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The Perspectives of Teachers and the Students Towards Online Tourism Education in India

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Abstract

Tourism management education is a contemporary academic field and the use of technology helps deliver, promote and expand its reach through online platforms and digital technology. Recent advancements in such digital technology and online education has transformed the accessibility and delivery of tourism education across India and world. Understanding how these changes influence the teaching and learning practices and the perception of the stakeholders about such changes becomes vital. In this context, the study aimed to identify the underlying dimensions of online tourism education and to examine the perspectives of teachers and students towards such practices. The study employed a survey method and administered random sampling with the variables of online approaches in tourism education. A closed-ended structured questionnaire was used to collect the data from teachers and students in tourism programs. The study centered on their experience of teaching-learning practices. The items were summarized through review of related literature and tested for the reliability coefficient using Cronbach alpha. Further these were factor analyzed to obtain six factors; the effectiveness of online teaching-learning, online classroom environment, instructional technology awareness, and motivation of students to study tourism programs in online mode and their educational outcome. A students' t-test was employed to compare the perspectives of teachers and students on chosen parameters of online tourism education. The findings of the study in addition to identifying the underlying factors highlighted the variations in perspectives between of teachers and students both overall and across gender. The findings shall be helpful in formulating policies with respect to online tourism education.

Keywords Online tourism education; curriculum development; ICT in tourism education; teaching-learning environment; educational outcome.

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Introduction

The Indian higher education system is the 3rd in the world after China and USA by higher education enrolments and number of institutions. The country has around 1472 universities and 52,627 colleges (MoE, 2020), and five lakh academicians engaged in providing higher education to more than 3 crores of students. Despite a substantial number of educational institutions, only 7 per cent of the youth in the country, in the eligible age group (17 to 23 years old) have access, compared to 50–70 percent in high-income countries and the world average of 30 percent. This data shows a low gross enrolment ratio (GER) in Indian higher education. With the current low GER, tourism education stands out as a distinct discipline of professional education in the country with high employability potential in tourism and hospitality, one of the fastest-growing sectors in the country. The industry is expected generate over 42 million jobs by end of 2025 envisaging diverse and huge career opportunities. Presently, tourism management education is being offered by 25 central universities, 29 state universities and more than 31 private and deemed to be universities and other higher educational institutions (UGC, 2023). The transformation of tourism education through digital technologies, has profoundly impacted tourism education especially after covid-19 pandemic in global and local contexts alike. The challenge for tourism institutions to continue education during the pandemic led complete shutdown, gave birth to the adoption and proliferation of online tourism education in the country, additionally the ease of teaching-learning practices and the awareness of educational technology among teachers and students augmented the adoption of online tourism management education. The growing popularity of online education has sparked widespread interest among stakeholders, policy makers and researchers alike. Higher education institutions in India are actively promoting and integrating digital learning resulting in a shift of educational activities to online mode. That is why, various aspects of such transformation have emerged as vital aspects of study, exploration and research.

Some recent studies focus on the fact that online education in tourism is becoming increasingly popular. The last few years have witnessed a dramatic increase and several advantages in the use of online teaching and learning in tourism education. A great number of students are taking their courses online, which urged teachers to design online courses to improve learning and teaching effectiveness (Evans, 2014). Online learning is the future trend of hospitality and tourism education, which has many advantages (Qiu & Li, 2021). Numerous studies have also reported that online learning could increase student participation, improve discussion quality, and foster online interactions (Yu, 2021). They emphasized on various aspects of online education in tourism programs, i.e., teaching learning process, curriculum, use of ICT and educational outcomes. As Al-Salman et al. (2021) argued, Online education makes education student-cantered, in which students participate in the learning

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process, and teachers act as supervisors and guides for the students. Stern (2020) has also mentioned that online education is convenient for students, where they can access online materials for 24 hours. Although the study of many scholars shows that there are many advantages and disadvantages of online education. As noted by Gautam (2021), advantages include efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and 24-hour access, while disadvantages are technical issues, lack of interaction and training (Gautam, 2020). The advantages of online education are also mentioned by a study at Strayer University (2020): flexibility, easy access, and interaction between learners and their professors (Almahasees et al., 2021). Crispin & Robinson (2001) have described a three-domain model of tourism education for betterment as a regenerative process; General degrees (tourism management), functional degrees (tourism marketing, IT in tourism, etc.), and market and product-based degrees (eco-tourism, adventure tourism, etc.). Several previous research have focused on the alternative disciplinary approaches to the study of tourism programs; while some have examined the influence of gender, educational level, and personality on the effectiveness of online learning. Yet online tourism education has received relatively little attention in the tourism literature. Many articles examined alternative disciplinary approaches to the study of tourism programs. Though some previous studies have examined the influence of gender, educational level and personality on the effectiveness of online learning, relatively little attention has been paid to online tourism education in the tourism literature. The present study explored the major factors underlying online tourism education through factor analysis. Next, two data sets were compared the perspective differences of faculty and students, further their genders towards online tourism education on those parameters using an independent sample t-test. The findings revealed the similarities and differences in the perspectives between the two groups in terms of factors affecting online teaching and learning in tourism in Indian context.

Literature review

Tourism education aims at providing high potential graduates equipped with management competencies relevant to the tourism industry. In addition to traditional classroom teaching-learning, practical work experience is a substantial component of subject knowledge and technical skills to the future success of tourism graduates (Tse, 2010). Live demonstrations, practical education and internships therefore enhance students' skills and management competencies by providing an important learning bridge between classroom theory and workplace practice (Wang et al., 2020). Sandwith (1993) argued that tourism students require managerial competencies such as conceptual/creative, leadership, interpersonal, administrative and technical knowledge. However, over the past decade, educational institutions and educators in tourism have been grappling with the need to integrate emerging technology into their classrooms and learning environment (Goh & King, 2020). This is the reason that in a competitive and changing environment with technological advances, there is a gap between the needs of professionals in industries and tourism education provided by teachers. To understand teachers' and students' perceptions towards online education has been an important topic of research. Online teaching-learning is the best available option under education, so research is needed on the effectiveness of online learning and its potential to strive in the future (Lei & So, 2021).

An effective online teaching-learning requires not only interaction with learners but also a good course delivery and facilitating interaction through technology (Moore, 2016). Popescu et al. (2021) has categorised students' perspective on tourism education into three major themes such as, education competencies, communication and interaction, and impact on the future professional career, intended to provide a preliminary evaluation of students' perspective on teaching and learning on a digital environment. They found that, first, a high level of participation and motivation is supported by the availability of digital technologies and the computer skills of students. Second, increased interaction and teamwork; third, separate content engagement with subjects and lecture/seminar classes. Fourth and the last is the relative loss of creativity in the absence of real-life interrelationships. Students' engagement with peers and instructors creates a social, and teaching environment as well as relationships within the classroom which is often correlated with more effective learning outcomes (Chatterjee & Correia, 2020). Online classroom environment is an important aspect of online education. Online learning environment can be defined as, "the teaching-learning with no physical location and in which the instructors and students are separated by space" (Moore, 2016b). It is important to maintain student discipline and student engagement during online classes as most faculty have reported a lack of student discipline as a major barrier to online learning (Seaman, 2009; Wasilik & Bolliger, 2009). As teachers relinquish some of their control over instructional events, many students feel freer, which may partially account for the higher attrition levels in online classes (Henke & Russum, 2000). Since online learning has a great impact on students' academic performance (Tawafak et al., 2020) also provides an opportunity for instructors/faculty to manage the learning and teaching process, can plan, deliver and track. Therefore, it becomes imperative for educational institutions to encourage a conducive learning environment to stimulate learner performance and promote higher level of knowledge acquisition for students. As nowadays with the use of ICT, there has been a complete evolution of the educational system where the emphasis has shifted from the instructor to the learner (Hong et al., 2021). Bali & Liu (2018) have conducted a comparative group study on students' perception towards online learning and face-to-face learning and reported that face-to-face learning was rated better than online learning in terms of social presence, social interaction and satisfaction. In contrast, there was no statistically significant difference in learning preference between levels of students. Some students were very comfortable with online learning because of the opportunity to be innovative using computer technology.

Motivation is an important factor for online education especially in tourism discipline. During online classes, students should stay motivated to achieve their learning outcomes (Herrera et al., 2021). Hartnett (2016) also argued that the students find it more essential to learn online rather than face to face classes. Although there are several studies have found on motivation e-learning or online learning vis-à-vis study tourism programs (such as Lee et al., 2008; Amin et al., 2022; Ozfidan et al., 2022), meagrely research on motivation for online tourism education can be found. Lee et al. (2008) mentioned five motivational

factors in tourism students, namely, self-actualization, job opportunity, field attractiveness, ease of study, and scholastic achievement. In addition, preferred overseas study destinations and areas of tourism study as motivational factors in the students have also been examined, however, this study was not based on motivation of students towards online learning in tourism education. In contrast, an empirical evaluation of tourism education investigated the role of educational technology, motivational variables and virtual capabilities towards students' e-learning effectiveness. The results showed that different components of ICT have a positive effect on e-learning effectiveness, except perception. Perceived usefulness, enjoyment, self-efficacy and social skills contribute positively to students' e-learning effectiveness, contributing to their knowledge acquisition and satisfaction (Amin et al., 2022). Ozfidan et al. (2022) conducted an exploratory study on study on student perspectives to online teaching and learning and argued, "Communicating effectively and meeting student needs is essential for motivating students to engage in online learning. In addition, providing access to a wide range of contents, a well-organized course structure, multiple sources and explanatory feedback, as well as facilitating a meaningful discussion can be included."

In higher education institutions (HEIs), the emergence of new technologies has brought a considerable innovative change and improvement in the pedagogy i.e., "how content is delivered", assessment i.e., "how learning is evaluated", and curriculum i.e., "what is being taught" of tourism programs (Deng & Benckendorff, 2020). It has also increased online-learning/ e-learning alongwith the awareness towards technology among tourism students. As Morrell (2016) has argued, technology and the Internet have not confined the teaching-learning process to the physical classroom or institution building, but the ability to interact and connect with peers around the world through information technology is increasing rapidly year after year. Online education is characterized by real-time classroom interaction through internet which solves the shortcomings of a traditional distance education, especially the lack of interpersonal communication. It makes it possible for students to interact with each other and their teachers or with external experts from a multimedia resource. So, online education refers to the teaching-learning of a course where most or all of the content is delivered online, as Allen & Seaman (2003) argued that it is typically with at least eighty percent of the course imparted online, without any face-to-face meetings (Allen & Seaman, 2003). Other researchers on tourism education reveal different dimensions of online teaching learning in tourism, such as, Fuchs & Höpken (2020) stated that the existent e-Tourism curricula, scientific knowledge, competencies, and concepts are sufficiently present, while practical skills and capabilities require further attention. In order to better engage distributed students in online courses, the critical factors in each domain need to be well attended to encourage students' cognitive, emotive, and social presence in an online learning environment (Wang, 2004). Balula et al. (2019) conducted a review study that is said to make a valuable contribution to the current discussion on redesigning tourism education by addressing the needs of students and faculty members. It focuses on both i.e., use of online technology in teaching and learning and the development of digital competence.

Bećirović & Dervić (2022) explored the factors of online learning perspective associated with students' academic achievements. They found that "Internet habits, readiness for e-learning, and satisfaction with online learning are factors in students' perspectives". Interestingly, the study determined by standard multiple regression analysis that these factors have negligible impact on students' academic achievement. Similarly, the "self-learning ability of students" and "teaching competencies of lecturers" had a positive impact on the "learning outcomes of students" (Demir & Akturk, 2023). Fortune et al (2011) conducted a study to evaluate differences in students' perceptions of learning, including general use of courses and leisure time spent on online social networks, regardless of course delivery method and online environment. It found no statistically significant difference in learning preference between people enrolled in the two different learning modes. Plus, participants were able to grow and be creative while learning in an advanced technological environment with little or no physical contact. Additionally, students of both learning platforms were quite satisfied with their chosen modes. Despite several benefits online education in tourism programs faces many challenges. Means et al. (2013) argued that online learning exists in leaners engagement, academic success and time consumption. Seaman, (2009b) and Wasilik & Bolliger, (2009b) have also reported faculty perspective that lack of student discipline is also a main constraint in online education and learning. Numerous studies mentioned other constraints such as, resistance of few teachers (Palvia, 2018), limited online teaching and learning activities, limitation in teachers' interest to attract students, time-consuming (Cavanaugh, 2005). The face-to-face interaction is more valuable as students can learn more from their peers than interacting with them online (Adnan & Anwar, 2020). In contrast some students were very comfortable in online learning since it led them to the chance to being innovative by using computer technology.

Gap

A detailed review of the available literature reveals that studies have been conducted on various aspects of online tourism education on the perspectives of academics and students in different countries. Although several empirical studies on online tourism education have been conducted by various scholars in other countries, there is not enough evidence of research conducted in India. Recently Chandra et al. (2022) and Ramachandran & Babu (2021b) made an attempt to study the issues and challenges of "online hospitality and tourism education", however, it provides a basis on students' perception of the effectiveness and satisfaction of online hospitality and tourism education, while limiting itself to only student expectations (Gomezelj & Čivre, (2012). Significant gaps in the literature were found; First, although many researches has been conducted on various disciplines of online education, tourism education remains relatively untouched. Second, most of the research in tourism domain focused on e-learning experience rather than exploring diverse factors influencing the quality of online tourism education. Third, it is worth noting that while most of the previous studies on online tourism education have been done abroad, little or no studies have been found on the Indian perspective. These gaps highlight the need for dedicated studies to better understand and address the challenges and requirements of online tourism education with a focus on Indian perspective.

Although this article builds on concepts drawn from previous studies, it addresses the gap in the literature, by examining the perspectives of teachers and students on underlying dimensions of online tourism education within the Indian context. The above gaps are addressed through the following research objectives:

- To identify underlying factors affecting the effectiveness of online tourism education.
- To examine the challenges and benefits associated with online tourism education from the perspective of teachers and students.

Method

The present study is based on a quantitative research design. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire from faculty members and students of major tourism education institutions in India. Questionnaire was prepared on the basis of Likert scale of 5-points ranging from 5 = strongly agree to 1= strongly disagree. It included questions related to the demographic profile of the respondents, and their perspectives towards the engagement in teaching-learning and environment, technology awareness, motivation and educational outcomes through online education in tourism. In order to accomplish research objectives, a survey method of data collection was administered using structured questionnaire. Data were collected from randomly selected institutions offering tourism programs, which attract a magnificent number of students every year. The respondents were from each education level e.g., undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral. A total of 405 respondents were taken as a sample using disproportionate stratified random sampling techniques, of which 315 were students and the remaining 90 were teachers. Data of Ph.D. scholars have been considered as teachers; As in most of the higher educational institutions in India, they also use to take classes of UG and PG tourism students. For the analysis, perspective dimensions were successfully predetermined through literature review, thereafter, the items under them were systematically structured for the main survey. Collected quantitative data was analysed by using statistical software SPSS 26.0. Researchers used both descriptive and inferential statistics using three-steps approach. First, descriptive analysis to describe respondents' frequencies and percentages and the mean of survey statements. Second, factor analysis was then carried out on the collected data to characterize the underlying dimensions of online tourism education. In this, as Kaiser's (1974) suggested, only factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1 were accepted. In addition, only items with factor loadings and commonalities greater 0.5 were included in the structure of final factors. Subsequently, reliability alpha within each factor was calculated to check the internal consistency of the factors. Finally, independent sample t-tests were conducted to examine the statistically significant differences between teachers and the students (Lei & So, 2021b), female and male teachers and then male and female students in terms of their perspectives toward online tourism education (Deale & Lee, 2018).

Results

Demographic characteristics

The results of respondents (e.g., tourism students and teachers) revealed that of the 405, slightly more than 56 per cent were male (n= 228), accurately more than 57 per cent of overall were the undergraduate tourism students (n= 193) in India. In terms of experience with online tourism education, largest number of respondents 83 per cent (n= 336) have experience of online teaching-learning upto two years.

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic Variables		No. of Respondents(N=405)	Percentage
Gender	Male	228	56.3%
	Female	177	43.7%
Position	Student	315	77.8%
	Teacher	90	22.2%
Education level	UG	193	47.7%
	PG	125	30.9%
	PG& NET/SET	22	5.4%
	Ph.D. & NET/SET	28	6.9%
	Post Doctorate	3	0.7%
Online experience	0-2 year	336	83%
	2-4 years	62	15.3%
	> 4 years	7	1.7%

Factor analysis

To accomplish the first objective of the study, the underlying factor of teachers and students' perspective towards online tourism education were identified through principal component factor analysis of 70 statements. The reliability of all 70 statements in the tool was found to be internally consistent (i.e., Cronbach's Alpha value for all factors = $\alpha > .05$ with a total scale reliability of .979). KMO measure obtained value .959 i.e., greater than .05, which showed the sample was adequate for factor analysis. Of the 70 items, a total of 63 items loaded in the rotated components matrix factor loadings on six factors, remained 7 unloaded items were excluded from the factors. The delineated factors were labelled as follows: 1) 'Online teaching learning effectiveness (17.7 per cent variance); 2) 'Online classroom environment' (12.96 per cent variance); 3) 'Educational outcome of OTE' (13.66 per cent variance); 4) 'Motivation to study online' (8.02 per cent variance); 5) 'Constraints of OTE' (7.16 per cent variance); and 6) 'Technological awareness' (6.12 per cent variance). The eigenvalues of all six factors were greater than 1 comparatively a high reliability of alpha coefficients above .9 (Table 2). Each item's communality greater or closer to 0.50 and factor loadings greater than 0.50 indicated a reasonably high correlation between the delineated factors and their individual items. The reveals overall mean value of all the items/ statements is 3.65. Thus shows a positive perspective of teachers and students towards the practice of online tourism education in India. Items 1 (i.e., It is effective for teachers in handling the online classes) & item 14

(i.e., flexibility class-time and place) under factor 1- Online teaching-learning effectiveness had the highest mean value 3.74 each. Items 8 (i.e., Students can learn while on the job), item 3 (i.e., Online tourism education provides opportunity to students for continuing their study pandemic like situations) & item 9 (i.e., Students can obtain degree from the best institutions/universities) under factor 2- Online classroom environment had the highest mean value 3.94, 3.90 and 3.90 respectively. Items 13 (i.e., It provides opportunity to students for higher education) & 2 (i.e., Improved knowledge) under factor 3- Educational outcome of OTE had the highest mean value 3.89 and 3.78 respectively. Item 6 (i.e., Students can learn from the best teachers in the field) under factor 4- Motivation to study online had the highest mean value 3.82. Item 5 (i.e., 5. Online teaching is frustrating due to technical glitches) under factor 5 - Constraints had highest mean value 3.80. Similarly, item 4 (i.e., Online educational tools are easy to use) under factor 6 -Technological awareness had highest mean value 3.77. The above highest mean value of the items/ statements under the respective factors indicated that that the respondents showed their positive perspectives toward the above factors of online tourism education.

Table 2. EFA results

Factors	Loadings	Commonality	Mean
Factor 1: Online teaching-learning effectiveness *(Eigen value = 30.496, Cronbach's Alpha = .962, Variance =17.712)*			
1. Effective for teachers in handling the online classes.	.776	.734	**3.72**
2. Standard institutional IT policy governing online education.	.765	.689	3.51
3. There is a continuous and comprehensive evaluation of teachers /instructors.	.760	.680	3.55
4. Facilitates teachers to update their subject/ content knowledge and skills.	.752	.700	**3.73**
5. Evaluation of teachers reflects in their career advancement and appraisal.	.746	.675	3.51
6. Online discussion forum should encourage learners to articulate and reflect their thinking.	.740	.710	3.59
7. Online classroom participation should be part of the students' assessment.	.729	.680	3.64
8. Instructors' expectations are higher than students' performance	.704	.642	3.68
9. Online classes are planned and organized.	.700	.656	3.64
10. Online education compatible for differently-abled students	.653	.560	3.52
11. Option to cover-up the missed classes.	.635	.631	3.69
12. Guidance and support to address the needs of the online students.	.632	.647	3.48
13. Option to integrate education with work and family chores	.606	.564	3.50
14. Flexibility class- time and place.	.594	.592	**3.72**
15. Incorporation of multimedia stimulate learners' interest.	.582	.662	3.52
16. Engagement and participation in online tourism education.	.581	.677	3.48
17. Develops attentiveness of students.	.536	.563	3.56
18. Bonding and teamwork in online class enhances understanding.	.559	.684	3.40
Factor 2: Online classroom environment *(Eigen value = 4.192, Cronbach's Alpha = .938, Variance = 12.961)*			
1. Online classroom environment is convenient.	.521	.553	3.71
2. Online teaching requires innovative methods of engaging with the students.	.741	.733	3.87
3. It provides opportunity to students for continuing their study pandemic like situations.	.737	.692	**3.90**
4. Students can access online course materials universally.	.700	.686	3.89
5. Online teaching suffers from mutual rapport between teachers and students.	.688	.627	3.65
6. Resource consumptions in online teaching are economical.	.660	.658	3.66
7. Additional online learning is often rewarding.	.637	.658	3.60
8. Students can learn while on the job.	.624	.618	**3.94**
9. Students can obtain degree from the best institutions/ universities.	.554	.674	**3.90**
10. Online evaluation has lesser credibility.	.539	.577	3.56
11. Online teaching suffers with respect to face-to-face contact.	.528	.505	3.80
12. Classroom etiquette for online learning environment.	.534	.554	3.45
13. Studying abroad certificate is highly regarded in my country.	.510	.652	3.69
Factor 3: Educational outcome *Eigen value = 4.423, Cronbach's Alpha = .956, Variance =13.667)*			
1. Improved reading achievement	.750	.713	3.74
2. Improved knowledge	.741	.728	**3.78**
3. Enhanced industry-institution interface.	.734	.749	3.77
4. Gives satisfaction and happiness	.724	.707	3.68
5. Improved skill-set in tourism	.697	.696	3.63
6. Encourage internationalization	.689	.682	3.69
7. Improved academic performance	.687	.680	3.73
8. Medium for cooperation and social interaction	.686	.662	3.60
9. Achieved social recognition	.677	.659	3.62
10. Increased placements	.677	.637	3.66
11. Increased enrolment for online courses.	.667	.667	3.76
12. International accreditations	.640	.643	3.62
13. Provides opportunity for higher education	.625	.625	**3.89**
Factor 4: Motivation to study online *(Eigen value = 3.093, Cronbach's Alpha = .914, Variance = 8.021)*			
1. Online tourism education enhances students' aptitude.	.754	.755	3.49
2. Salary expected to be high after graduating online in tourism	.710	.703	3.43
3. Students believe, they can get job after graduating.	.659	.729	3.59
4. Students can know more about different cultures.	.657	.676	3.77
5. Students can get diverse knowledge in this field compared to physical classroom.	.615	.648	3.60
6. Students can learn from the best teachers in the field.	.537	.671	**3.82**
7. There are innovative course modules available online only	.517	.502	3.55
Factor 5: Constraints of OTE *(Eigen value = 1.997, Cronbach's Alpha = .875, Variance =7.162)*			
1. We face data limits, data privacy and security issues	.651	.657	3.44
2. Technical and internet issues cripple the online education	.642	.681	3.67
3. Teachers and the taught, both struggle for online adaptability	.619	.686	3.54
4. Lack of real-time interaction between teacher and students characterizes the online learning	.582	.608	3.57
5. Online teaching is frustrating due to technical glitches.	.692	.695	**3.80**
6. Challenging to motivate students in online learning.	.712	.651	3.73
7. Online education suffers from insufficient tools for students' assessment	.535	.609	3.57
Factor 6: Technological awareness *(Eigen value = 1.749, Cronbach's Alpha = .944, Variance = 6.121)*			
1. Use of technology facilitate online learning.	.931	.871	3.63
2. There is a scope for staff training and development through educational technology.	.917	.849	3.65
3. Learning resources on institutional/ departmental website is comprehensive and easy to navigate.	.909	.827	3.62
4. Online educational tools are easy to use.	.902	.819	**3.77**
5. Use of ICT has improved teaching and learning.	.854	.737	3.55
Total Variance Explained = 65.643			
Total Scale Reliability = .979			

Significant difference in the perspective between the groups towards Online Tourism Education

The independent sample t-tests were conducted on the factors obtained in the study amongst the teachers and the students who have practicing teaching-learning online in tourism programs. In the independent samples test output table, if the significance (p-value) value of 'Levene's test of equality of variances' is found to be less than 5% level of significant (i.e., 0.05), the t-value and p-value for 't-test for equality of means' is taken as considering "equal variances not assumed" between the means of groups. For instance, the differences in perspective between the teachers and the taught and between the male and female teachers towards 'Factor 2- Online teaching learning environment' is found to be 0 which is less than .05. Therefore, we have put the t-value and p-value for 't-test for equality of means' considering "equal variances not assumed" between the means of groups. Table 2 displayed the composite means of different groups and t-value and p-value associated with 't-test for equality of means'.

Table 3. Independent samples test for differences of means between the groups

Groups / Factors	No. of Items	Position- Teacher & Student				Gender- Male /Female Teacher				Gender- Male /Female Student			
		Student (Mean, n=315)	Teacher (Mean, n=90)	t- value	p- value	Male (Mean, n=76)	Female (Mean, n=14)	t- value	p- value	Male (Mean, n=152)	Female (Mean, n=163)	t- value	p- value
FC-1	18	3.504	3.842	-3.256	0.001	**3.894**	**3.560**	**1.370**	**0.174**	3.496	3.511	-0.144	0.886
FC-2	13	3.645	4.079	-5.769	0.000	4.011	4.445	-3.962	0.000	3.644	3.645	-0.010	0.992
FC-3	13	**3.669**	**3.832**	**-1.584**	**0.114**	**3.878**	**3.582**	**1.434**	**0.155**	3.640	3.696	-0.547	0.585
FC-4	7	**3.596**	**3.640**	**-0.460**	**0.646**	**3.598**	**3.867**	**-1.219**	**0.226**	3.547	3.641	-0.890	0.374
FC-5	7	3.547	3.859	3.072	0.002	**3.868**	**3.806**	**0.263**	**0.793**	3.546	3.548	-0.018	0.986
FC-6	5	3.716	3.391	2.619	0.009	3.274	4.029	-2.414	0.018	3.661	3.767	-0.928	0.354

Abbreviation and indications: *FC = Factor; 1. Online teaching learning effectiveness, 2. Online classroom environment, 3. Educational outcome, 4. Motivation to study online, 5. Constraints of OTE, 6. Technological awareness.*

To determine any statistically significant differences between the students and teachers and as according to their gender i.e., male and female teachers in six factors. As Table 3 shows, p-values of all the factors except Factor 3 (i.e., educational outcome) and Factor 4 (i.e., motivation) are less than .05 (5% level of significance). Hence, we can conclude that there is a significant difference in the perspective towards online tourism education between students and teachers in all the factors except the factors mentioned above. Remarkably, the composite mean of two groups in all factors were almost identical except both the above factors, with the mean of the teachers' group being slightly higher than that of the students group. It can be observed that teachers showed slightly stronger perspective than students. In terms of the gender differences of teachers, data showed the p-values of all factors are more than .05 except Factor-2 (i.e., online classroom environment) and Factor- 6 (i.e., technological awareness). This indicated that there are no significant differences in the perspectives of male and female teachers in all the factors except both the above factors towards online tourism education. In other words, the significant differences in perspective of male and female teachers are found only in two factors, which are 'online classroom environment' and 'technological awareness' towards online tourism education. The groups' composite means of male teachers are slightly higher than females except of 'Factor-4 Motivation' that means, male teachers have stronger perspective than females except in the motivation towards online tourism education. Subsequently, to examine the gender differences of students, there was no significant differences in the perspectives of male and female students are found among all the six factors of online tourism education. Interestingly, the composite means of both the groups in all the five factors were almost equal; the mean of the female group being slightly higher than that of the male group. This shows that female students' attitudes towards all factors of online tourism education were slightly stronger than male students.

Discussion

The study focuses on the understanding of the underlying dimensions of online education in tourism. In view of these dimensions, it examines the significance of the two key stakeholders' perspectives (i.e., teachers and students) towards online tourism education under their gender differences. To accomplish the first objective of the study, the underlying dimensions of online tourism education were identified. The identified all six principal factors were labelled as common terms representing all underlying items stated within them for online tourism education. The first factor was labelled as 'Online teaching-learning effectiveness', second was labelled as 'Online classroom environment', third as 'Educational outcome', fourth as 'Motivation to study online', fifth as 'Constraints of OTE', and the last is labelled as '*Technological awareness*'. Each of the above factors comprised 18, 13, 13, 7, 7 and 5 items/statements respectively regarding online tourism education. The difference in the perspective between students and teachers and their gender difference towards online tourism education were identified based on the factors to fulfil the second objective. The significant difference is observed amongst the students and the teachers with respect to online tourism education, the teachers' opinions were slightly inflated than that of the students, which showed teachers' perspective of online tourism education slightly stronger than students. This may be due to the fact that the teachers give up some their control over instructional events. And, students are sometimes unwilling to accept some of the responsibilities as traditionally assumed by teachers. First, teaching and learning practice of online tourism programs are student-centric (Sun & Liu, 2021). Second, the students' attention is easily distracted with the use of social media (Koessmeier & Büttner, 2021), and other factors since online learning usually revolves in the home in which distractions at home easily affect a student while studying (Barrot et al., 2021). Finally, students could become more mentally stressed that turn them to become dissatisfied with their online learning experience (Raj & Fatima, 2020). In contrary, Bali and Liu, (2018) has argued that the perception of students with physical classroom was higher than online learning in term of social presence, social interaction, and satisfaction, however, there is no statistically significant difference in learning preference found among level of students (Bali & Liu, 2018b).

With the gender differences of teachers, except in online teaching learning environment and technological awareness), there are no significant differences in perspective of male and female teachers in 'engagement in teaching-learning', 'educational outcomes', 'motivation' and 'constraints' towards online tourism education. The perspectives of the male teacher are slightly higher than female except in 'motivation' that means, male teachers have stronger perspective than female except the motivation towards online tourism education. As Yu (2021) argued that females had stronger self-regulation than males, led to their significantly more positive online learning outcomes and persistent and committed to achieve higher learning outcomes (Yu, 2021b). The respondents across gender were alike in their opinion about varied factors of 'online teaching learning environment', 'technological awareness', 'engagement in teaching-learning', 'educational outcomes', 'motivation' and 'constraints' towards online tourism education. However, it can be observed that female students had slightly higher likings than male students in all factors towards online tourism education. However, some studies focused gender differences on different perspectives in different factors towards online learning. For instance, no significant gender difference was found in leaning outcomes based on style and in students' satisfaction (Harvey et al., 2017). Possibly such because studies show that males were more stable in attitudes, while females performed well in engagement (Nistor, 2013). A similar study by Lei and So (2021) with teachers' and students' data sets to compare using independent samples t-tests showed similar results i.e., similarities and differences between both the groups, regarding factors affecting online teaching and learning satisfaction.

Conclusion, limitation and future research

The present study aimed to identify the key dimensions of online tourism education considered important for tourism students to pursue their studies online. The perspectives of tourism teachers and students on such parameters have been statistically examined. The summarized dimensions from the literature, were factor analyzed using exploratory factor Analysis technique. A total of six such dimensions towards online tourism education were obtained, such as; the effectiveness of online teaching learning practice, online classroom environment, educational outcome, motivation, constraints and technological awareness. Additionally, the independent sample t-tests examined the perspectives of teachers and students, male and female teachers and male and female students on these six parameters. The findings reveal a significant difference in the perspective of teachers and students in "the effectiveness in teaching learning", "online classroom environment", "technological awareness" and "constraints in online tourism education" except in the "educational outcome" and "motivation to study tourism programs online" towards online tourism education. The understanding will help tailor online tourism education practices to address the concerns and expectations of online learners in the field. Future researches in the subject could focus on the mixed method of qualitative and quantitative approaches and extend the horizon to include the tourism industry for a wider perspective on the effectiveness of online tourism education. The underlying factors of online tourism education can be replicated in other geographies for confirmation through confirmatory factor analysis forming a logical extension of the study. In addition, future researches may try with an equal sample of groups within the respondents to enhance the reliability of the results. This makes the comparison of means among the groups more convincing to reveal the differences in perspective factors. Future research could do more in-depth study in the field and may also include comparison in the perceptions or effectiveness (Ramchandran and Babu, 2021b) between online, blended and face-2-face education in tourism programs. The outcome of the study helps the stakeholders to gain knowledge about the adoption of online tourism education. Since online learning is relatively new to students and teachers in a developing nation like India, tourism programs require systemic adjustments to cater to the study habits of learners in online education. The findings can serve as a valuable reference for assessing the effectiveness of online tourism education in India guiding institutions and educators in improving teacher and student preparedness and systematically monitoring the progress to achieve desired learning outcomes.

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