
“EFFECTIVENESS OF VIRTUAL COURSES AND EVENTS TOWARDS THE QUALITY IN LEGAL EDUCATION”: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON USAGE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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Reading a book won't help you to swim, and the same is applicable for the legal profession as well

“No Lawyer can effectively plead their case by mere reading the book”

INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever thought of home without smartphone & internet connection? I never thought of the same, before the Covid-19 period. When, the Covid-19 started spreading across the world, everyone forced adopt technology whether be it to work or to learn or to interact. Classes were conducted through Online; video lectures were provided even the semester examination were conducted through Online. Then, the seminars with the help of web platforms conducted as webinar and courses for law students were offered by platforms like Swayam, Moodle, Coursera, and edX by enabling them to learn at their own pace from leading experts in the Law Field. Major specialty about this platform, were it enables them to revisit the content. Slow and Steadily Moot Court Competitions, Client Counseling Competitions, Mock Trial Competitions, Legal Writing and PIL Drafting Competitions and Negotiation Competitions etc. were conducted through Online. This research will analyze importance of using Information and Communication Technology contributing to the enhancement of Legal Education.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT¹

Have you ever thought of 1st year law students are introduced to the art of legal reasoning, learning to think like a lawyer. They engage in case analysis to identify legal issues, locate

¹ Devadas, —History of Legal Education in India, National University of Advanced Legal Studies, 53

applicable laws and explore how these laws interact with the facts at hand. The importance of these foundational teachings cannot be emphasized enough; without this grasp of the Legal Process, a lawyer's growth is stunted. Historically, L.L.B. degree program in India, which followed a Legal-Education model established in the 1960s², did not mandate practical training. Subjects such as the Code of Civil Procedure, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Indian Evidence Act, Minor Acts and Drafting, Pleading and Conveyancing were typically delivered through traditional lectures and evaluated via memory-based written examinations, much like other academic disciplines.³ However, as the need for practical advocacy skills became clear, clinical legal education⁴ emerged as a vital pedagogical method within law school curricula. In today's context, practical training is essential for law students, and clinical legal education is crucial for preparing them for the bar.⁵

Recognizing this need, the Bar Council of India has sought to integrate practical-training into the curriculum.⁶ This initiative includes mandatory components such as Moot Court, Mock Trials, Court Visits, and legal research and writing. Specifically, Part II (B) of Schedule II in the BCI Rules of Legal Education (2008)⁷ delineates four required clinical-courses: (i) Drafting, Pleading, and Conveyance; (ii) Professional Ethics and Professional Accounting System; (iii) Alternative Dispute Resolution; and (iv) Moot Court Exercise and Internship. Each of these courses emphasizes practical skills, utilizing a pedagogy focused on experimental learning.

Through these enhancements to Legal Education, students are equipped not only to understand legal theory but also to apply their knowledge effectively in real-world scenarios. The introduction of practical training in Legal Education marks a significant shift in the approach to training aspiring lawyers. As outlined in Part II (B) of Schedule II of the BCI Rules of Legal Education 2008, four mandatory clinical courses have been established:

² D. N. Mishra, —Legal Education in India: Present Status and Prospects, in *Legal Education in India in 21st Century*, (19) 1999.

³ Arthur Taylor Von Mehren, —Law and Legal Education in India: Some Observations, 78 *Harv. L. Rev.* (1965).

⁴ George S. Grossman, —Clinical Legal Education: History and Diagnosis, 26 *J. Legal Edu.* 162 (1973-1974), available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/42892228.pdf> (visited on December 22, 2024).

⁵ N. K. Indriyan, *The Challenge of Legal Education: The Current Scenario*, 107 *Indian Bar Review*, 28(4) 2001.

⁶ Paras Diwan, —Legal Education in India - Status and Problems, *Bar Council of India Trust*, 54- 74 (1983).

⁷ Part II (B) of Schedule II in the BCI Rules of Legal Education (2008)

- (i) Drafting, Pleading, and Conveyance;
- (ii) Professional Ethics and Professional Accounting System;
- (iii) Alternative Dispute Resolution; and
- (iv) Moot Court Exercise and Internship.

Each of these courses emphasizes practical skills and necessitates a pedagogy that prioritizes hands-on-learning. Understanding the relationship between legal principles and the specifics of cases through methods such as the Socratic Method and case analysis is vital for any law student. These teachings provide the foundational knowledge necessary for effective legal practice: without them a “Lawyer’s growth remains unattainable”.⁸

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

❖ In respect of Online Legal Education

The rapid integration of **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)** has transformed legal education through accessibility and innovation. Platforms such as Coursera and Zoom have transformed traditional classroom learning into a more inclusive and interactive entity. According to *Gerdy*⁹ (2006) and *Webley* (2010), this kind of transformation provides better skills in legal writing, reasoning, and research work, which benefit students through critical analysis and multimedia learning tools. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed the transition to speed up and, as *Sherry and Dedrick noted* (1998), demolished geographical barriers for participation in webinars, courses, and conferences. However, even with such growth, virtual platforms are still found wanting by most people who opine that these lack experiential richness which is required to build professional skills, according to *Dewey* (1938). Academic dishonesty and reduction of non-verbal cues have made their utility quite complicated, as *Herring opined* (2009). A hybrid approach is the best to combine digital innovation with in-person immersion and serve as an ideal model to maximize the potential of online legal education.

⁸ Chandra Krishnamoorthi, —Legal Education and Legal Profession in India, 263, International Journal of Legal Information 36 (2), 2008, available at: <http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/ijli/vol36/iss2/9> (visited in Jan 9, 2025)

⁹ Gerdy, Kristin B., The Heart of Lawyering: Clients, Empathy, and Compassion (2013)

❖ In the light of Moot Court Competitions¹⁰

Virtual moot court competitions have changed the way legal education functions, providing opportunities for learning via technology with respect to continuity and accessibility. It provides platforms where simulated advocacy may be performed in the following *The Moot Court Advisor's Handbook*¹¹ and *ILSA Guide to International Law Moot Court Competition*. Such places offer controlled skill enhancement of the student with regards to legal argumentation, networking, and public speaking skills according to *The Moot Court Workbook*, Aspen Publishing. The pandemic-era adoption of digital formats expanded participation across geographies, aligning with Bar Council of India reforms.¹² However, challenges persist, including technical hurdles, diminished non-verbal interaction, and limited networking opportunities, as discussed in *the Journal of Australasian Law Teachers Association*¹³. Emerging trends such as MOOCs and LawMeets provide innovative pathways for skill development but necessitate balancing digital efficiency with the authenticity of in-person advocacy experiences. The evolution of these competitions underscores the need for continuous innovation to address their inherent limitations.

SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

As I stated earlier, reading a book won't help you to swim, and the same is applicable for the legal profession as well “No Lawyer can effectively plead their case by mere reading the book”. These Events enhance their a) Legal Writing and Research: These contests push students to write excellent legal essays, create strong legal arguments, and carry out in-depth legal research. b) Improving Career Prospects: Winning awards increases a student's resume's worth by showcasing their brilliance, commitment, and legal knowledge to prospective employers. It will attract the attention of law firms, corporations, or government departments, leading to internships and even full-time job offers. c) Developing Advocacy Skills: Students can improve their public speaking and courtroom presentation abilities by participating in moot court, mock

¹⁰ Parsons, Louise, —Competitive Mooting as Clinical Legal Education: Can Real Benefits be Derived from an Unreal Experience? 1 (4) Australian Journal of Clinical Education 2016. available at: <http://epublications.bond.edu.au/ajce/vol1/iss1/4> (visited on Jan 5, 2025).

¹¹ The Moot Court Advisor's Handbook, second edition by The Legal Writing Institute, James Dimitri, Melissa E. Love Koenig, Susie Salmon, (2023)

¹² Jane E. Schukoske, —Legal Education Reform in India: Dialogue among Indian Law Teachers, 249 Jindal Global Law Review 1(1) (2009)

¹³ Virtual mooting: Using technology to enhance the mooting experience, Jennifer Yule, Judith McNamara and Mark Thomas (2010)

trial, and negotiation competitions. d) Professional Networking: Judges, mentors, and legal experts are frequently involved in competitions, and they can offer students helpful advice and networking possibilities. e) Exposure to Diverse Legal Issues: In order to develop into well-rounded legal practitioners, several competitions ask students to investigate novel and developing areas of the law. International law, human rights, economic arbitration, and environmental law are just a few of the varied legal topics that students are exposed to through competitions.

LIMITATION OF STUDY:

I majorly focusing from the year 2019, where the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 outbreak as a Public Emergency of International concern. During that period, most of nations closed their borders partially. Later, due to the severity of the disease complete closures were implemented by restricting non-citizens at international borders.

Since the COVID-19 epidemic, there has been a discernible rise in the number of virtual and hybrid moot court competition formats. Many legal schools and colleges carried on this trend by hosting online moots that enabled students to participate virtually from all around India and beyond.

RESEARCH DESIGN:

Independent Variable:

*Using Information and Communication Technology contributing to the enhancement of Legal Education.

Dependent Variable:

*Updation of Skills and Performance of the Students, Advocates and Academician.

HYPOTHESIS:

The Virtual Courses And Events Enhanced The Quality Of Legal Education.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study uses a non-doctrinal research methodology to investigate “Does the Virtual Courses and Events Enhanced the Quality of Legal Education.” This study adopts sampling as the method to get the required data. Purposive Sampling is the intended sample method. Because it makes possible focused collection of information from an identified population that is most pertinent to the study, this method was selected to ensure an equitable balance of viewpoints without overburdening the study with extraneous data. Surveys and interviews with law students, instructors, and practicing attorneys who are familiar with the subject matter will be the main methods of gathering data. ICT being included into law education, students' opinions about digital technologies and how they have impacted their comprehension of professional ethics will be evaluated through the surveys. Sampling improves the validity and dependability of the results by concentrating on a manageable sample of the population. The goal is to use sampling techniques to collect empirical data that will aid in developing an understanding of “Effectiveness of Virtual Courses and Events towards the Quality of Legal Education” that is supported by evidence. Especially, I prepared a Google Form which consists of various questions regarding the experience of both online and offline Experience of the Students, Advocates and Academician.

Research Setting: (Questionnaires prepared for Data collection)

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Q. Gender

A. Option A: Female

Option B: Male

Option C: Others

Q. Current Designation

A. Option A: Academician

Option B: Advocate

Option C: Student

Q. How comfortable you are using Technology for Legal Education?

A. Option A: Very Likely

Option B: Likely

Option C: Moderately

Option D: Unlike

ONLINE COURSES

Q. Have you completed any of the Courses any of the course conducted in Online Platforms like Lawctopus, Lawsikho, Lawbhoomi?

A. Option A: Yes

Option B: No

Q. How effective as Online Learning been for you?

A. Option A: Best,

Option B: Good,

Option C: Neutral,

Option D: Bad,

**Q. Rank the reasons why you preferred the legal Education in E-Learning Platform?
(Make a Preference from most to Least)**

A. Option A: Learn when it convenient for me

Option B: Interact Online with Students and Teachers without any Hesitation

Option C: Collaborate Virtually with a Student Group on a Project

Option D: Studying concepts that are not offered by my Law School

Option E: Learn from variety of Online Sources like video, interactive media, animation etc.

VIRTUAL CONFERENCES

Q. Have you participated in any of Virtual Conference/ Workshop/ Conclave etc?

A. Option A: Yes

Option B: No.

Q. What were your primary goals in attending the Virtual Conference/ Workshop/ Conclave etc? (Choose more than One Option)

A. Option A: To Update Latest Legal Trends and Development,

Option B: Improving Communication Skills,

Option C: To Know about Career and Employment Opportunities,

Option D: Just for Sake of Participation Certificate & CV Building.

Q. How difficult to concentrate on Virtual Conferences?

A. Option A: Difficult

Option B: Good

Option C: Not Bad

Option D: Best

MOOT COURT COMPETITION

Q. Have you participated in any of Virtual Moot Court Competitions?

A. Option A: Yes

Option B: No.

Q. Which is most effective in terms of Learning?

A. Option A: Online Moot Court Competition

Option B: Offline Moot Court Competition

Q. Which is most convenient in terms of Approaching Moot Court Competition?

A. Option A: Online Moot Court Competition

Option B: Offline Moot Court Competition

Q. Rate your opinion on quality of judging in the Virtual Moot Court Competition?

A. Option A: Highly Satisfied

Option B: Satisfied

Option C: Moderate

Option D: Dissatisfied

Option E: Highly dissatisfied (Disparate)

Q. What were your primary goals in attending the Virtual Moot Court Competitions? (Rate from most to Least)

A. Option A: To Update Latest Legal Trends and Development,

Option B: Improving Communication Skills,

Option C: To Know about Career and Employment Opportunities,

Option D: Just for Sake of Participation Certificate & CV Building.

Q. How moot court competition helped you (Rate from most to Least)

A. Option A: Drafting

Option B: Effective Arguing Skills

Option C: Presentation Skills

Option D: Accepting Likelihood of Bias

Option E: Procrastination

Option F: Social Networking

Option G: Court Mannerism

Q. Do you think participating in the Online Moot Court Competition enriches your advocacy skills? (Rate your experience)?

A. Option A: Best,

Option B: Good,

Option C: Neutral,

Option D: Bad,

Option E: Worst

SKILLS INVOLVED IN PARTICIPATING MOOT COURT COMPETITION:

Before get into the skills learned out of Moot Court Competition many of us think, Moot is just an extra-curricular activity. Moot is far more than just an extra-curricular activity. It's a co-curricular Activity. In law school, it is important to differentiate between extracurricular and co-curricular activities, particularly when it comes to moot court competitions. The conventional academic program is enhanced and expanded by these activities. They are a vital component of the educational process and have an intimate link to the subject of study. Students who get involved in extracurricular events gain knowledge of their academic subjects and develop skills that are indispensable to their future career. Extracurricular activities that usually have nothing associated with one's formal curriculum program. While such opportunities cannot directly contribute to students' the core goals of studying, they additionally provide them the option to pursue enthusiasms distant to their studies, such sports, music, or drama.

PRE-PREPARATION:

- a) Research: Research includes aspects of the case have been covered by statutes, case law, legal theory can be developed that takes into account the case's facts as well as the pertinent authorities. In order to create arguments and advance their arguments, students learn how to locate, evaluate, and use various sources. From the finding the legal issues into searching precedents through legal databases like Westlaw, LexisNexis, or other jurisdiction-specific tools. Legal Research won't stop at the stage of the sourcing and compiling the information from various sources, whereas it lies on the synthesize information into a coherent, logical argument. For example, relating the precedents with the facts of the case, to show the applicability of the precedents with the given facts. A crucial element of creating strong legal arguments is legal research. Students learn how to construct their arguments in a way that is both legitimate and persuasive by comprehending pertinent statutes, case law, and legal principles. Participants in moot courts are taught to formulate arguments that anticipate and address potential vulnerabilities in addition to emphasizing the advantages of their stance.¹⁴

¹⁴ Mukesh Anand and Nomita Aggarwal, *Beginners Path to Moot Court*, (Universal Law Publishing, Second edition, New Delhi, 2014).

- b) Drafting: Moots require the student to a memorial for both appellant and the respondent. A memorial is a comprehensive document that outlines the legal arguments, case law, facts, and legal principles supporting a team's position. It helps students master the art of presenting legal arguments in a structured and persuasive manner. It includes, (1) Present clear and concise arguments, (2) Analyze legal issues in-depth and apply relevant case law, (3) Organize legal research effectively to support each point and (4) Write in a formal, professional tone, ensuring clarity and coherence.
- c) Team Work: Moot is all about team work. It exposes the experience of real hardship of working with team, which includes leading and working under leadership. Because everyone's ideas come together with extract different viewpoints and using the best out it. cooperation is frequently essential to succeed in law firms and legal departments, this teamwork experience is crucial.
- d) Preparing Brief: During the oral-argument practice phase, writing a strong brief saves time spent researching the legal problems, and a strong brief is necessary for the advocate's team to prevail.

EXECUTION STAGE:

- a) Etiquette and Court Decorum: A Student Advocate should always conduct himself with dignity and respect when he makes his argument in court. Be it judge or Opposite Counsel, Oralists are required to treat them politely and respectfully. Generally, the judges can be addressed collectively as "Your Lordships", if it is international moot court competition addressed as "Your Excellencies" or individually as "Your Excellency." And the Opposite Counsel referred as "Learned Friend Counsel"
- b) Demeanor: Regardless of whether it is real court or Moot Court preserving a professional demeanor is essential while presenting their case. It includes vocal variety, eye contact, body language, tone with slowly and clearly, avoiding a rushed or mumbled manner, colloquial speech, and most importantly, without reading directly the Written Submission.
- c) Handling Judges: Judges play a vital role; they have responsibility to testing the caliber and requiring justification for their argument. They ask questions to seek clarification,

and evaluate comprehension of the issues. There is no straight jacket formula for handling judges, it differs with each and every person. While handling judge's student advocate need to listen patiently, respond clearly, admitting when it is necessary.

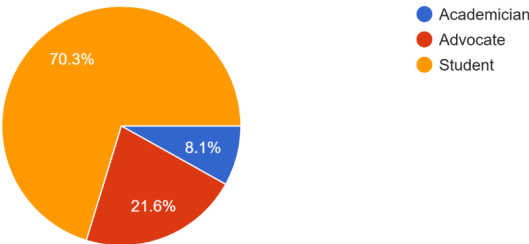
- d) Oral Advocacy and Public Speaking: Moot competitions assist students develop their public speaking confidence by mimicking the atmosphere and pressure of a real courtroom or legal procedure, since they arguing in front of judges or an audience. Participating in these contests helps students hone their persuasive argumentation skills, which are crucial in the practice of law.

RESEARCH FINDINGS:

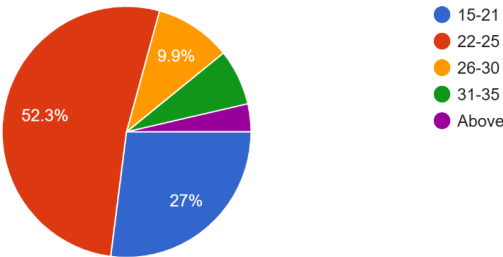
RESPONSE TO GENERAL QUESTIONS

I received 111 responses from 78 students, 24 Advocates and 9 Academicians out of these 54 Male & 56 Female members. I didn't mandate to answer even to a single question, due to possibility choosing a compulsion for sake of completing it.

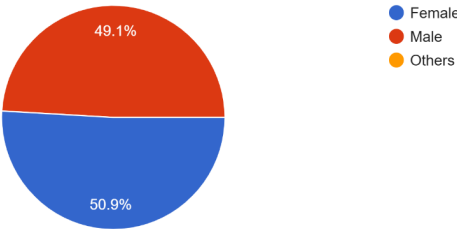
Occupation
111 responses



Age
111 responses



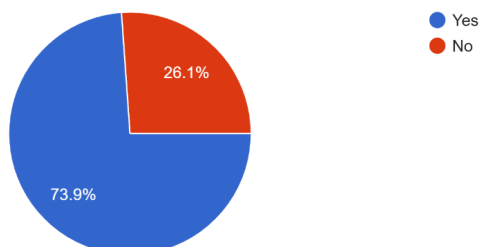
Gender
110 responses



VIRTUAL CONFERENCES

Have you participated in any of Virtual Conference/Workshop/Conclave etc?

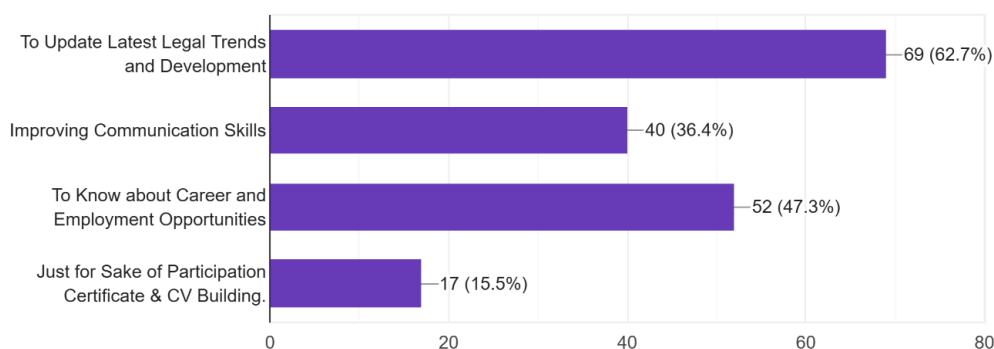
111 responses



Out of 111 members 82 members (73.9%) have participated in the Virtual Conferences

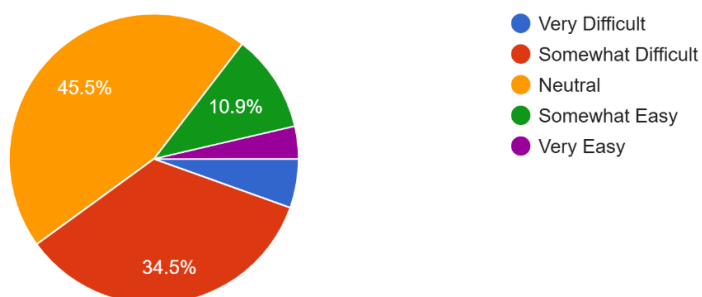
What are your primary goals in attending the Virtual Conference/Workshop/Conclave etc.? (You can choose one or more options)

110 responses



How difficult is it to concentrate on virtual conferences?

110 responses

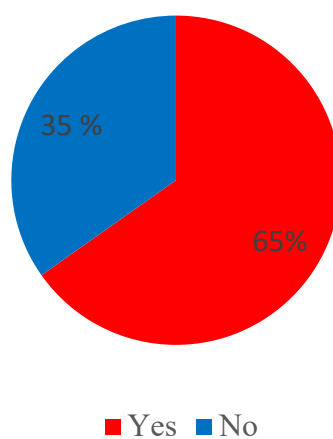


NEUTRAL	50 Members	45.5%
SOMEWHAT DIFFICULT	38 Members	34.5%
SOMEWHAT EASY	12 Members	10.9%
VERY DIFFICULT	6 Members	5.5%
VERY EASY	4 Members	3.6%

VIRTUAL COURSES

Have you completed any of the Courses any of the course conducted in Online Platforms like Lawctopus, Lawsikho, Lawbhoomi?

100 responses

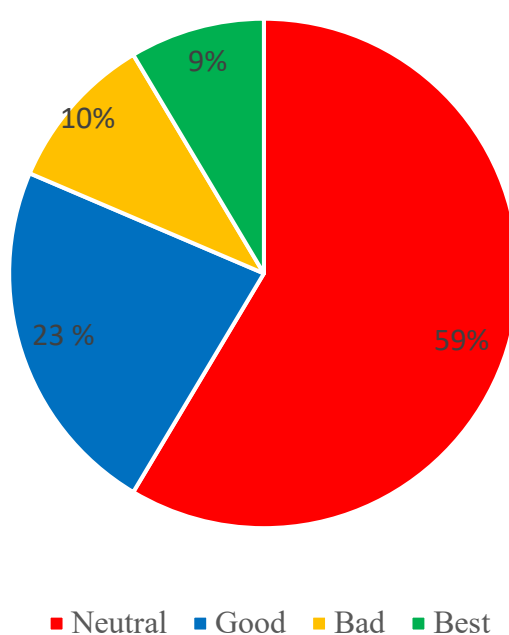


Out of 100 responses, 65 have completed any of the one course through E-Learning.

Rank the reasons why you preferred the legal Education in E-Learning Platform (103 Responses)		
1)	Learn when it convenient for me	1 st Preference
2)	Studying concepts that are not offered by my Law School	2 nd Preference
3)	Learn from variety of Online Sources like video, interactive media, animation etc	3 rd Preference
4)	Collaborate Virtually with a Student Group on a Project	4 th Preference
5)	Interact Online with Students and Teachers without any Hesitation	5 th Preference

How effective as Online Learning been for you?

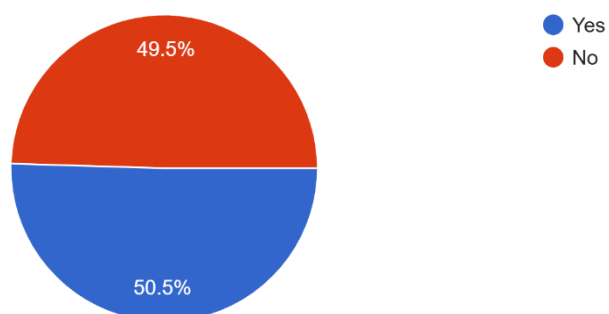
100 responses



VIRTUAL MOOT COURT COMPETITION

Have you participated in any of the virtual moot court competitions?

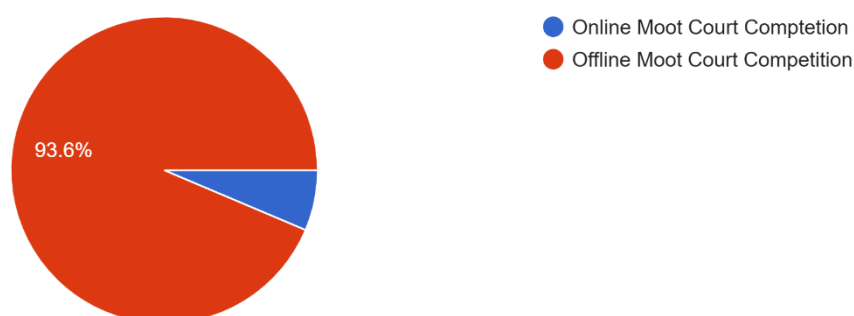
107 responses



Out of 107 responses, 55(50.5%) participated in the Online Moot Court Competition

Which is the most effective in terms of Learning?

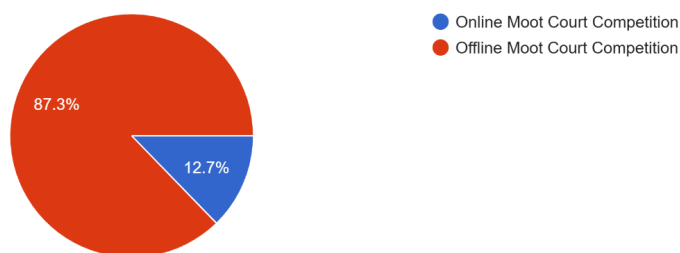
110 responses



Out of 110 responses, 103 (93.6%) found Offline Moot Court Competition is Effective & 7 (6.4%) found Online Moot Court Competition is Effective in terms of learning.

Which is most effective in terms of Approaching Moot Court Competitions?

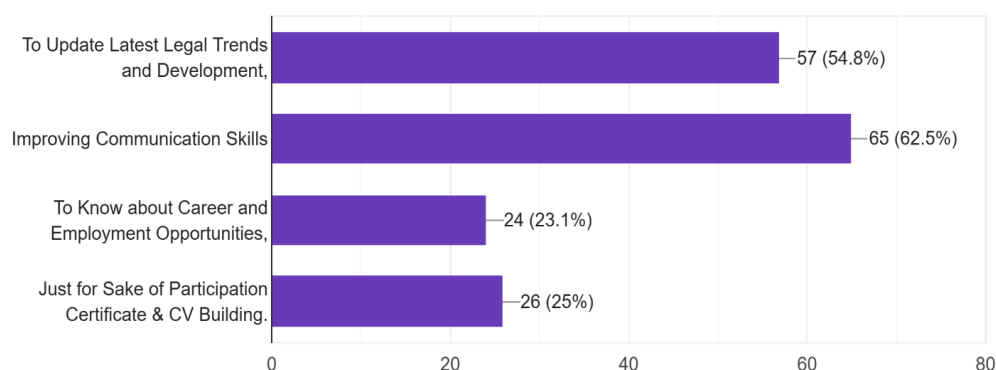
110 responses



Out of 110 responses, 96(87.3 %) found effective & 14 Members (12.7%), found effective in terms of Approaching the Moot Court Competition.

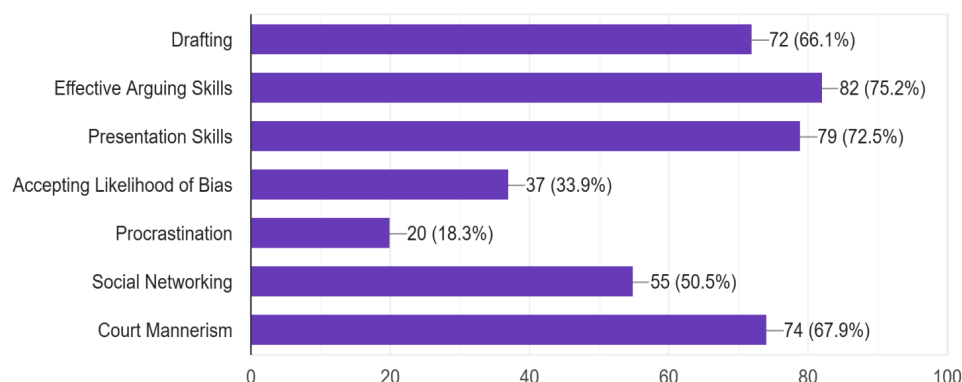
What were your primary goals in attending the Virtual Moot Court Competitions? (You can choose one or more options)

104 responses

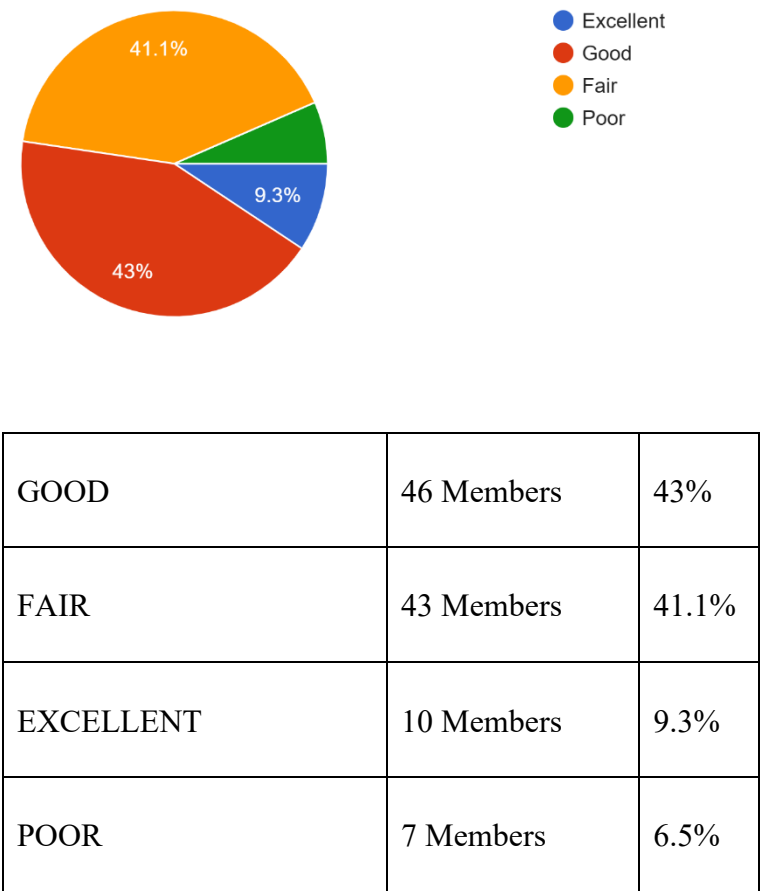


How moot court competitions helped you (You can choose one or more options)

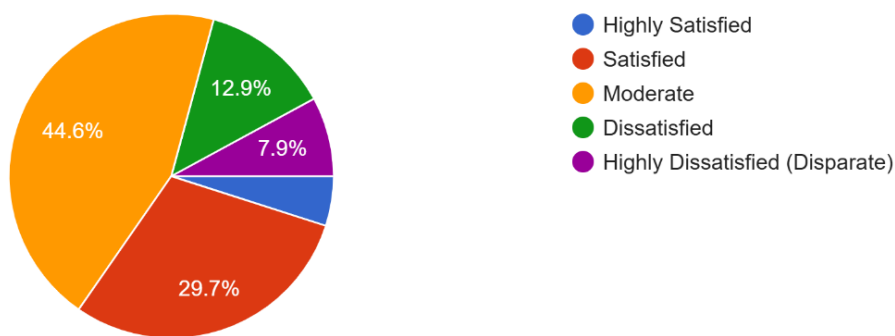
109 responses



Do you think participating in the Online Moot Court Competition enriches your advocacy skills?
107 responses



Rate your opinion on quality of judging in the Virtual Moot Court Competition?
101 responses



MODERATE	45 Members	44.6%
SATISFIED	30 Members	29.7%
DISSATISFIED	13 Members	12.9%
HIGHLY DISSATISFIED	8 Members	7.9 %
HIGHLY SATISFIED	5 Members	5 %

SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION:

- a) Whether it is Online Courses or Virtual Conferences or Moot Court Competition - In the world of full of distractions, student find difficult due to endless popup notification. Apart from these, most of the students participate from their home, where they distracted by family members, noise, or other surroundings. Almost half of them think its neutral to be part of these activities through online.
- b) However, in terms of Moot Court Competitions, they prefer Offline Moot Court Competitions because of
 - (i) Conventional moot court events commonly take place in real-life court rooms or replicated circumstances, allowing for an aura of realness. The ambiance of a real courtroom cannot be replicated by online platforms, which could lead to a less meaningful experience.
 - (ii) The participants may not be able to fully grasp the pressure and seriousness of appearing in a real courtroom partly because of the lack of an authentic setting.
 - (iii) Students can hone their public speaking abilities in front of jurists, colleagues, and spectators in person during competitions. Because participants may be expressing herself to a monitor instead of before a real person, the online setting may leave public speaking practice a lesser intensity and constrain chance to build confidence while speaking in front of a massive crowd.

- (iv) Nonverbal clues that are crucial in in-person moots, like posture, facial expressions, and gestures, are less stressed in online forums.
- (v) Social Networking, in Online Moot Court Competition there is no way of building connection even with the opponent team, probably organizing committee will end the meeting as soon as the rounds gets over. So, the possibility of exploring, building connections are very least.

This study concludes that, the usage of Information and Communication Technology does contribute to the enhancement of Legal Education, but comparatively less than Offline Experience.

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