PARALLEL
HOMENIVERSE

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HOME

Introduction

Hello, we are a group of prospect Young Envoys from UNICEF Young Envoys Programme 2021!

During the pandemic, students have switched their learning mode from physical classrooms to online. Thus we carried out a study to explore the digital gap among local students.

This study aims to raise public awareness on the situation and provide insights to mobilize stakeholders to act upon the issue. Our survey targets students, parents, and teachers. In May of 2021, we gathered a total of 650 online survey responses from all stakeholders.
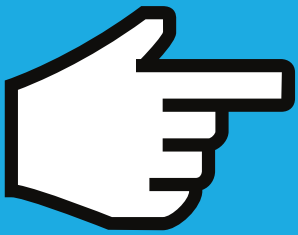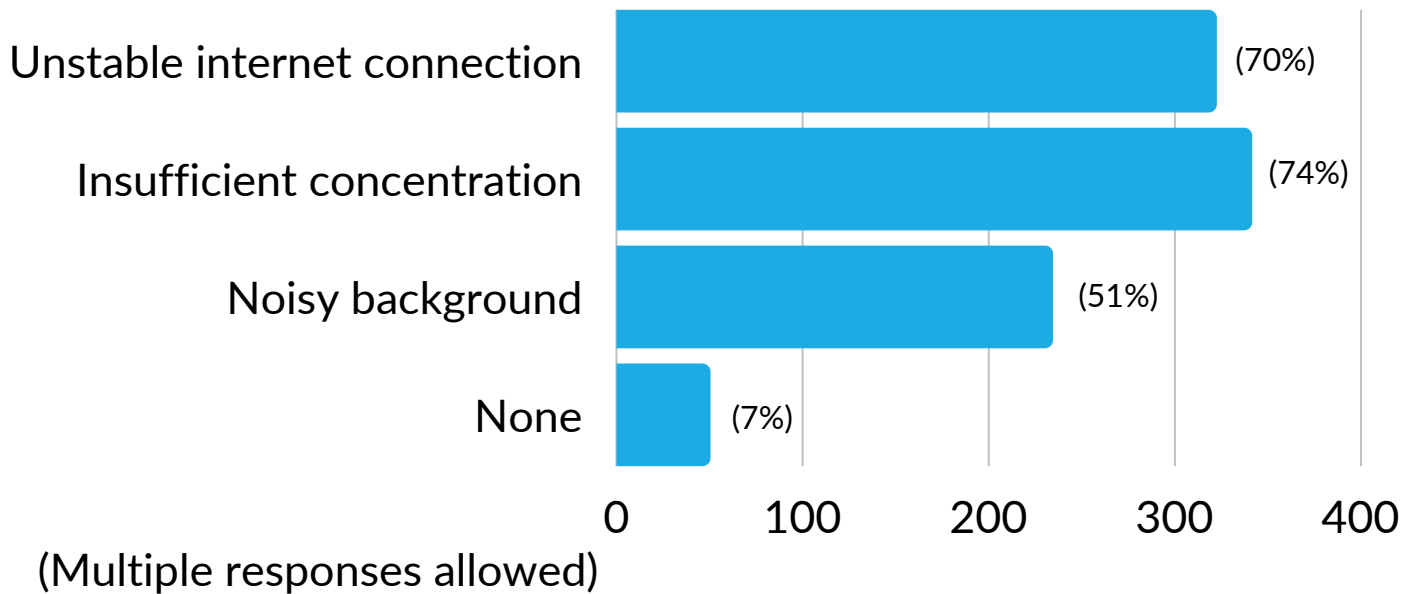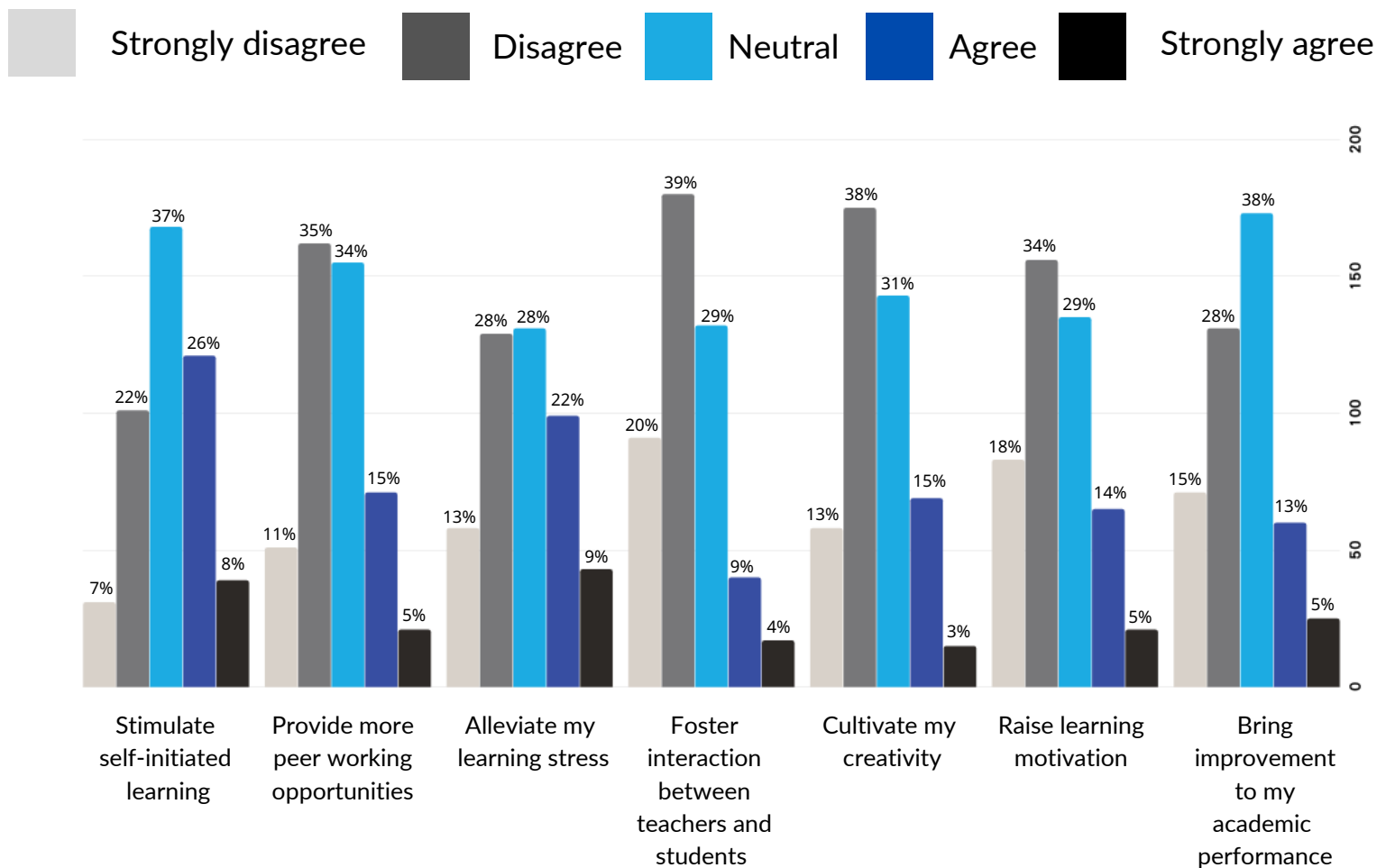
👉 Students

Teachers

Parents

I've encountered the below situations during online lessons

Situation	
Unstable internet connection	(70%)
Insufficient concentration	(74%)
Noisy background	(51%)
None	(7%)

0   100   200   300   400

(Multiple responses allowed)

Among the 460 secondary students interviewed, 70% of them have experienced unstable internet connection and 74% expressed inability to concentrate during online lessons, which affects the students' online learning experience.
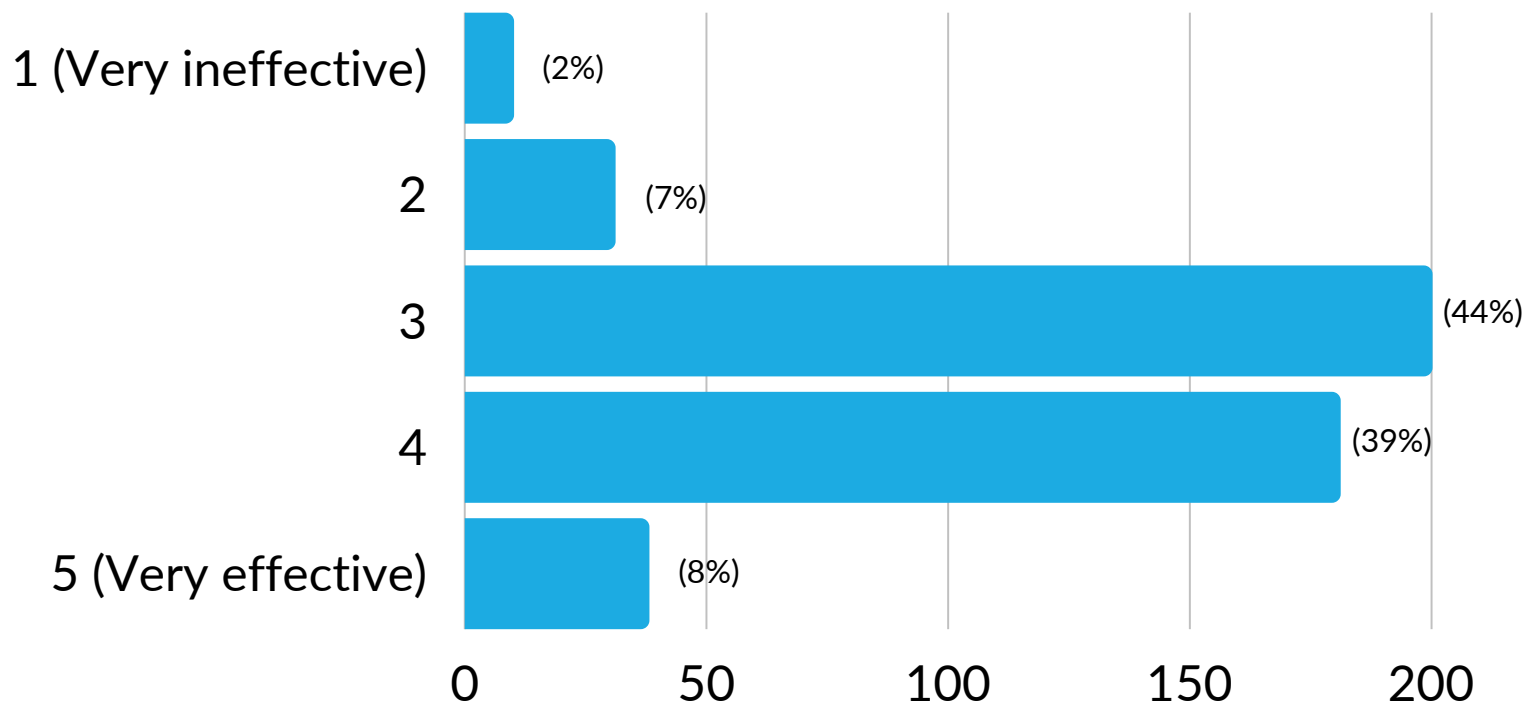
Online learning brought me the below changes

As shown above, larger portion of respondents disagreed that online learning was effective, and up to 59% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that online learning can foster interaction between students.

It is worth noticing that a fair amount of students agree that online learning can stimulate self-initiated learning (where 34% agree it can; and 29% disagree).

Measures offered by school are effective in alleviating digital gap among students

Rating	Percentage
1 (Very ineffective)	(2%)
2	(7%)
3	(44%)
4	(39%)
5 (Very effective)	(8%)

(x-axis: 0, 50, 100, 150, 200)

Most respondents believed that their school's measures were effective in alleviating the digital gap among students.

However, nearly 10% of students responded with either "very ineffective" or "ineffective", indicating their school has not provided enough support.
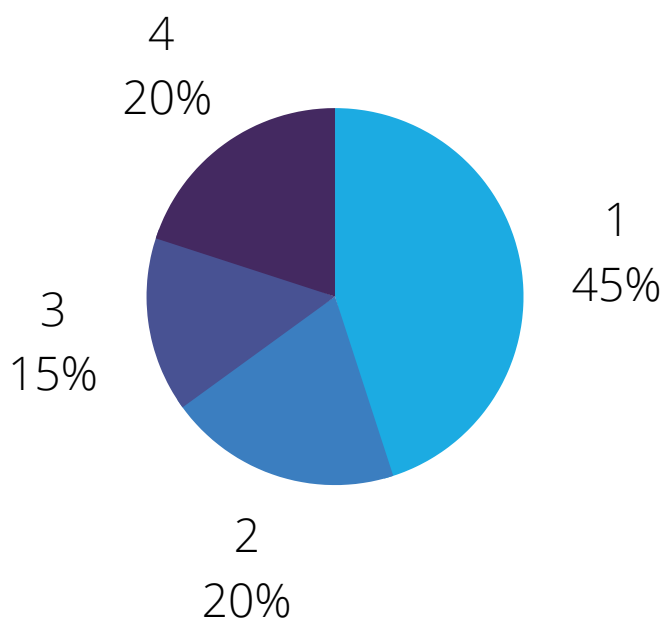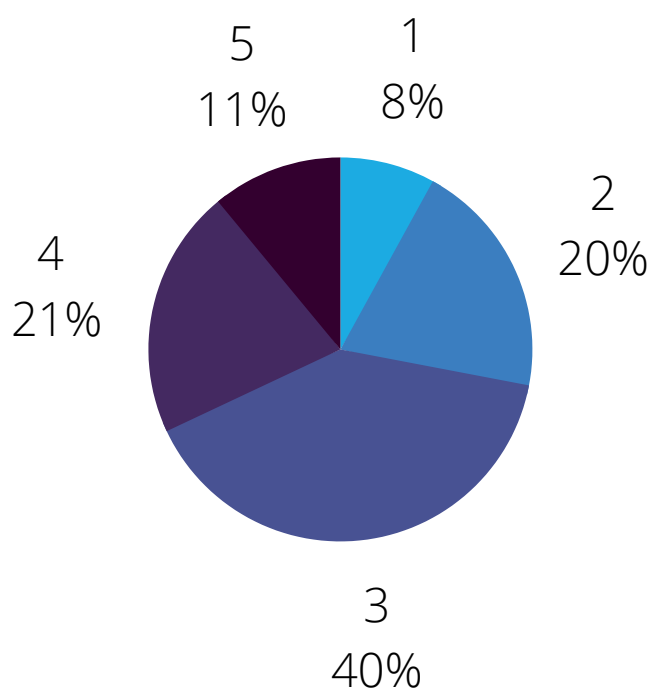
Students
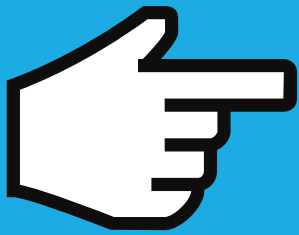
👉 Parents

Teachers

I have sufficient knowledge on using information technology to assist my child's learning

Receiving subsidies

4
20%

3
15%

1
45%

2
20%

Not Receiving subsidies

5
11%

1
8%

4
21%

2
20%

3
40%

1: Very Insufficient   5: Very Sufficient

Government subsidies include: Students who are receiving half grant/full grant under School Textbook Assistance Scheme, Student Travel Subsidy Scheme, or the family under CSSA Scheme

65% of parents receiving subsidies believe they lack information technology knowledge, compared to 28% of parents not receiving subsidies think alike. Thus, the social and economic status of a family and its level of digital knowledge is positively related.
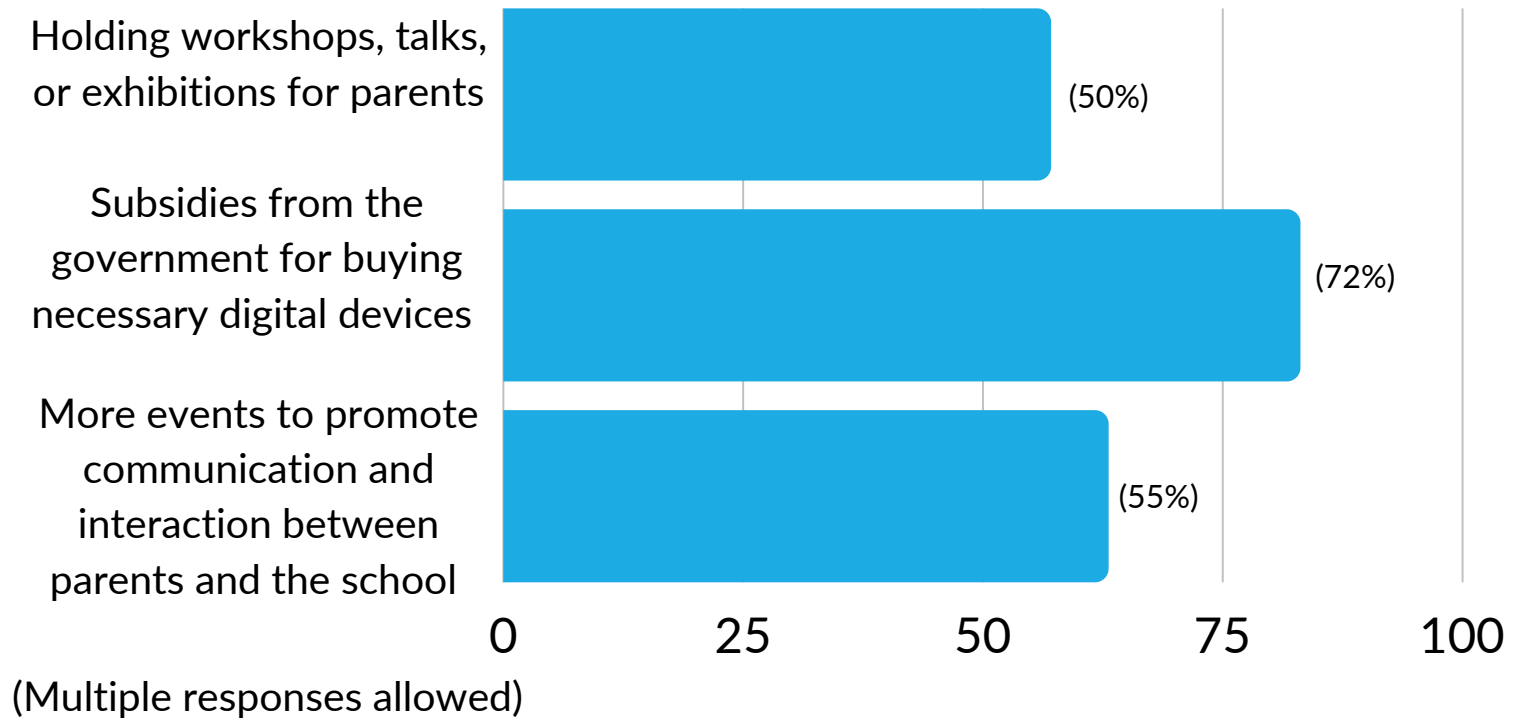
Does your child have to share digital devices with people in your home?

Yes
16%

No
84%
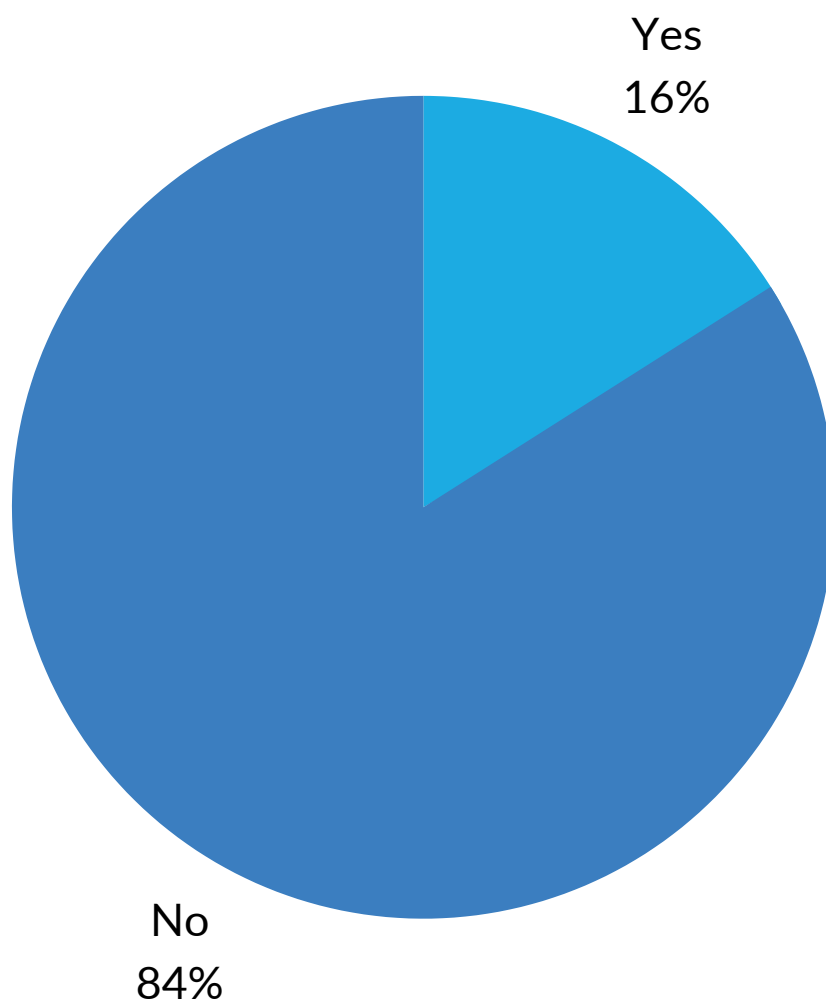
84% of children in a household do not have to share their digital devices, while 16% of them who have to share devices with family members face disadvantages when it comes to their online learning experience.

Which of the following methods can help you support your child's online learning?

Holding workshops, talks, or exhibitions for parents (50%)

Subsidies from the government for buying necessary digital devices (72%)

More events to promote communication and interaction between parents and the school (55%)

0   25   50   75   100

(Multiple responses allowed)

72% of parents believe receiving subsidies from the government for buying devices is helpful as it is the prerequisite factor for digital accessibility. In addition, providing parents with the necessary digital skills is also important for them to support their child's online learning.
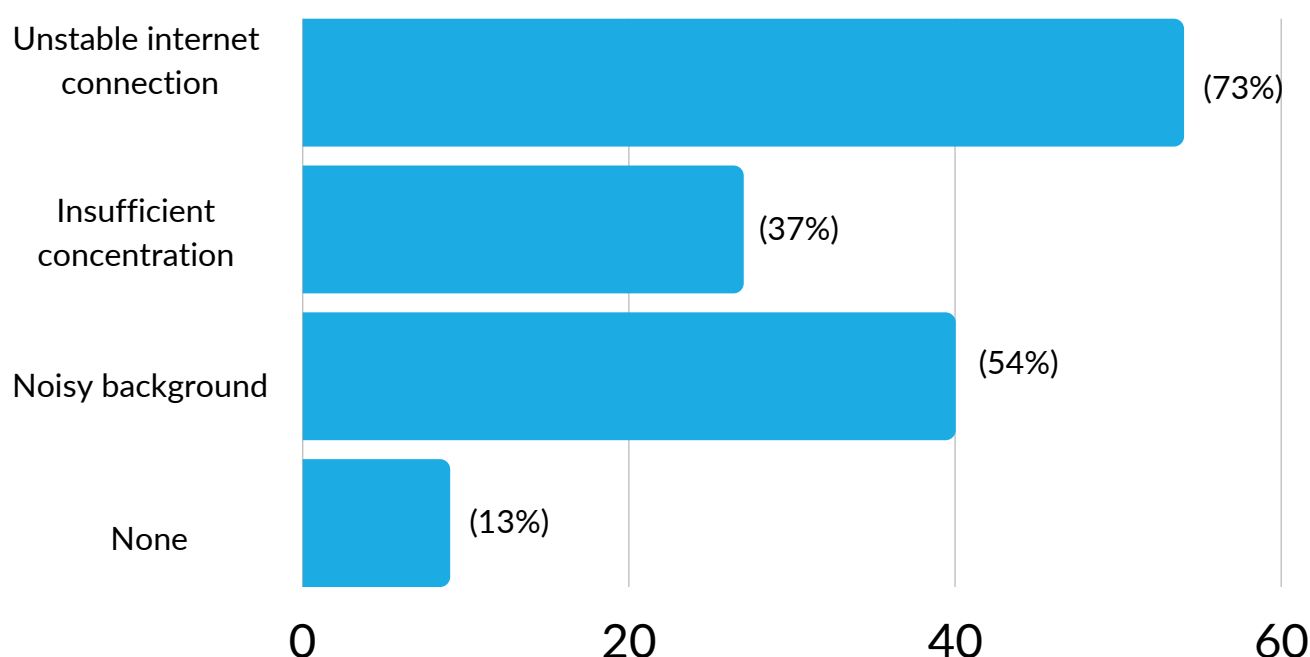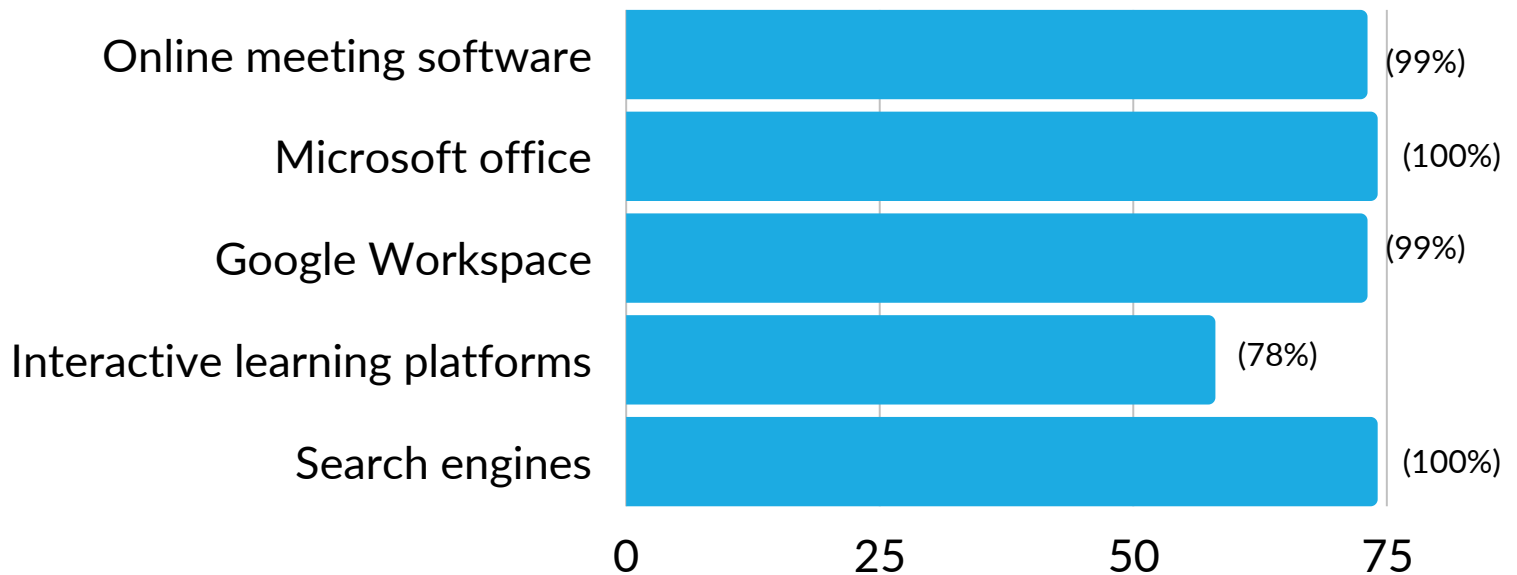
Students

Parents
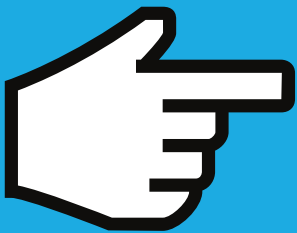
👉 Teachers

I have encountered the below situations when working/teaching from home

Unstable internet connection	(73%)
Insufficient concentration	(37%)
Noisy background	(54%)
None	(13%)

0   20   40   60

(Multiple responses allowed)

Among the 74 teachers interviewed, 73% claimed they had been inconvenienced by unstable internet connection, while 54% had to endure a noisy environment at home. Overall, the analysis highlights that multiple factors negatively affect the online learning experience of both teachers and students.

I can master the below software or applications for online teaching

Online meeting software	(99%)
Microsoft office	(100%)
Google Workspace	(99%)
Interactive learning platforms	(78%)
Search engines	(100%)

0   25   50   75

(Multiple responses allowed)

Although most teachers answered that they could master online meeting software, less than 80% of them could master interactive learning platforms. This indicates that the variety of online learning tools available to teachers is lacking, and more effort should be placed into providing students with a more holistic online learning experience.

Has your school provided relevant courses or training to support your online teaching?

No
11%

Yes
89%
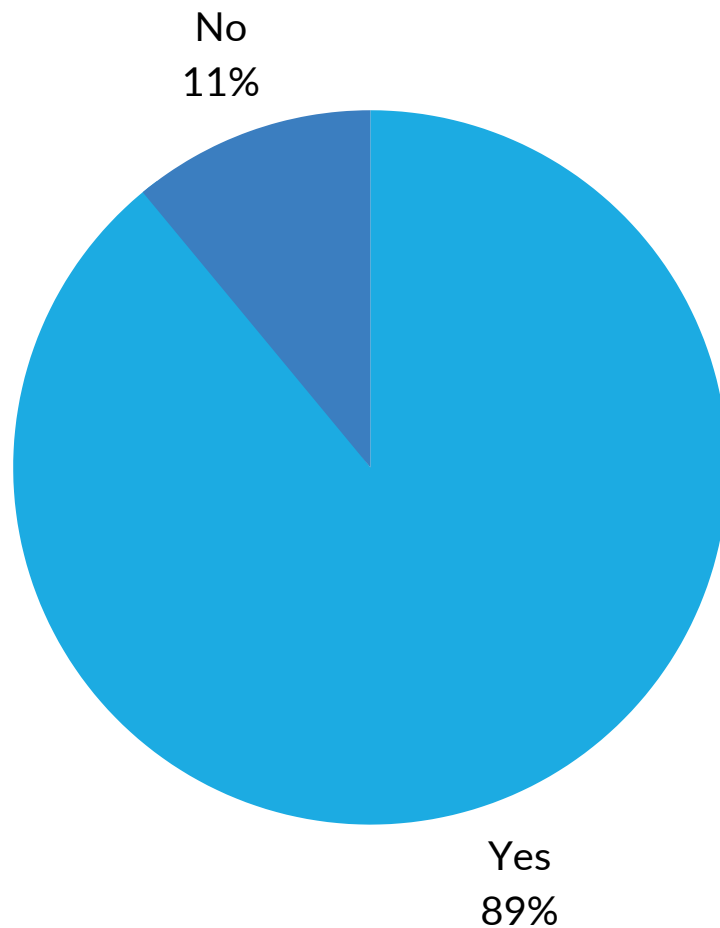
89% of teachers agreed that their schools have provided relevant courses or training to support online teaching. However, the remaining 11% of teachers without adequate training should not be ignored, as their lack of knowledge will be reflected in their students' experience with online learning.

Has your school adapted the following e-learning methods before the COVID-19 pandemic?

Online classroom	(72%)
Online meeting software	(43%)

Scale: 0 20 40 60
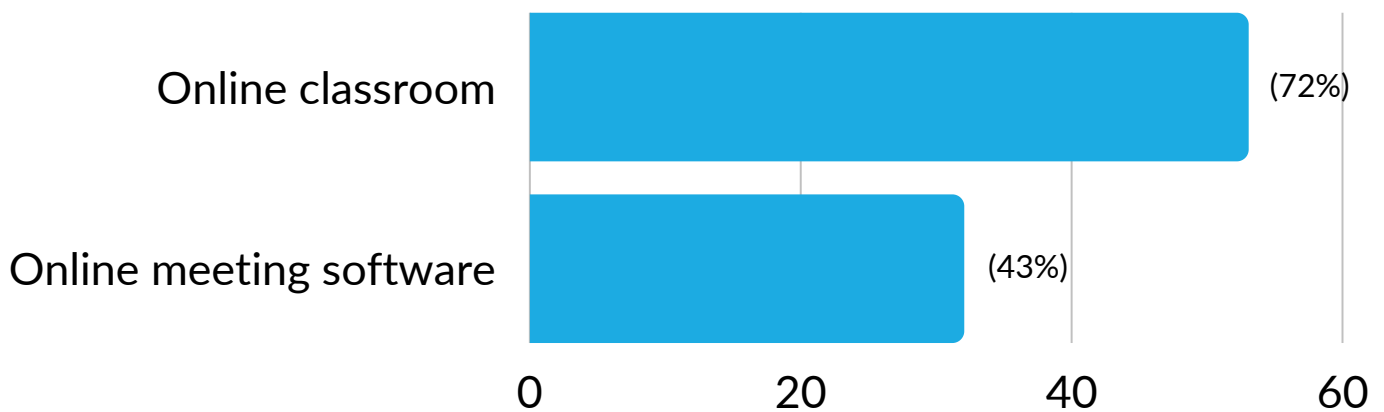
Only 43% of schools have tried online meeting software before the epidemic, which indicating over half of the teachers tried online meeting software for the first time during this period. The sudden switch in teaching mode, combined with unfamiliarity of using online meeting software results in negatively impacting their students' online learning experience.

Suggestions

Material support

- **Implement device-lending schemes**
  Schools and nonprofits can provide device-lending services to assist students without a device suitable for online learning.

- **Internet and data support**
  Many students report that they suffer from network connectivity issues. Schools and nonprofits can provide data cards or WiFi eggs to affected students.

- **Allow online classes outside the home**
  Schools and nonprofits can provide classrooms and public spaces for both teachers and students to have online class, thus mitigating the impact of a noisy environment at home.

Technical support

- **Implementing technical support hotlines**
  Schools, nonprofits, and the government can introduce technical support hotlines that instantly refer callers to a professional when they encounter technical problems.

- **Gradual shift to e-learning**
  E-learning may continue to be implemented in the future. To prepare for this possibility, schools can replace some face-to-face classes with online ones after the pandemic.

Mutual and self-help

- **Self-learning of informational technology skills**
  Parents can participate in workshops teaching relevant IT skills, while students can become familiar with their school's online learning software before classes commence.

- **Donate functioning secondhand computers**

- **Cultivate empathy**
  When stakeholders understand and communicate with each other, more concrete solutions to digital inequality can be implemented.

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