



# “Challenges faced by COVID batch students in the workforce”

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**Abstract:** The COVID pandemic has impacted the higher education sector in India. Students suddenly have to adapt to Online education. Due to this sudden shift to online education, students were left to face many challenges. The paradigm of MBA education also got altered due to the pandemic. Now in this post-pandemic times offices have again started working in offline mode. Now the students who have done their post-graduation in management in an online mode have to adjust to working in the workforce. The paper tries to understand the various challenges the students now face in the workforce due to this unfair situation. The statistical analytical tools used include Percentage analysis, Crosstabs analysis, Spearman Correlation, and multivariate linear regression. It is apparent that the online method of MBA education has had a negative impact on many aspects of students' learning. According to the findings, the majority of students believe that on-campus instruction would have aided them in developing soft skills, business abilities, and confidence. Students' job performance is also affected by their lack of opportunity to build a social network. Many students are still dealing with the mental and physical effects of pandemics and the abrupt move to online education. Additionally, students are having problems dealing with office politics. It's worth noting that, regardless of the gender of the pupils, the general perception remained consistent, however, the perception of women differed significantly. The perceptions differ according to the domain of previous job experience students.

**Index Terms - Online Education, COVID batch, Skills**

## I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID batch refers to the students who had to undergo involuntary online education during the years of the pandemic. On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization classified the Coronavirus outbreak a pandemic. The Indian government imposed a complete lockdown on March 24, 2020, citing an increase in COVID-19 positive cases, thereby halting practically all aspects of public life. The education sector is one of the most affected areas as a result of the COVID-19-induced lockdown. Due to the epidemic, about 32 crore pupils have been affected, and many have been forced to adapt to e-learning as a substitute.

Several students struggled to acclimate to online education due to huge variations in socioeconomic position and vicinity. They experienced challenges such as a lack of learning environment, alienation from peers, burnout, low levels of retention, unavailability of resources, and many more in addition to accessibility issues. Because most school-aged children's academics haven't fully resumed, college/university students have had to bear the weight of the various issues that have arisen as a result of e-learning.

Teachers were confronted with new obstacles when it came to teaching online and adjusting to new technologies. Many colleges recognized the challenges professors experience in transitioning to online teaching and held orientation seminars for them. However, because the transition was so rapid, many teachers continued to have issues using online teaching tools. Teaching was particularly challenging due to a lack of contact and apprehension over student retention.

Students' mental health has been severely impacted by online learning. In addition to accessibility challenges, several students had difficulty attending classes owing to a variety of family issues. Domestic abuse instances increased dramatically during the lockdown period, according to Oxfam India. Many students, use their university/college residential campuses as a means of escaping violent homes and finding needed support among their peers or on-campus inclusive groups. Lockdown led to college closures, depriving these students of help and forcing them to return to harmful home settings. Students were under a lot of pressure due to deadlines and tests. Students could study in groups and support one other with homework and exam preparations in physical classes, which was not possible in online classes. This resulted in anxiety and worry when completing academic assignments. Due to a dearth of placements on campus and a lack of job possibilities outside, graduating students had difficulty obtaining work. Students also had difficulty locating academic internships that were required for their courses (Ladegaam, 2021).

The home ministry government of India has decided to end all COVID-19 containment measures from March 31, two years after their implementation following the outbreak of the pandemic. Earlier also many of the corporate offices had started working offline, now all the roadblocks to that have been removed (Press Trust Of India, n.d.).

Many of the students graduating during the pandemic faced a lot of issues while getting a job. A recent report by Naukri.com explained how about 66 percent of students did not receive their offer letters, whereas 44 percent faced deferred joining dates after being hired. There was another 33 percent of students did not hear back from their employer with regard to the status of their employment (IANS, n.d.).

## II. The objective of the Study:

To understand the challenges faced by Students graduating in 2021 (COVID batch) in the workforce.

## III. Research Methodology:

The study is exploratory research. A simple random sampling method was used in this research study. The study is based on primary as well as secondary data collected with the help of a questionnaire. The secondary data was collected from books, reports, journals, and research papers throughout the period of this study. Based on a review of the literature variables were finalized for this research. 100 is the sample size. The data corresponding to the values in the Lickert Scale was entered for each statement in the questionnaire.

## IV. Review of Literature:

- Lack of network building:

Many of the MBA students who did their post-graduation online did not get enough opportunity to build a strong network, and the lack of connection is bound to adversely affect their job performance (Disadvantages of Online MBA Course., n.d.).

- Soft Skills:

Due to online education, many students were not able to physically interact with each other due to which their soft skill training like collaboration, adaptability, and the ability to connect the project, peers, and partners got hammered. It is bound to affect their ability to work in a group (Disadvantages of Online MBA Course., n.d.).

- Business Skills:

Due to the online mode of education, there was a lack of business exposure, due to which students did not get enough opportunity to develop their business acumen (Salunke, n.d.).

- Prolonged physical and mental issues:

Due to a lack of peer association and social interaction, many students developed mental health issues like anxiety attacks, depression, etc. Increased dependence on mobile and laptop and reduction in physical activity has resulted in many students developing issues like back pain, neck pain, etc. (India Today, 2021). The students are bound to struggle in order to adapt again to offline work due to these prolonged mental and physical issues.

- Lack of confidence:

Many times new employees face a lack of confidence at an early point after joining an organization (BETH BENJAMIN). The students from the COVID batch because of having no on-campus experience are more prone to this issue.

- Office politics:

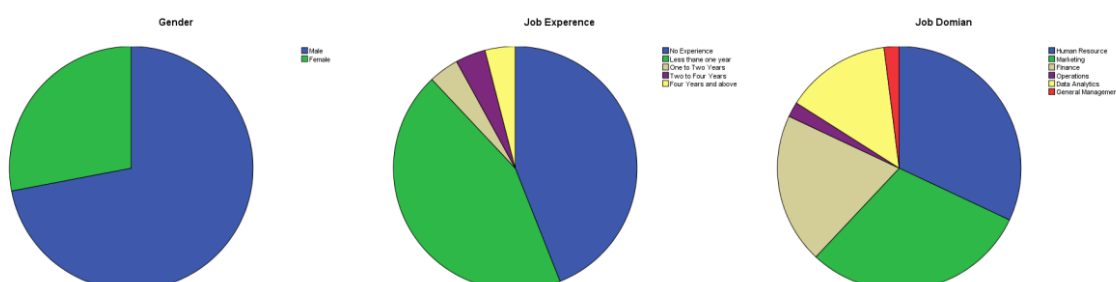
Being able to tackle office politics is one of the most important skill that an employee must know (Careerwise Minnstate, n.d.). Students from the COVID batch due to their lack of on-campus training are more prone to get affected by it.

## V. Data Analysis and Interpretation:

- Questionnaire:

1. Do you believe the lack of opportunity build a Social network is affecting your job performance?
2. Do you believe online education hammered your ability to develop soft skills?
3. Do you believe an on-campus mode of teaching would have helped you develop the necessary business skill in a more proficient way?
4. The mental and physical issues that rose due to online education affecting your job engagement?
5. Do you believe that on-campus education would have helped you to develop your confidence in a better way?
6. Do you believe that on-campus education would have helped you to develop a good acumen to tackle office politics?

- Respondents Profile:



- Percentage Analysis:

Percentage analysis is used to understand the dominant perception regarding the different survey questions.

Frequency Table:

Do you believe the lack of opportunity to build a Social network is affecting your job performance?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly Agree	62	62.0	62.0	62.0
	Agree	6	6.0	6.0	68.0
	Neutral	22	22.0	22.0	90.0
	Disagree	8	8.0	8.0	98.0
	Highly Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Do you believe online education hampered your ability to develop soft skills?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly Agree	62	62.0	62.0	62.0
	Agree	16	16.0	16.0	78.0
	Neutral	6	6.0	6.0	84.0
	Disagree	14	14.0	14.0	98.0
	Highly Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Do you believe an on-campus mode of teaching would have helped you develop the necessary business skill in a more proficient way?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly Agree	72	72.0	72.0	72.0
	Agree	2	2.0	2.0	74.0
	Neutral	6	6.0	6.0	80.0
	Disagree	8	8.0	8.0	88.0
	Highly Disagree	12	12.0	12.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The mental and physical issues that rose due to online education affecting your job engagement?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly Agree	66	66.0	66.0	66.0
	Agree	8	8.0	8.0	74.0
	Neutral	10	10.0	10.0	84.0
	Disagree	6	6.0	6.0	90.0
	Highly Disagree	10	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Do you believe that on-campus education would have helped you to develop your confidence in a better way?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly Agree	76	76.0	76.0	76.0
	Agree	2	2.0	2.0	78.0
	Neutral	8	8.0	8.0	86.0
	Disagree	6	6.0	6.0	92.0
	Highly Disagree	8	8.0	8.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Do you believe that on-campus education would have helped you to develop a good acumen to tackle office politics?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Highly Agree	76	76.0	76.0	76.0
	Agree	6	6.0	6.0	82.0
	Neutral	2	2.0	2.0	84.0
	Disagree	14	14.0	14.0	98.0
	Highly Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

#### Analysis

We can see that 62% of the respondents opined that, the lack of opportunity to build a Social network is affecting their job performance.

We can see that 62% of the respondents opined that, online education hampered their ability to develop soft skills.

We can see that 72% of the respondents opined that, an on-campus mode of teaching would have helped them to develop the necessary business skill in a more proficient way.

We can see that 66% of the respondents opined that, the mental and physical issues that rose due to online education is affecting their job engagement.

We can see that 76% of the respondents opined that, an on-campus education would have helped them to develop your confidence in a better way.

We can see that 76% of the respondents opined that, an on-campus education would have helped them to develop a good acumen to tackle office politics.

- Regression Analysis:

#### The Problem:

To investigate if Job domain, Job experience, and Gender have a significant impact on the perception that the lack of opportunity to build a Social network is affecting your job performance.

#### Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.658 <sup>a</sup>	.433	.396	.89777

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Job Domain, Job Experience

Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	.007	.565		.012	.991
Job Domain	.520	.092	.644	5.659	.000
Job Experience	.367	.134	.315	2.736	.009
Gender	-.084	.286	-.033	-.293	.771

a. Dependent Variable: Do you believe the lack of opportunity to build a Social network is affecting your job performance?

Hypothesis

H0: There is not a significant impact of Job domain, Job experience, and Gender on the perception that the lack of opportunity to build a Social network is affecting your job performance.

H1: There is a significant impact of Job domain, Job experience, and Gender on the perception that the lack of opportunity to build a Social network is affecting your job performance.

Here  $P < 0.05$  hence H1 is accepted. The regression model is a good fit for the data.

The "R" column represents the value of R, the multiple correlation coefficient so there exists a positive correlation of 0.658. This is a multivariate analysis so we will consider adjusted R2. the adjusted R2 = 0.396 depicts that the model explains 39.6% of the variance in a dependent variable.

As we can see above P-value for Gender is greater than 0.05 so they are playing an insignificant role in creating the perception that the lack of opportunity to build a Social network is affecting your job performance.

- Non-parametric test

Spearman's rho is used because the data is ordinal in nature. Pearson's test cannot be used in this case (Frost, n.d.). It is performed to understand if there is any correlation in the said perspectives regarding different variables. \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlations

	SN	SS	BS	MPI	C	OP
Social network	1.000					
Soft skills	.463**	1.000				
Business skill	.785**	.582**	1.000			
Mental, physical issues	.760**	.623**	.795**	1.000		
confidence	.191	.094	.195	.128	1.000	
office politics	.386**	.496**	.561**	.503**	.159	1.000

- The perception that mental and physical issues that rose due to online education affecting job engagement and the perception that the lack of opportunity to build a Social network is affecting job performance are positively correlated at 0.76.
- The perception that an on-campus mode of teaching would have helped one develop the necessary business skill in a more proficient way and the perception that the lack of opportunity to build a Social network is affecting one's job performance are positively correlated at 0.78.
- The perception that mental and physical issues that rose due to online education affecting job engagement and the perception that an on-campus mode of teaching would have helped one develop the necessary business skill in a more proficient way are positively correlated at 0.79.

- Cross Tabs analysis:

Cross Tabs analysis is carried out in order to understand the differentiated opinion of students pertaining to Different job domains and different years of job experience in order to do a comparative study.

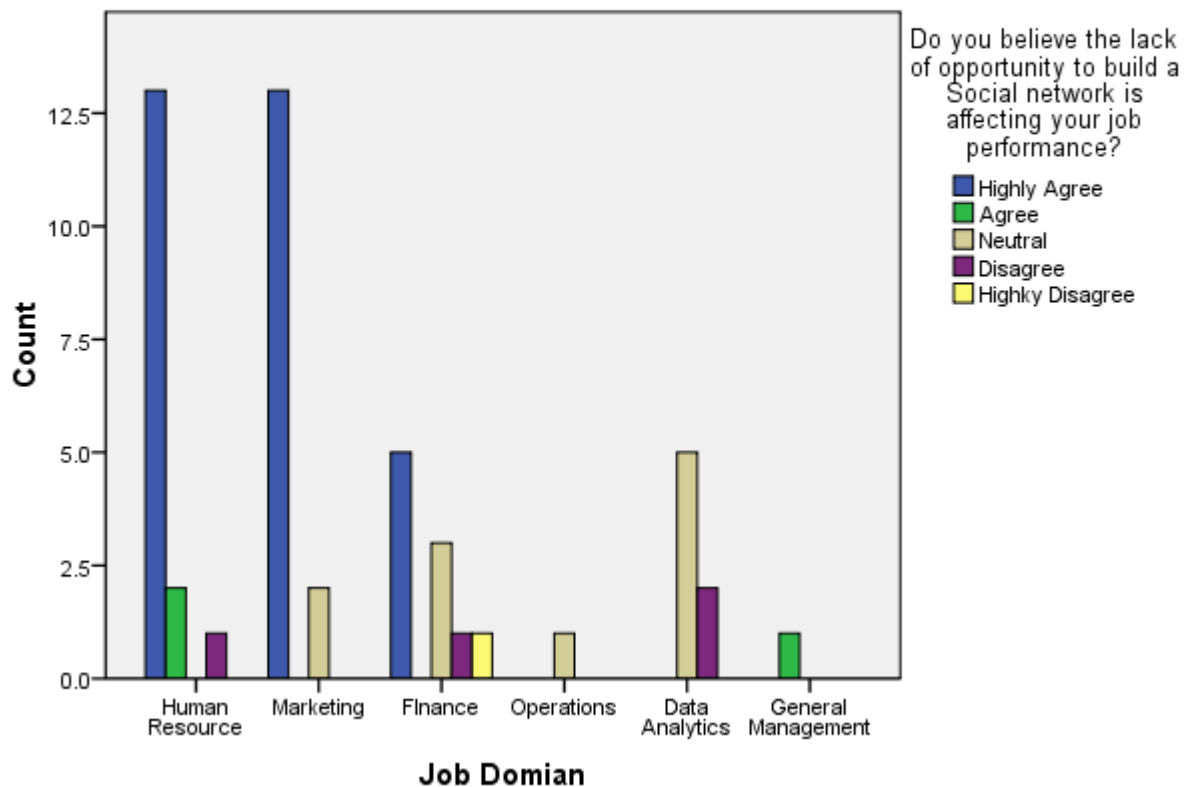
- Job Domain \* Do you believe the lack of opportunity to build a Social network is affecting your job performance?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	50.330 <sup>a</sup>	20	.000
Likelihood Ratio	45.076	20	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	16.372	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	50		

a. 27 cells (90.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.

Bar Chart



Variable 1: Do you believe the lack of opportunity to build a Social network is affecting your job performance?

Variable 2: Job Domain

The null hypothesis (H0) and alternative hypothesis (H1) of the Chi-Square Test of Independence can be expressed as following:

H0: "[Variable 1] is independent of [Variable 2]"

H1: "[Variable 1] is not independent of [Variable 2]"

Since the p-value is lower than our chosen significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), we do reject the null hypothesis. we conclude that there is enough evidence to suggest an association between Job Domain and the perception that lack of opportunity to build a Social network is affecting the COVID batch students job performance.

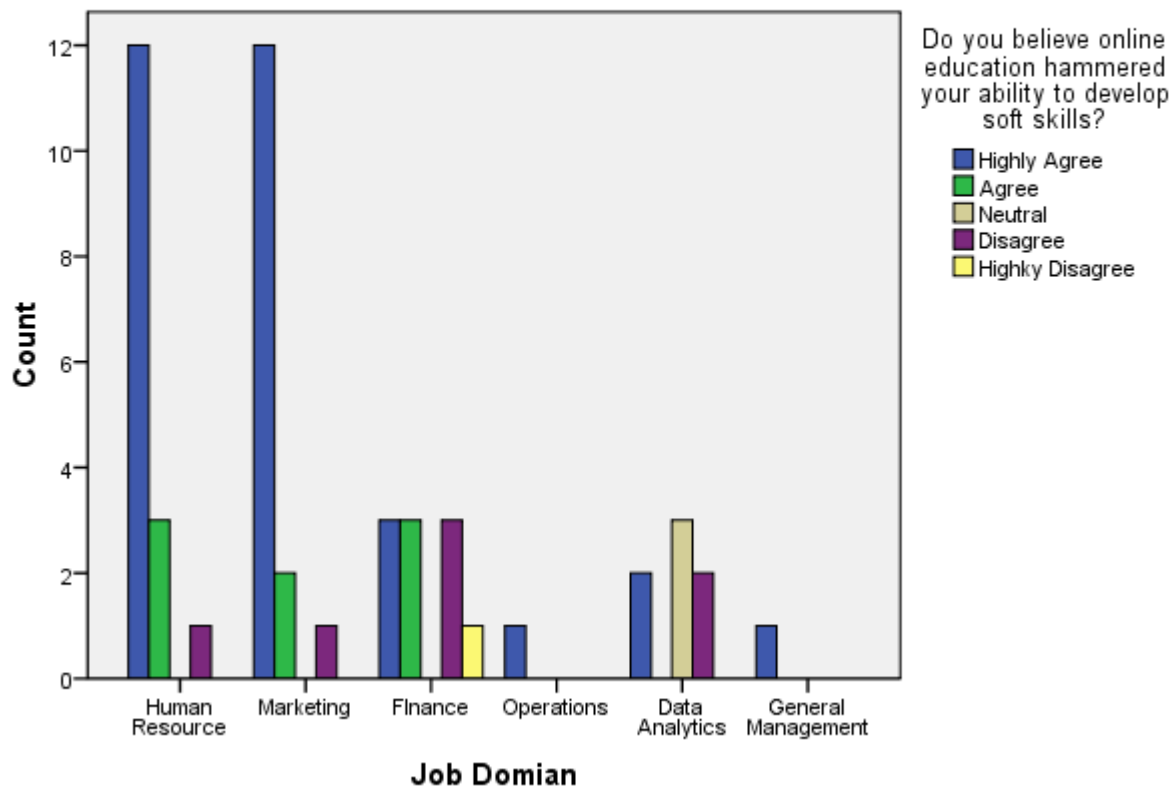
2. Job Domain \* Do you believe online education hampered your ability to develop soft skills?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	34.268 <sup>a</sup>	20	.024
Likelihood Ratio	28.482	20	.098
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.257	1	.012
N of Valid Cases	50		

a. 27 cells (90.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.

Bar Chart



Variable 1: Do you believe online education hammered your ability to develop soft skills?

Variable 2: Job Domain

The null hypothesis (H0) and alternative hypothesis (H1) of the Chi-Square Test of Independence can be expressed as following:

H0: "[Variable 1] is independent of [Variable 2]"

H1: "[Variable 1] is not independent of [Variable 2]"

Since the p-value is lower than our chosen significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), we do reject the null hypothesis. we conclude that there is enough evidence to suggest an association between Job Domain and the perception that online education hammered COVID batch student’s ability to develop soft skills.

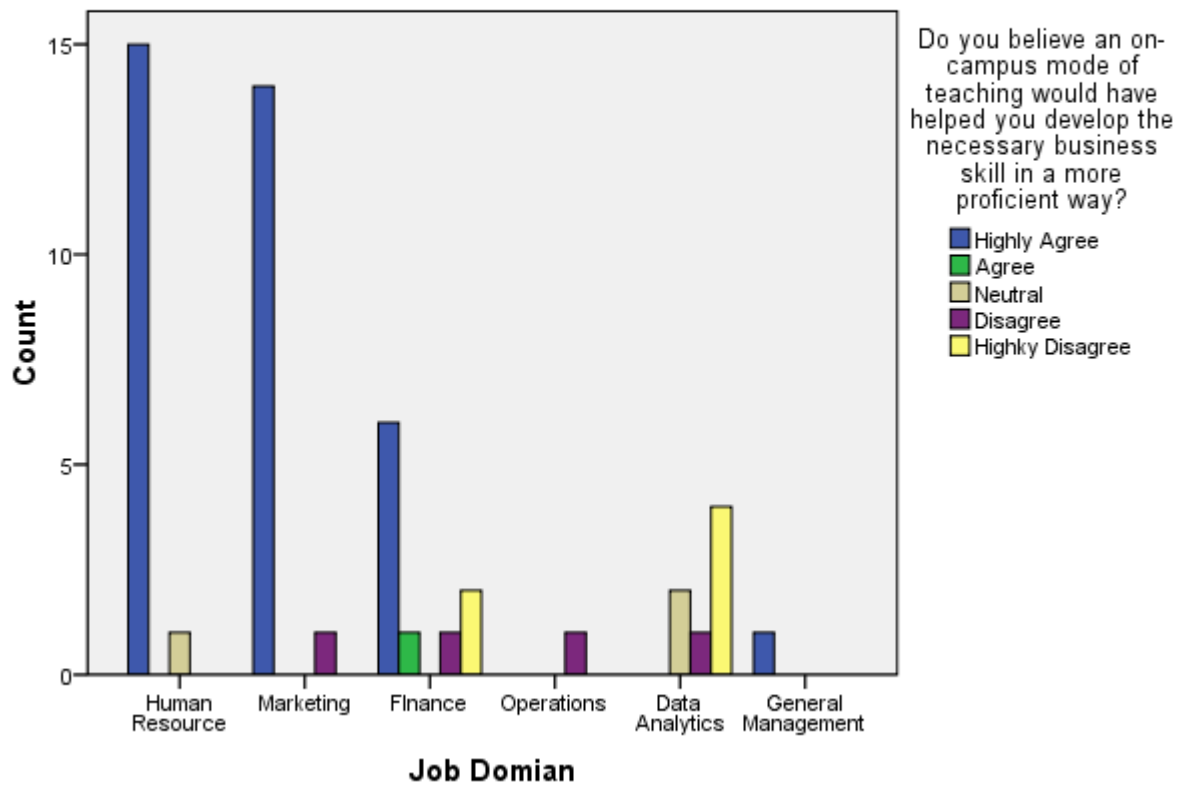
3. Job Domian \* Do you believe an oncampus mode of teaching would have helped you develop the necessary business skill in a more proficient way?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	48.384 <sup>a</sup>	20	.000
Likelihood Ratio	44.019	20	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.290	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	50		

a. 26 cells (86.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.

Bar Chart



Variable 1: Do you believe an on campus mode of teaching would have helped you develop the necessary business skill in a more proficient way?

Variable 2: Job Domain

The null hypothesis (H0) and alternative hypothesis (H1) of the Chi-Square Test of Independence can be expressed as following:

H0: "[Variable 1] is independent of [Variable 2]"

H1: "[Variable 1] is not independent of [Variable 2]"

Since the p-value is lower than our chosen significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), we do reject the null hypothesis. we conclude that there is enough evidence to suggest an association between Job Domain and the perception that On campus mode of teaching would have helped COVID batch students to develop the necessary business skill in a more proficient way.

4. Job Domian \* The mental and physical issues that rose due to online education affecting your job engagement?

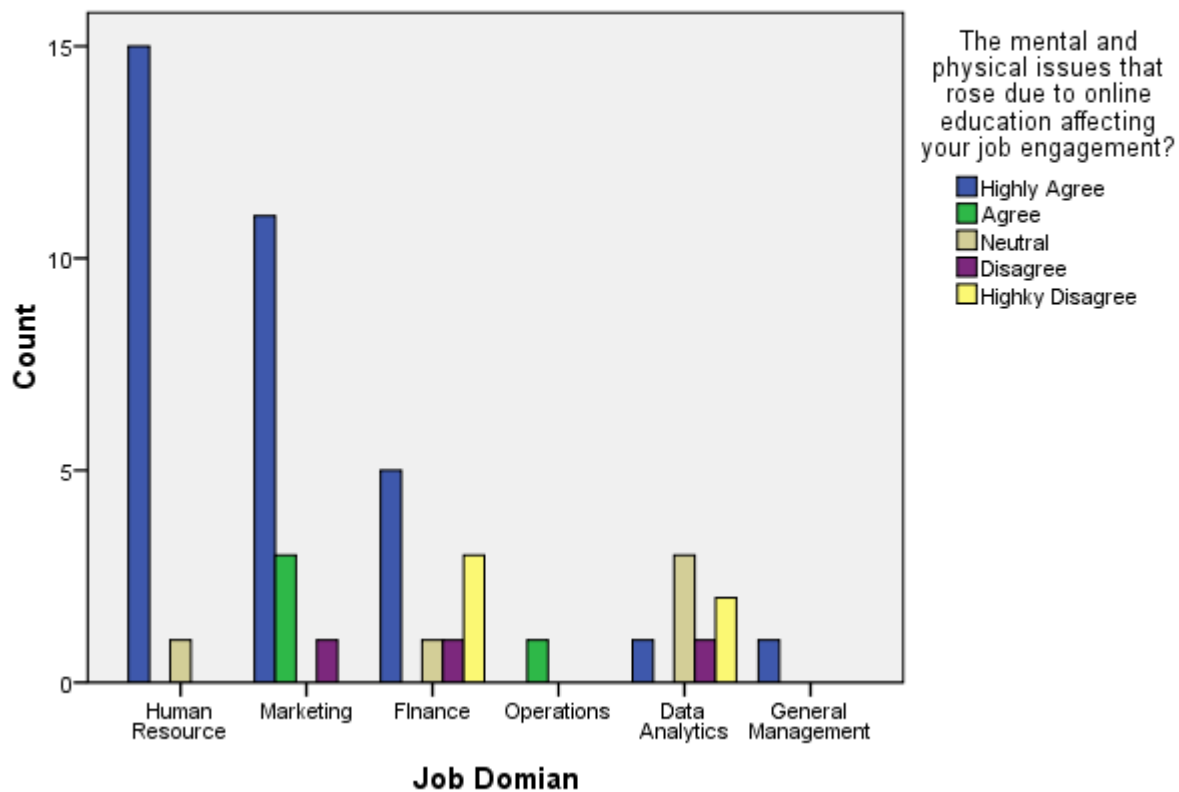
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	43.404 <sup>a</sup>	20	.002
Likelihood Ratio	39.940	20	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.975	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	50		

a. 27 cells (90.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .06.



Bar Chart



Variable 1: The mental and physical issues that rose due to online education affecting your job engagement?

Variable 2: Job Domain

The null hypothesis (H0) and alternative hypothesis (H1) of the Chi-Square Test of Independence can be expressed as follows:

H0: "[Variable 1] is independent of [Variable 2]"

H1: "[Variable 1] is not independent of [Variable 2]"

Since the p-value is lower than our chosen significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), we do reject the null hypothesis. we conclude that there is enough evidence to suggest an association between Job Domain and the perception that the mental and physical issues that rose due to online education affect COVID batch student’s job engagement.

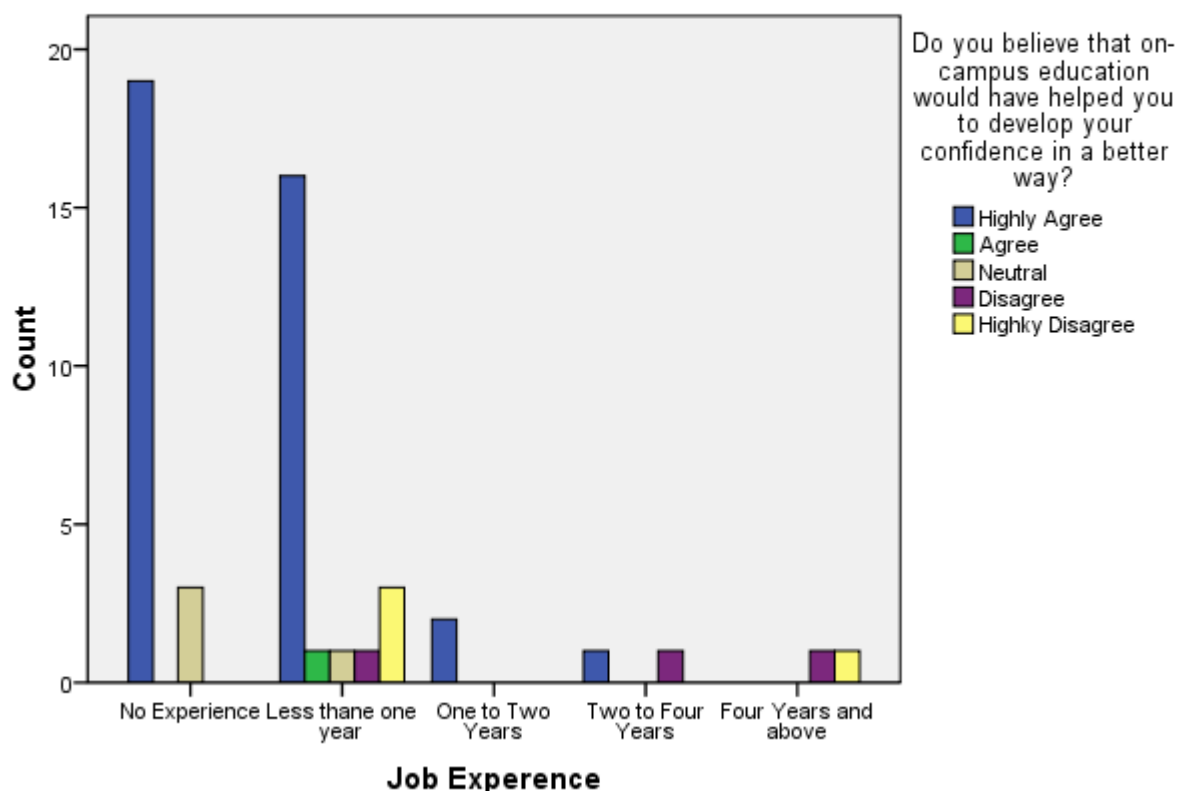
5. Job Experience \* Do you believe that oncampus education would have helped you to develop your confidence in a better way?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	26.934 <sup>a</sup>	16	.042
Likelihood Ratio	22.211	16	.136
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.295	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	50		

a. 23 cells (92.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .04.

Bar Chart



Variable 1: Do you believe that on campus education would have helped you to develop your confidence in a better way?

Variable 2: Job Experience

The null hypothesis (H0) and alternative hypothesis (H1) of the Chi-Square Test of Independence can be expressed as follows:

H0: "[Variable 1] is independent of [Variable 2]"

H1: "[Variable 1] is not independent of [Variable 2]"

Since the p-value is lower than our chosen significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), we do reject the null hypothesis. we conclude that there is enough evidence to suggest an association between Job experience and the perception that on-campus education would have helped COVID batch students to develop their confidence in a better way.

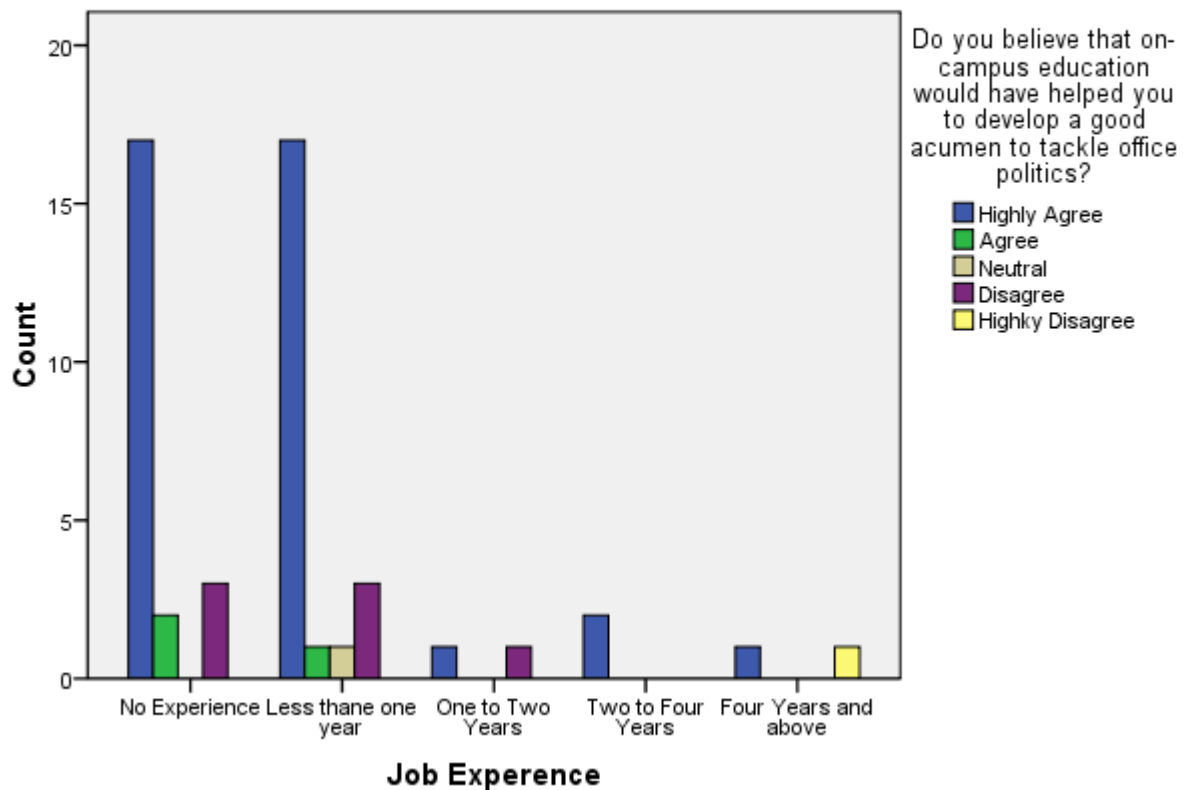
6. Job Experience \* Do you believe that oncampus education would have helped you to develop a good acumen to tackle office politics?

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	28.993 <sup>a</sup>	16	.024
Likelihood Ratio	11.969	16	.746
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.501	1	.220
N of Valid Cases	50		

a. 23 cells (92.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .04.

Bar Chart



Variable 1: Do you believe that on campus education would have helped you to develop a good acumen to tackle office politics?

Variable 2: Job Experience

The null hypothesis (H0) and alternative hypothesis (H1) of the Chi-Square Test of Independence can be expressed as follows:

H0: "[Variable 1] is independent of [Variable 2]"

H1: "[Variable 1] is not independent of [Variable 2]"

Since the p-value is lower than our chosen significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), we do reject the null hypothesis. we conclude that there is enough evidence to suggest an association between Job experience and the perception that on-campus education would have helped COVID batch students to develop a good acumen to tackle office politics.

## VI. Conclusion:

It is clear that the online mode of MBA education has affected many aspects of students' learning in an adverse way. From the analysis, it is clear that the majority of the students feel that an on-campus mode of teaching would have helped them to develop soft skills, business skills, and confidence more effectively. The lack of opportunity to develop a social network is also affecting students' job performance. Many of the students are still suffering the mental and physical issues that developed due to pandemics and the sudden shift to online mode of education. Also, students are facing difficulty while tackling office politics. It is interesting to note that the general perception remained the same regardless of the gender of the students but the perception vastly differs when it comes to job domain and previous work experience. Majority of the students that were highly affected belonged to the marketing and the Human resources domain and less than one year or no experience category. Students working in the domain of Business analytics were not significantly affected due to online education also those with more than one year of job experience also seem to be handling themselves well regardless of the change. The students who believe that mental and physical issues that rose due to online education are affecting their job engagement and believe that an on-campus mode of teaching would have helped them develop the necessary business skill are also prone to believe that the lack of opportunity to build a Social network is also affecting job performance. Also, Students feel that due to their mental-physical issues they were not able to develop business skills in a proficient way.

## VII. Limitations of the study:

The study was limited to MBA and PGDM students from the Mumbai Metropolitan area. The study is limited to time scope and funds. The paper does not expound on the favorable effects of online education.

**VIII. Abbreviations:**

Social network	SN
Soft skills	SS
Business skill	BS
Mental, physical issues	MPI
confidence	C
office politics	OP

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