
Utilization of Online Coaching and Digital Information Resources by Competitive Examination Aspirants: A Comparative Study of Dharwad and Vijayapura Districts of Karnataka

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Abstract

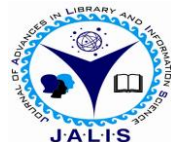
The study explores the impact of digital technologies on individuals preparing for competitive exams, with a specific focus on online coaching platforms in the Dharwad and Vijayapura districts of Karnataka. It examines aspects such as the types of exams taken, the frequency and duration of platform use, preferred information sources, satisfaction levels, and the associated benefits and challenges. Utilising a descriptive and comparative survey methodology, data were collected from 200 participants via a structured questionnaire and analysed through frequency and percentage measures. The findings reveal a significant reliance on digital resources, with YouTube, smartphones, online classes, e-books/PDFs, and current affairs materials as preferred tools. The study concludes with recommendations for enhancing digital library infrastructure, improving collections for competitive exams, augmenting online mock-test services, expanding Kannada current affairs materials, and promoting digital information literacy programs to better support aspirants in their studies.

Keywords

Online coaching; competitive examinations; digital information resources; e-learning; digital literacy; aspirants; library services.

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1. Introduction

Competitive examinations are pivotal for employment and professional advancement in India, with aspirants preparing for exams organised by bodies like the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC), and Staff Selection Commission (SSC). Historically, candidates relied on traditional resources such as textbooks and coaching centres (Dilli, 2010; Kishore Kumar & Ananda Ramesh, 2020). However, the advent of information and communication technology (ICT) has revolutionised this preparation process, leading to the adoption of digital tools such as e-books, online lectures, educational videos, and current affairs websites, which enhance accessibility and flexibility (Amendum et al., 2011; Nicolaou et al., 2019). In this context, online coaching has become essential, enabling learners to study at their convenience from various locations. Methods like online video-based learning and blended-learning provide flexible access to educational content and bolster effective learning outcomes (Glusac et al., 2015; Puspaningtyas & Ulfa, 2020). Yet, challenges exist, including poor internet connectivity, technical issues, limited interaction, information overload, and varying levels of digital literacy. Despite the shift towards digital resources, libraries remain significant in providing both print and electronic materials, along with internet access and relevant information services for exam candidates. Research underscores libraries' critical role in meeting the information needs of competitive-examination aspirants by providing accessible, reliable resources (Koovakkai & Jalaja, 2006; Saravanan & Jadhav, 2013; Kishore Kumar & Ananda Ramesh, 2020). This study specifically investigates the use of online coaching and digital resources among competitive-examination aspirants in the Dharwad and Vijayapura districts. It focuses on usage patterns, preferred platforms, resources, devices, languages, benefits, and challenges to enhance the effectiveness of digital and blended learning services across regions.

2. Statement of the Problem

The rise of online coaching platforms has transformed competitive-examination preparation into a hybrid digital-learning process, allowing aspirants to participate in live classes, access recorded lectures, and utilize various digital resources. Despite this availability, effective utilization varies based on factors such as digital literacy, learning preferences, financial resources, and

access to the internet. Furthermore, there is a lack of district-level comparative research on how candidates in Dharwad and Vijayapura engage with these online resources, a gap the present study aims to address.

3. Need and Significance of the Study

- Online coaching provides flexible and accessible preparation for competitive examinations.
- Smartphones and mobile apps enable learning anytime and anywhere.
- Libraries can integrate print and digital resources to support aspirants.
- Online coaching benefits rural and semi-urban aspirants by reducing geographical barriers.
- Comparison between Dharwad and Vijayapura identifies similarities and differences.
- Findings can help libraries develop competitive-examination-oriented digital services.
- Coaching institutions can improve online and blended-learning programmes based on the findings.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To examine the demographic profile and examination preferences of aspirants.
- To study the utilization of online coaching platforms.
- To examine the use of digital information resources and devices.
- To assess satisfaction, effectiveness and problems related to online coaching.
- To compare Dharwad and Vijayapura aspirants and suggest improved library and digital support

5. Hypotheses

- **H01:** There is no significant difference between Dharwad and Vijayapura aspirants in their utilisation of online coaching.
- **H02:** There is no significant difference between Dharwad and Vijayapura aspirants in their satisfaction with online coaching.
- **H03:** There is no significant association between gender and frequency of online coaching usage.

- **H04:** There is no significant association between educational qualification and use of digital information resources.
- **H05:** There is no significant relationship between digital literacy and perceived effectiveness of online coaching.

6. Scope of the Study

The study focuses on competitive examination aspirants in the Dharwad and Vijayapura districts of Karnataka, specifically those preparing for government exams such as UPSC, KPSC/KAS, SSC, and others. It examines the utilization of online coaching platforms, mobile apps, e-books/PDFs, YouTube content, online mock tests, current-affairs websites, digital newspapers, online question banks, and library-based digital resources in their preparation.

7. Research Methodology

The study utilised a descriptive and comparative survey method, sampling 200 competitive examination aspirants from the Dharwad and Vijayapura districts. Primary data was obtained via a structured questionnaire, supplemented by secondary data from various sources. Data analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel and SPSS, employing frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, ranking, Chi-square test, and independent-samples t-test for interpretation.

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1. District-wise Distribution of Respondents

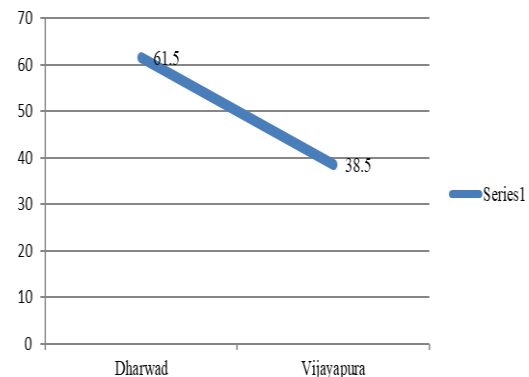


Figure 1: District-wise Respondents

Figure 1 shows that a majority, 61.5%, of the respondents are from Dharwad, compared to 38.5% from Vijayapura. Therefore, respondents from

Dharwad represent the larger segment of the surveyed sample.

2. Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents

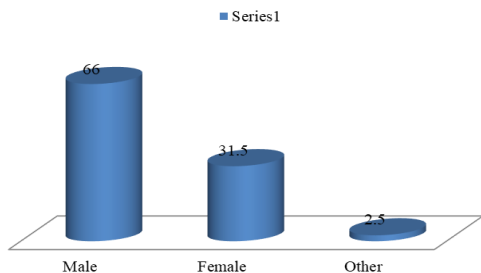


Figure 2: Gender-wise Respondents

Figure 2 indicates that the majority of respondents are male (66.0%), followed by female respondents (31.5%), while 2.5% belong to the other category

3. Age-wise Distribution of Respondents

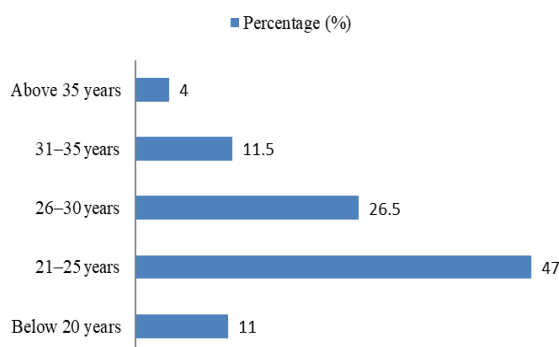


Figure 3: Gender-wise Distribution of Respondents

Figure 3 shows that the largest group of respondents is 21-25 years (47.0%), followed by 26-30 years (26.5%), indicating that competitive-examination preparation is more common among young aspirants.

4. Educational Qualification of Respondents

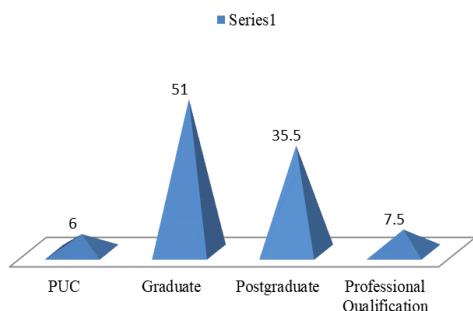


Figure 4: Educational Qualification of Respondents

The figure 4 shows that graduates (51.0%) constitute the largest group, followed by postgraduates (35.5%). Thus, most respondents possess graduate or postgraduate qualifications.

5. Place of Residence

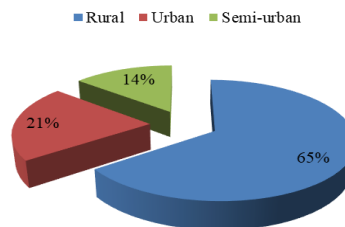


Figure 5: Place of Residence

In figure 5, the majority of respondents (65.0%) are from rural areas, followed by urban (21.0%) and semi-urban (14.0%) areas. This indicates strong participation of rural aspirants and highlights the importance of accessible online coaching and digital learning resources for rural candidates.

6. Competitive Examination Being Prepared For

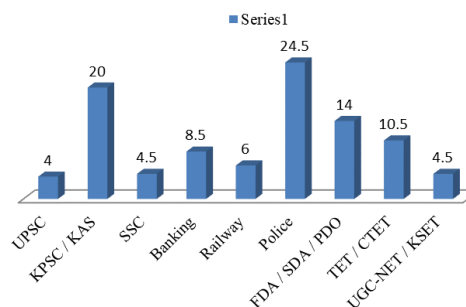


Figure 6: Competitive Examination Being Prepared

Figure 6 shows that Police examinations (24.5%) are the most preferred, followed by KPSC/KAS (20.0%) and FDA/SDA/PDO (14.0%). UPSC (4.0%) is less preferred, indicating greater interest in state-level and departmental examinations.

7. Duration of Competitive-Examination Preparation

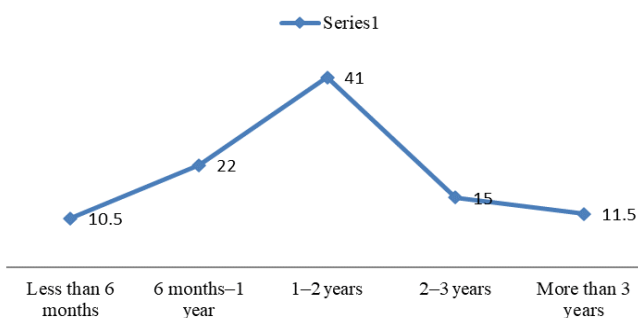


Figure 7: Duration of Competitive-Examination Preparation

The figure 7 shows that the highest proportion of respondents (41.0%) have been preparing for 1-2 years, followed by 22.0% preparing for 6 months-1 year. This indicates sustained and long-term preparation among most aspirants.

8. Primary Mode of Preparation

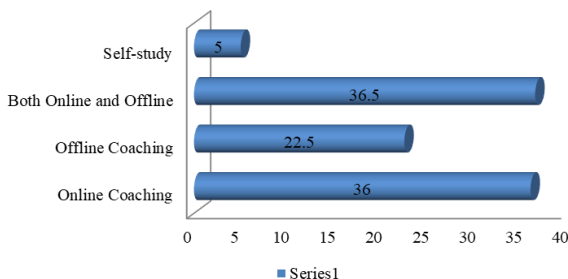


Figure 8: Primary Mode of Preparation

The figure 8 shows that both online and offline coaching (36.5%) is the most preferred mode, closely followed by online coaching alone (36.0%). This indicates a strong preference for online and blended learning among aspirants.

9. Frequency of Online Coaching Use

Table 1: Frequency of Online Coaching Use

Sl. No.	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Regularly	121	60.5
2	Frequently	38	19.0
3	Occasionally	22	11.0
4	Rarely	10	5.0
5	Never	9	4.5
	Total	200	100.0

The table 1 shows that the majority of respondents (60.5%) use online coaching regularly, while 19.0% use it frequently. This indicates a high level of online coaching utilization among the respondents.

10. Type of Online Coaching Used

Table 2: Type of Online Coaching Used

Sl. No.	Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Live Classes	74	37.0
2	Recorded Classes	26	13.0
3	Both Live and Recorded Classes	53	26.5
4	YouTube / Free Classes	31	15.5
5	Mobile Applications	16	8.0
	Total	200	100.0

The table 2 shows that live classes (37.0%) are the most commonly used type of online coaching, followed by both live and recorded classes (26.5%). This indicates a strong preference for interactive and flexible learning among aspirants.

11. Online Platforms Used Most Frequently

Table 3: Online Platforms Used Most Frequently

Sl. No.	Online Platform	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	YouTube	95	47.5
2	Coaching Institute Apps/Webbsites	37	18.5
3	Unacademy	31	15.5
4	Testbook	11	5.5
5	Adda247	5	2.5
6	BYJU'S / Other Educational Platforms	21	10.5
	Total	200	100.0

Table 3 shows that the majority of users (47.5%) use YouTube the most frequently, followed by coaching institute apps/websites (18.5%) and Unacademy (15.5%). Thus, YouTube is the dominant online coaching platform among the respondents.

12. Main Reasons for Using Online Coaching

Table 4: Main Reasons for Using Online Coaching

Sl. No.	Main Reason	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Flexible Timing	57	28.5
2	Affordable Cost	44	22.0
3	Quality Teaching	7	3.5
4	Recorded Lectures	11	5.5
5	Access from Anywhere	31	15.5
6	Availability of Study Materials	26	13.0
7	Mock Tests	24	12.0
	Total	200	100.0

Table 4 shows that flexible timing (28.5%) is the major reason for using online coaching. Affordable cost (22.0%) is the second most important reason, followed by access from anywhere (15.5%). The availability of study materials (13.0%) and mock tests (12.0%) is also an important factor. Thus, flexibility, affordability and accessibility are the major factors encouraging aspirants to use online coaching.

13. Digital Information Resources Used

Table 5: Digital Information Resources Used

Sl. No.	Digital Resource	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	E-books / PDFs	33	16.5
2	YouTube Educational Videos	45	22.5
3	Online Newspapers	21	10.5
4	Current-Affairs Websites	31	15.5
5	Mobile Applications	23	11.5
6	Online Question Banks	20	10.0
7	Online Mock Tests	27	13.5
	Total	200	100.0

The table 5 indicates that YouTube educational videos (22.5%) are the most widely used digital resource, followed by e-books/PDFs (16.5%) and current-affairs websites (15.5%). This highlights the growing importance of digital learning resources in competitive-examination preparation.

14. Device Used to Access Online Coaching and Digital Resources

■ Smartphone ■ Laptop ■ Desktop Computer ■ Tablet

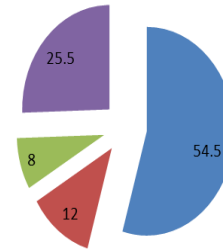


Figure 9: Online Coaching and Digital Resources

Figure 9 indicates that smartphones (54.5%) are the most commonly used devices, followed by tablets (25.5%). This shows that mobile devices are the primary means of accessing online coaching and digital resources among respondents.

15. Frequency of Use of Digital Current-Affairs Resources

Table 6: Frequency of Use of Digital Current-Affairs Resources

Sl. No.	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Daily	87	43.5
2	Several times a week	49	24.5
3	Weekly	38	19.0
4	Occasionally	17	8.5
5	Never	9	4.5
	Total	200	100.0

The table 6 significant of 43.5% of respondents use digital current-affairs resources daily, while 24.5% use them several times a week. This indicates that current-affairs resources are regularly used by most aspirants.

16. Preferred Language

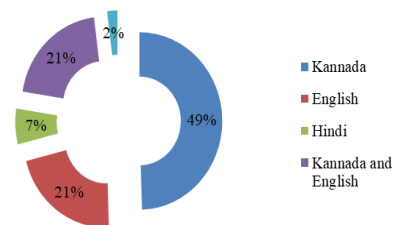


Figure 10: Preferred Language

Figure 10 shows that Kannada (49.5%) is the most preferred language, followed by English (21.5%) and both Kannada and English (20.5%). Hindi and other languages account for 6.5% and 2.0%, respectively. Thus, Kannada is the dominant language for online coaching and digital learning.

17. Satisfaction with Quality of Online Coaching

Table 7: Satisfaction with Quality of Online Coaching

Sl. No.	Satisfaction Level	Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Highly Satisfied	5	121	60.5
2	Satisfied	4	51	25.5
3	Neutral	3	20	10.0
4	Dissatisfied	2	5	2.5
5	Highly Dissatisfied	1	3	1.5
	Total		200	100.0

Table 7 shows that a majority (60.5%) of respondents are highly satisfied with the quality of online coaching. Another 25.5% are satisfied, indicating a positive overall perception. Only 4.0% are dissatisfied or highly dissatisfied. Thus, online coaching is highly satisfying among respondents.

18. Most Useful Online Coaching Features

Table 8: Most Useful Online Coaching Features

Sl. No.	Online Coaching Feature	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Live Lectures	61	30.5
2	Recorded Lectures	15	7.5
3	Mock Tests	21	10.5
4	Previous-Year Question Papers	31	15.5
5	Current Affairs	33	16.5
6	Study Materials / PDFs	10	5.0
7	Doubt-Clearing Sessions	17	8.5
8	Performance Analysis	12	6.0
	Total	200	100.0

Table 8 highlights that live lectures (30.5%) are the most useful online coaching feature, followed by current-affairs content (16.5%) and previous-year question papers (15.5%). Mock tests (10.5%) and doubt-clearing sessions (8.5%) are also valued. Thus,

interactive and examination-oriented features are most preferred by aspirants.

19. Problems Faced While Using Online and Digital Resources

Table 9: Problems Faced While Using Online Coaching and Digital Resources

Sl. No.	Major Problem	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Poor Internet Connectivity	41	20.5
2	High Data Cost	27	13.5
3	Technical Problems	28	14.0
4	Lack of Personal Interaction	31	15.5
5	Distractions / Social Media	14	7.0
6	Lack of Motivation / Self-discipline	20	10.0
7	Information Overload	27	13.5
8	Difficulty Identifying Reliable Information	12	6.0
	Total	200	100.0

Table 9 indicates that poor internet connectivity (20.5%) is the major problem faced by respondents, followed by lack of personal interaction (15.5%) and technical problems (14.0%). High data cost and information overload (13.5% each) are also notable challenges. Thus, connectivity, technical difficulties, and limited interaction are the major barriers to effective online learning.

9. Findings of the Study

- Dharwad respondents (61.5%) were higher than Vijayapura respondents (38.5%).
- Male aspirants (66.0%) constituted the majority of the respondents.
- The largest age group was 21–25 years (47.0%).
- Graduates (51.0%) formed the largest educational group, while 65.0% of respondents were from rural areas.
- Police examinations (24.5%) were the most preferred, followed by KPSC/KAS (20.0%).
- 1–2 years (41.0%) was the most common duration of competitive-examination preparation.
- Online and offline coaching together (36.5%) was the most common mode of preparation.

- Regular online coaching use (60.5%) was reported by the largest proportion of respondents.
- YouTube (47.5%) was the most frequently used online platform.
- 1-2 hours daily (43.5%) was the most common duration of online coaching use.
- Flexible timing (28.5%) was the major reason for using online coaching, followed by affordable cost (22.0%).
- YouTube educational videos (22.5%) were the most-used digital information resource.
- Smartphones (54.5%) were the most commonly used device.
- Kannada (49.5%) was the most preferred learning language.
- 60.5% of respondents were highly satisfied with online coaching.
- Live lectures (30.5%) were considered the most useful coaching feature.
- Poor internet connectivity (20.5%) was the major problem faced by aspirants.

10. Suggestions

- Libraries should provide high-speed internet and reliable Wi-Fi for uninterrupted online learning.
- Computers, tablets, charging facilities and digital study spaces should be made available to aspirants.
- Libraries should provide e-books, PDFs, current-affairs resources, mock tests and previous-year question papers.
- More Kannada-language digital resources should be developed and made accessible.
- Special digital facilities should be developed for rural aspirants facing connectivity and data-cost problems.
- Libraries may collaborate with reputed online coaching providers to improve access to quality learning materials.

Conclusion

The study concludes that online coaching and digital information resources have become important components of competitive-examination preparation among aspirants in Dharwad and Vijayapura districts. The findings show a strong preference for online learning, particularly YouTube, live lectures, smartphones, current-affairs resources and flexible learning options. Most respondents expressed satisfaction with the quality of online coaching. However, poor internet connectivity, technical problems, data costs and lack of personal

interaction remain major challenges. Libraries can play an important role by providing high-speed internet, digital resources, e-books, mock tests, reliable information sources and digital-literacy support, particularly for rural aspirants. Overall, effective integration of online coaching, digital resources and library services can significantly strengthen competitive-examination preparation.

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