity is lost. Similar results were found in studies done in different geographical areas also. (29).

Students felt student teacher interaction was better in online classes. Students prefer physical classes over the online education system. Professors typically use presentations and the video conferencing and note taking programs. For the quality of interactions they require



educational technologies(29,30). Professors must try to provide some flexibility to the students attending their online courses. Self reflection on the part of the students is extremely important in online education. Students reported to have an improvement in the online teaching skills of the professors. Online education can be better personalized because of the smaller class size and the homogenous background of the students(31). One note can help the professors and the students to collaboratively accumulate the knowledge and the educational technologies requires the supporting quality of the interaction and some empirical studies have revealed that students are suffering from stress and anxiety during the pandemic condition.(32)

CONCLUSION:

Online education has been on the fringe for a longtime. The COVID-19 pandemic made it mainstream. We found that the students considered online education an alternative under the current circumstances. Online education affects the Students mental health and makes a digital divide among their families. Students prefer the physical education system than the online education system.

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