

## Perception of Physiotherapists about Webinars and its Role in Building Professional Relationships

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### Abstract

Webinar is an online process of gathering and presenting the information. Webinars are proving a boon for all academic fraternity in the present scenario of COVID-19 pandemic. Till now no previous work has explored the perceptions of physiotherapists on Webinar as an evolving platform in this new era. The objectives of this study were to evaluate physiotherapist's perception towards Webinars as a new way of learning and whether webinar builds sense of professional relationship. An online survey using a web-based questionnaire was conducted in which an already framed & validated questionnaire as a google form was circulated amongst all the practicing physiotherapists of various institutes & universities of North India through different social media apps. After 10 days, data was collected from 145 participants and was used for further analysis. Results indicate that the most common reason to attend webinar is to gain Knowledge regarding burning topics (76.6%). More than seventy percent were satisfied with webinars & want them to continue. More than eighty percent think Webinars build professional relationships among physiotherapists. Our findings suggest that webinars should continue for physiotherapists with or without lockdown period & can be used as an effective way to build professional relationships among physiotherapists.

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### Introduction

Online education is gaining more recognition with wide-spread 4G & 5G connectivity and use of social media to effectively communicate. A webinar is a method of acquiring and presenting information through the internet. [1] This technology has numerous benefits, including flexibility in terms of place and

time, cost effectiveness, interactive elements such as chats, queries and responses, calls, polls, real-time audio video conversations, presentations, and feedback, among others. [2]

Webinars are proving a boon for all academic fraternity in the present scenario of COVID-19 pandemic. Traditional

teaching methods have well defined pedagogy in medical education. [3] But online education & webinars are new in physiotherapy field. As there is lack of physical presence and need of technical knowledge, these webinars were not very widespread. Due to the impact of the pandemic, there has been a spectacular shift in webinar conceptions, which has expanded by more than 300 percent by 2020.3 Further, no previous work has explored the perceptions of physiotherapists on Webinars as an evolving platform in this new era. The study has been undertaken with following objectives are to identify the sources of awareness regarding webinars among physiotherapists, to know the purpose of physiotherapists for attending webinars, to make out the type of webinars attended by physiotherapists, to recognize the satisfaction count of physiotherapists towards webinars, to assess the perception of physiotherapists towards different aspects of webinars and to know the role of webinars in building professional relationships among physiotherapists. A large number of webinars are being produced at a rapid pace in every subject, but the relevance, value, and use of these webinars is a major concern for all. We observed that there is the lack of research in the field of physiotherapy The present study has been conducted to assess the perception of physiotherapists for webinars in this new era of online education so that future efficacy of webinars can be established.

### Materials & Methods

A cross-sectional, internet-based study, was conducted between 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2022 and 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2022. An online survey using a web-based questionnaire was conducted in which an already framed questionnaire as a google form was circulated amongst the practicing physiotherapists of various institutes & universities of North India through different social media apps using a

snowball technique. An electronic consent is taken by the participants and the questions were divided into sections including demographic profile, sources of awareness, platform used to attend webinars, devices used to attend webinars, type of webinars attended, purpose to participate in webinars, opinion and perceptions about the webinars, satisfaction of physiotherapists, view on continuation of webinars and role of webinars in building professional relationships. All answers were confidential and questionnaire was in English language, combining multiple choice and Likert response scale questions, with the option for respondents to provide further free text responses for some questions. The survey aimed to assess physiotherapists' opinions, using a 5-point Likert scale of agreeableness ('strongly disagree', 'disagree', 'neutral', 'agree', and 'strongly agree') against certain questions. The self-administered survey was developed using "Google Forms", which require participants to sign-in into their Google accounts to prevent multiple entries from respondents. The survey link was created and initially posted on the personal social media accounts of the primary investigators and on several medical groups on Facebook and Instagram. Physiotherapists were encouraged to recruit other colleagues by resending the link to their contacts through a "snow-ball technique". The link was posted only once on each group, and twice on the personal accounts of the investigators. The survey continued until there was no more responses for 1 day. The survey was closed at 23:59, April 7, 2022. After 10 days, data was collected from 145 participants and was arranged in CSV file for further analysis in Excel. In reporting the results, the data from the columns of "strongly agree," "agree," "neutral," "strongly disagree" and "disagree" were compared for different opinions along with gender distribution,

age distribution and viewpoints about webinars building professional relationships as well.

### Results

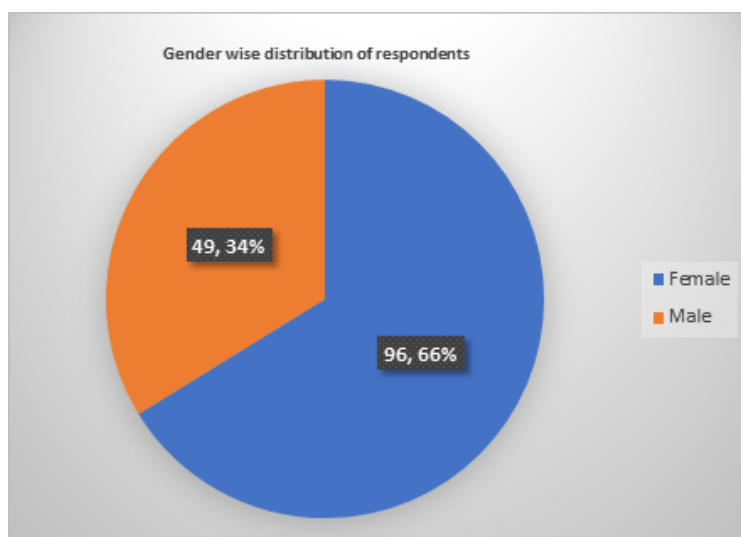
A total of 145 responses were received by respondents where 49(34%) males, and 96 (66%) were females, with a mean age of 25.312 years for all responders. The respondents were mostly post graduate students 109(77%) followed by academicians 50(34.5) as summarized in table 1, 2, 3. Our Results indicate that Whats App (69%) is most common source

of promoting webinars among physiotherapists, Google Meet (72.4) & Zoom meeting (64.8) are the widely preferred platforms for attending these webinars, the participants preferred both paid & free webinars and mobile phones (73.8%) are the most used device.

The most common reason to attend webinar is to gain Knowledge regarding burning topics (76.6%). More than eighty percent think Webinars build professional relationships among physiotherapists.

**Table 1: Gender wise distribution of Respondents**

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage%
Female	96	33.8
Male	49	66.2



**Figure 1: Graphical presentation of Gender wise distribution of respondents**

**Table 2: Age wise distribution of Respondents**

Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
21-25	109	77%
26-30	21	15%
31-35	10	6%
35-40	3	2%
41-45	2	1%

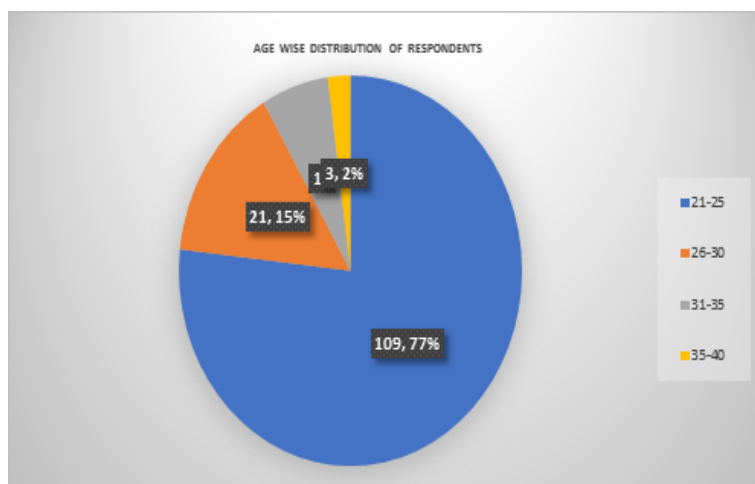


Figure 2: Graphical presentation of Age wise distribution of respondents

Table 3: Educational status wise distribution of Respondents

Educational Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Clinician	20	13.8
PGs	74	51
Academician	50	34.5
Phds	1	0.68

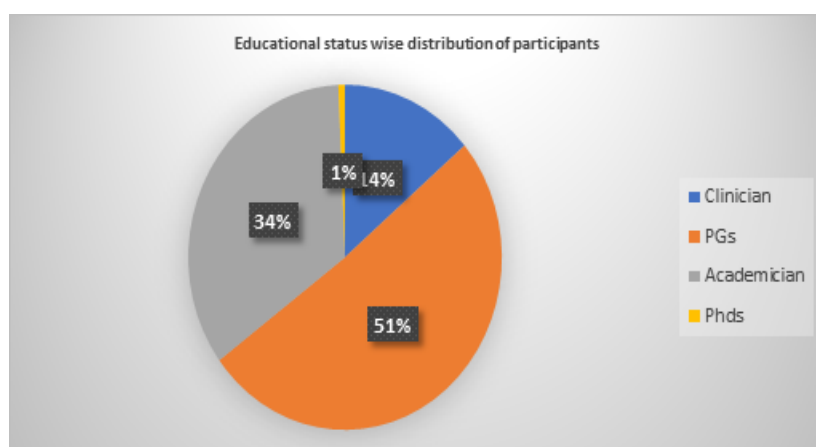


Figure 3: Graphical presentation of Education Status wise distribution of respondents

Table 4: Sources of awareness among respondents

Sources of awareness	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
WhatsApp	100	69
Facebook	32	22.1
Friends/Colleagues	62	42.8
Instagram	23	15.9
Email alerts	39	26.9
Other social media app	17	11.7

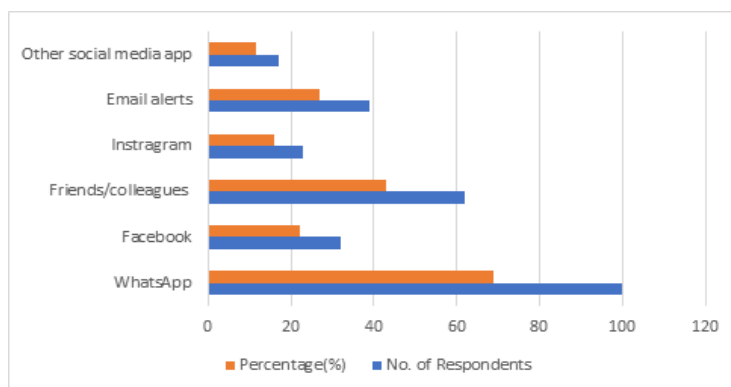


Figure 4: Graphical presentation of Sources of awareness among respondents

Table 5: Platforms used by Respondents to attend Webinars

Platform Used for Attending Webinars	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Google Meet	105	72.4
Zoom meeting	94	64.8
WebEx Events	8	5.5
Live Stream via You Tube	17	11.7
Global go to meeting	4	2.8
Microsoft team	12	8.3
Telegram	9	6.2

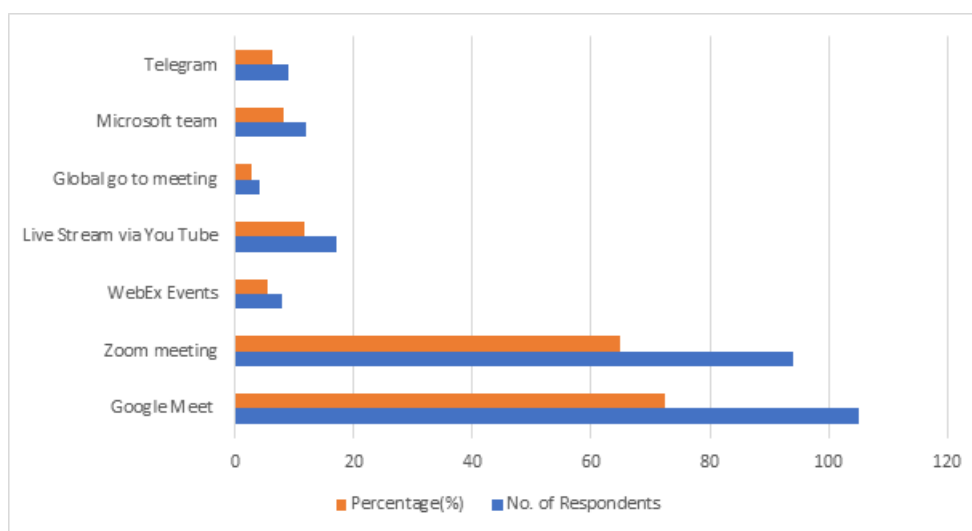


Figure 5: Graphical presentation of Platform used for attending Webinars

Table 6: Purposes for which respondents attend Webinars

Purpose	No of Respondents	Percentage (%)
To gain Knowledge regarding burning topics	111	76.6
Online Interaction with Intellectuals	10	6.9
To get e- Certificate only	3	2.1
Professional collaboration	4	2.85
To get awareness of Resource person	5	3.4
To deliver lecture	1	0.7
To build professional relationships	9	6.2
Time Pass	2	1.4

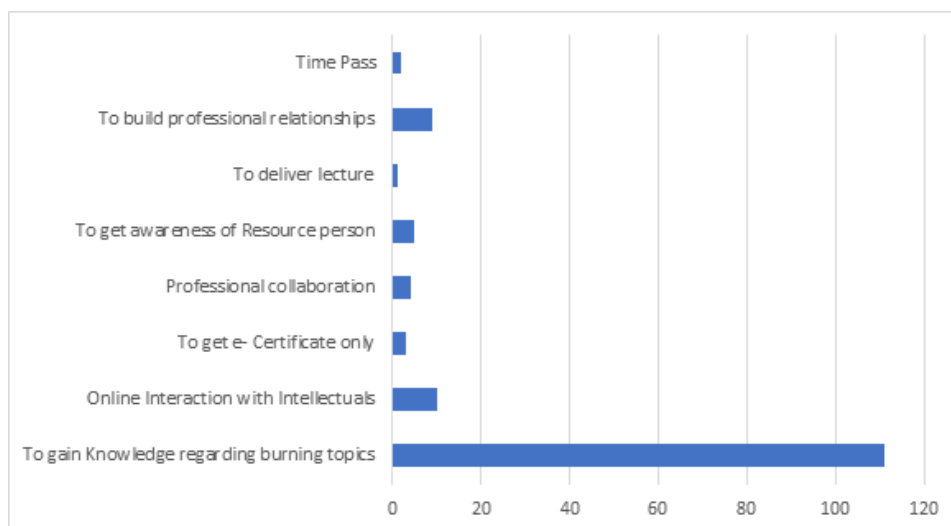


Figure 6: Graphical presentation of purposes for which respondents attend Webinars

Table 7: Opinions about Webinars

	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Webinars are Affordable events	8 (5.5)	83 (57.2)	41 (28.3)	5 (3.4)	8 (5.5)
Most of Webinars are useful for my academic work.	20 (13.8)	90 (62.1)	44(30.3)	10 (6.9)	1(0.7)
Webinar are real-time tools. Presenter can teach, interact with the participant.	14(9.7)	84(57.9)	28(19.3)	11(7.6)	14(9.7)
Webinars motivate academic fraternity to learn new things	26(17.9)	98(67.6)	16(11)	5(3.4)	0
One cannot use my mobile data for attending long webinars	4(2.8)	41(28.3)	39(26.9)	47(32.4)	14(9.7)
People after login do not attend sincerely.	30(20.7)	96(66.2)	17(11.7)	2(1.4)	0
Most of Webinars are useless	7 (4.8)	29(20)	40(27.6)	61(42.1)	8(5.5)
Technical knowledge base is must to operate webinar	13(9)	95(65.5)	32(22.1)	4 (2.8)	1(0.7)
Webinars can replace the class room teaching	6(4.1)	37(25.5)	29 (20)	60(41.4)	13(9)
It saves time and travel expenses	29(20)	86(59.3)	23(15.9)	23 (15.9)	2(1.4)
Team teaching is possible	20(13.8)	92(63.4)	28(19.3)	4(2.8)	1(0.7)

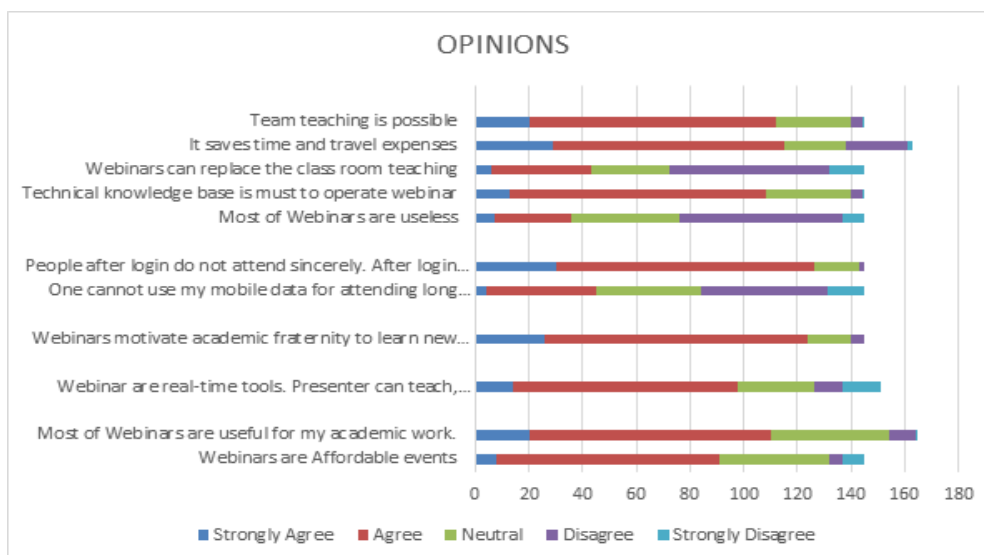


Figure 7: Graphical presentation of opinions about webinars

Table 8: Satisfaction of respondents with Webinars

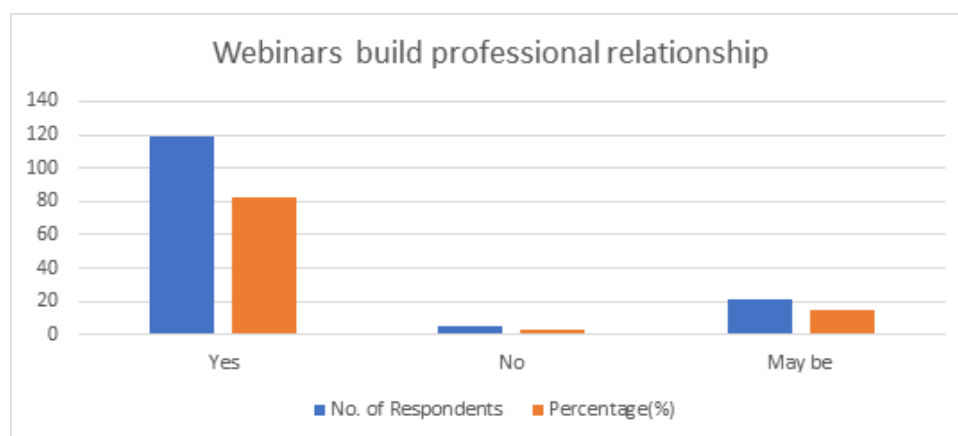
Satisfaction with webinars	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	105	73.9
No	11	7.7
May be	26	18.3



Figure 8. Graphical presentation of Satisfaction of respondents with Webinars.

Table 9: View on webinars building Professional relationship

Webinars builds Professional Relationships	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	119	82.1
No	5	3.4
May be	21	14.5



**Figure 9: Graphical presentation of view on webinars building professional relationships.**

### Discussion

COVID-19 emergency pushed universities to rethink teaching methodologies, forcing teachers to learn online options to continue education. [4] The fields of pharmacy and nursing account for around 27% of all published texts on webinars; social sciences contribute for roughly 20%; and engineering disciplines account for about 10%. [5] Our study is the only study till now which analysed physiotherapist's viewpoints and perceptions about webinars.

The present study revealed that the most common reason to attend webinar is to gain Knowledge regarding burning topics (76.6%). More than eighty percent participants found Webinars build professional relationships among physiotherapists and more than 70 % participants were satisfied with attended webinars. The results were in line with the study by Ismail et al. where nearly two-thirds of physicians attended more meetings during the first 6 months of the pandemic compared to the same period last year, and the majority reported satisfaction. [6]

Majority of population (41.4%) believed that webinars cannot replace classroom teaching which is in line with other surveys by Figueroa et al. [7] and Al-Ahmari et al. [8], where around 60% to

70% of physicians believed that webinars should not replace face-to-face traditional teaching. Moreover, similar findings were found among medical students in a study that included 13 medical schools, where 54.8% disagreed that e-learning could be used for clinical teaching. [9]

Another important factor is the teacher-student ratio (teacher:student), which is currently not at a satisfactory level in India, there is a big demand for classrooms, which is unfortunately not being met. In such cases, web-based classes may be an option as a supplement to classroom instruction. In many ways, it would reduce the infrastructural load on an institution. [10] In our study 76.6 percentage of population found that getting knowledge on recent topics is the main purpose of attending webinars. [11]

While our research has contributed to the literature by highlighting the viewpoints of physiotherapists using webinars for education, there are some notable limitations to our study. First, more participant information would have been helpful in determining the perceptions. Secondly, those who contributed in our analysis were mostly graduate physiotherapists which limits the idea of webinars building professional relationships.

### Conclusion



Our findings suggest that webinars should continue for physiotherapists with or without lockdown period but as a source of added knowledge not as a replacement for classroom teaching. Webinars can also be used as an effective way to build professional relationships among physiotherapists. Universities should train lecturers to help them develop appropriate pedagogical skills aimed at guaranteeing a high level of education to their students. The future direction can be given to study by increasing the sample size, and further role of social media can be analysed in building professional relationships and gaining knowledge.

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