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Data Storytelling: Advantages and Disadvantages of a Master's degree in a remote learning environment

Since the pandemic hit the entire world in early 2020, the way we live our lives changed drastically. One such change was a shift in the delivery mode of education, where the classes are delivered online instead of traditional classroom lectures. As a part of this assignment, I surveyed the overall experience of students learning remotely.

Data Collection

A Microsoft Form was created containing questions, and using Power Automate, I could fetch the responses directly into an Excel file on OneDrive for Business, and this data was used to analyze and visualize in Power BI. To gather the data, the form was circulated amongst students pursuing a master's degree in different parts of the world. 61 entries were recorded in total.

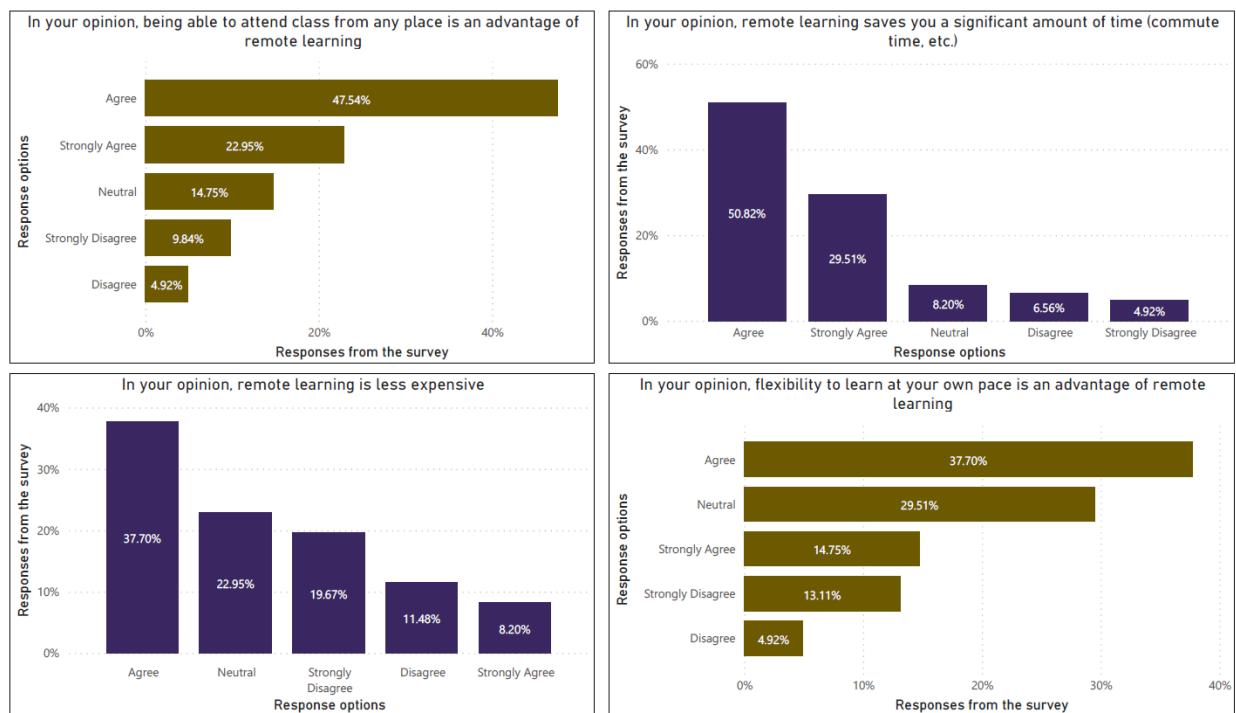## *Data Insights*

Advantages:

Figure 1: Advantages of Remote Learning (survey responses)

The survey questions were designed to get a consensus on how students think the remote learning environment is, by asking if they see a particular aspect as an advantage or a disadvantage. Flexibility to attend from anywhere, saving commute time and cost, learning at your own pace were some advantages

agreed by a majority of the students. Although about 52% of students agree that self-paced learning is an advantage, the remaining students feel it's not significant, or blatantly disagree, indicating that it depends person-to-person (*Figure1*) It is noteworthy that there are a significant number of students who think that there's no difference in the cost incurred during the course, because more than 80% students, mostly international are living in the same city as their University, hence not saving up on the rent and other expenses (*Figure2*).
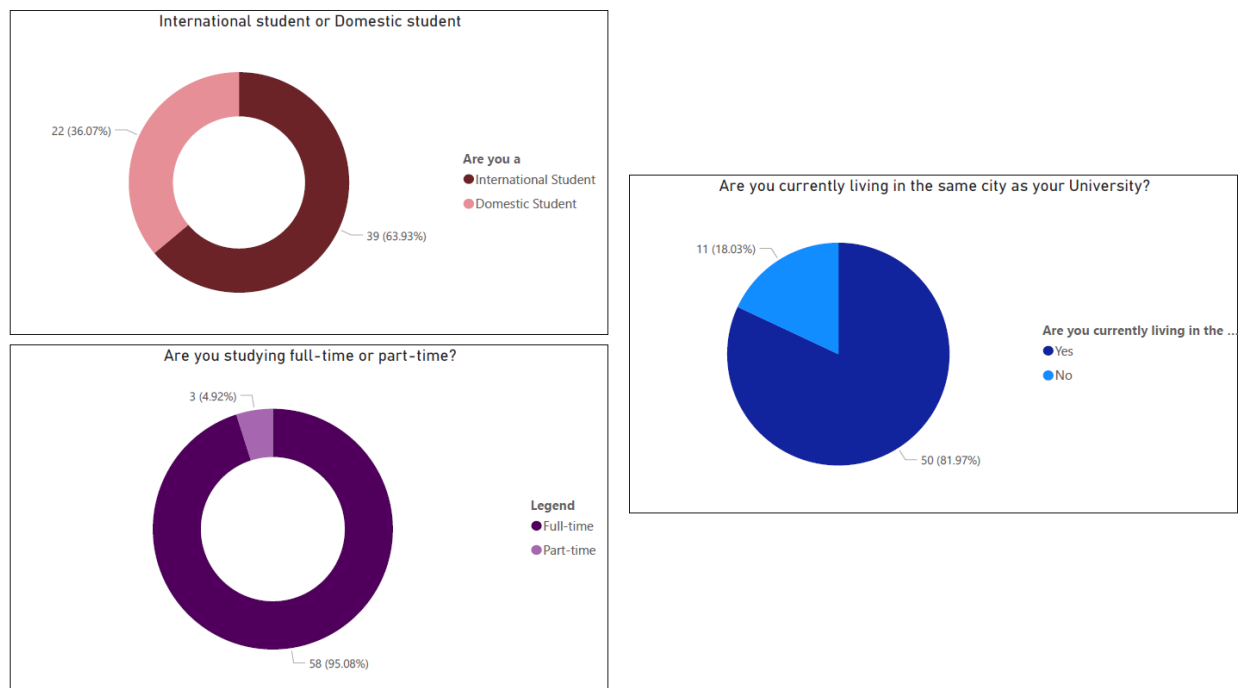

Figure 2: Current location and study mode of students (survey responses)
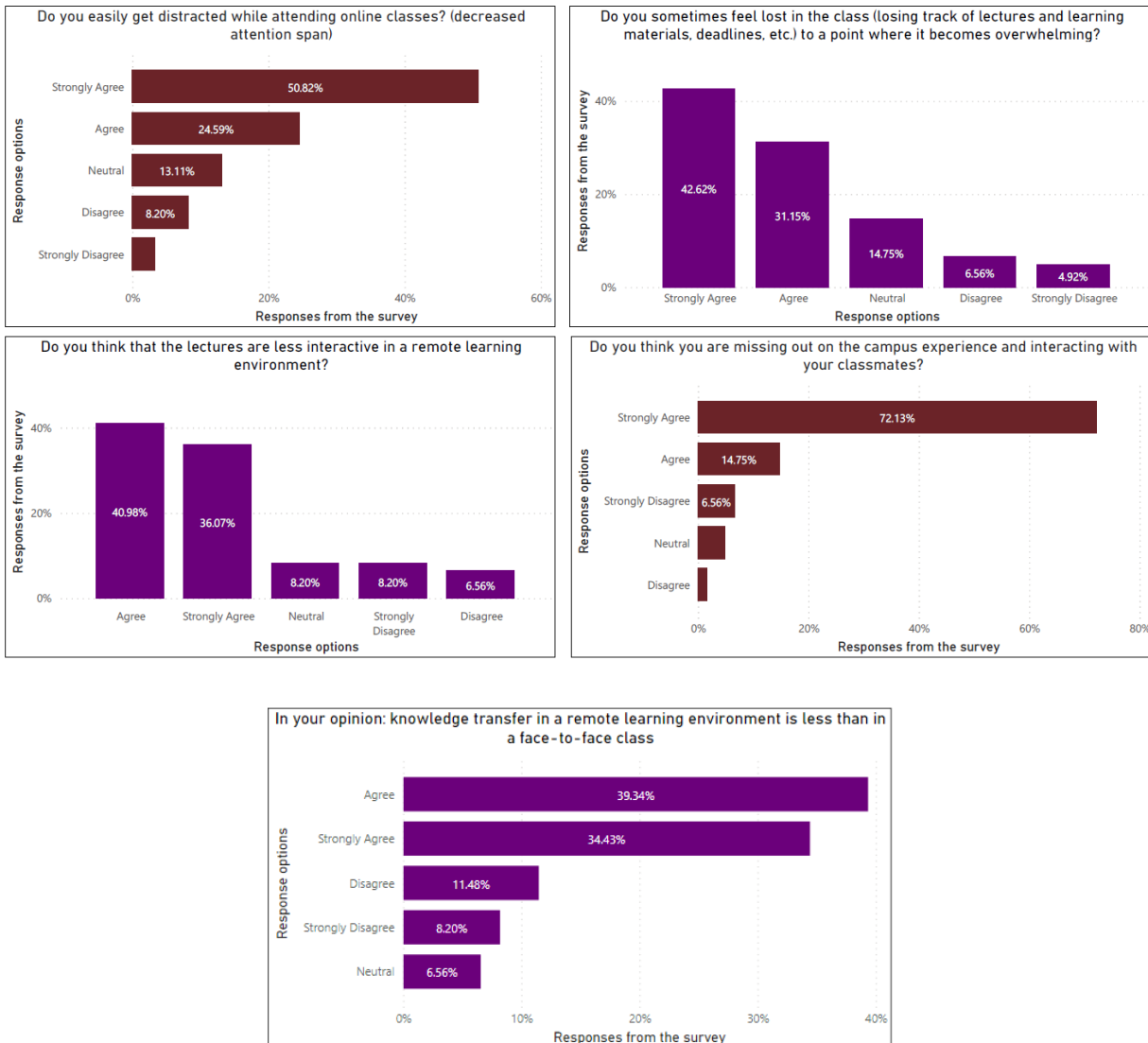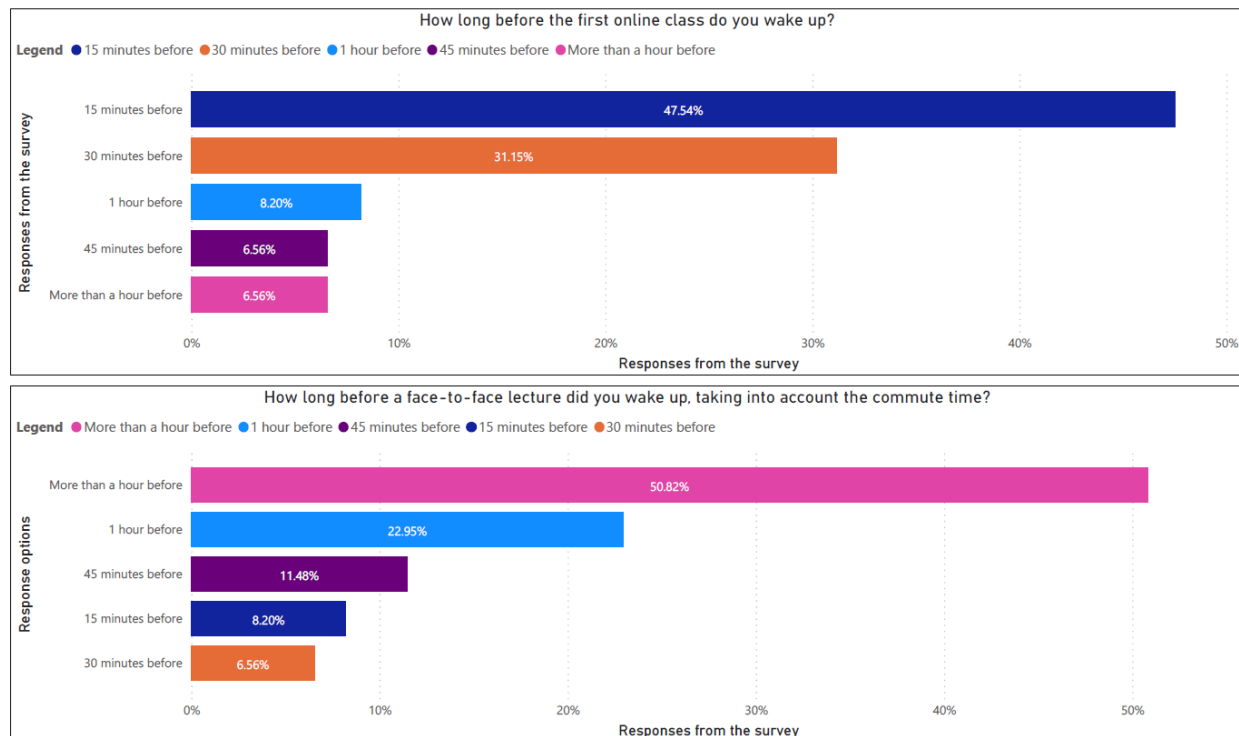
Disadvantages:

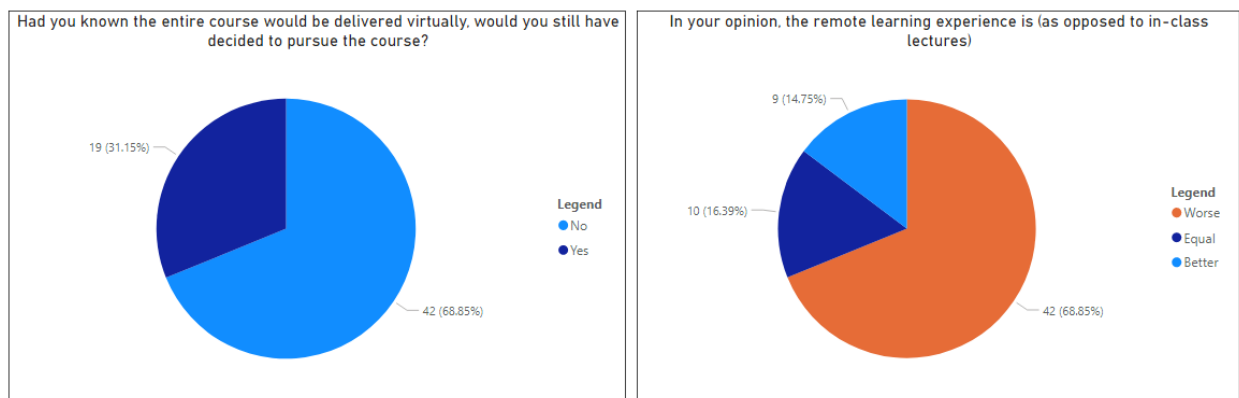*Figure 3: Disadvantages of Remote Learning (survey responses)*

It's evident from the above visualizations, the responses are more unanimous, agreeing to the challenges faced during online classes and seeing them as disadvantages, which did not happen while learning in a traditional face-to-face set-up. More than 75% of students agree that attention span is less while focusing on the lectures delivered online, also are behind on the course readings and assignments. The most unanimous disadvantage is missing out on campus life and interacting with peers. Since students are attending classes from their homes, or some revisit the recordings later-on, because of time-difference if they're attending from a different part of the world, the classes are less interactive, which makes them all the more unmotivated to attend the class. Another noteworthy observation is that 75% of students agree to the fact that the knowledge transfer in remote learning is far less than in a traditional learning environment. It can be inferred that there's a certain level of self-discipline needed to make the most out

of remote learning, and this can be summarized from the below visualization where students are asked how long before the first class they wake up in remote and traditional learning environments respectively.

How long before the first online class do you wake up?

Legend ● 15 minutes before ● 30 minutes before ● 1 hour before ● 45 minutes before ● More than a hour before

Responses from the survey	
15 minutes before	47.54%
30 minutes before	31.15%
1 hour before	8.20%
45 minutes before	6.56%
More than a hour before	6.56%

Responses from the survey

How long before a face-to-face lecture did you wake up, taking into account the commute time?

Legend ● More than a hour before ● 1 hour before ● 45 minutes before ● 15 minutes before ● 30 minutes before

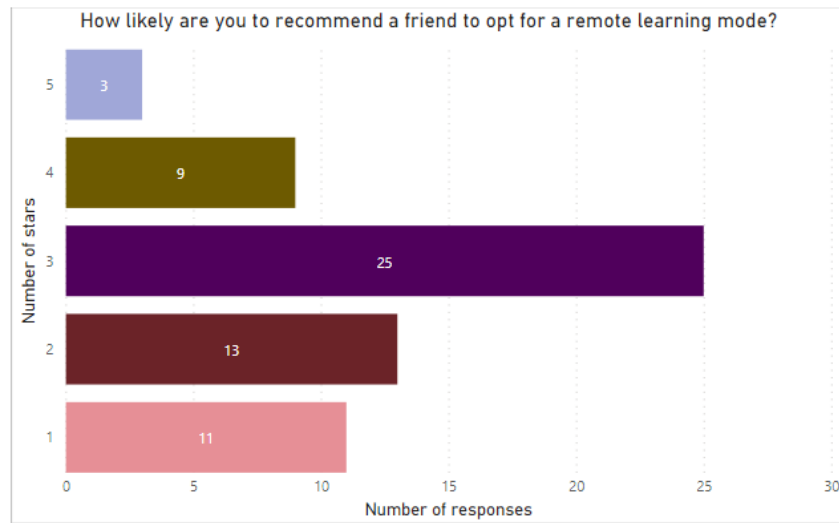| Response options	
More than a hour before	50.82%
1 hour before	22.95%
45 minutes before	11.48%
15 minutes before	8.20%
30 minutes before	6.56%

Responses from the survey

Almost half of the students said 15 minutes before for online, which just depicts that it's just human to be lazy if you know there's no commute-time, getting ready time, etc. since the class is to be taken from the home. As opposed to that, more than 50% of students said they woke up more than 1 hour before the first class in a traditional setting, meaning there's a routine that keeps a student active and attentive.

Conclusion:

Had you known the entire course would be delivered virtually, would you still have decided to pursue the course?

19 (31.15%)
42 (68.85%)

Legend
● No
● Yes

In your opinion, the remote learning experience is (as opposed to in-class lectures)

9 (14.75%)
10 (16.39%)
42 (68.85%)

Legend
● Worse
● Equal
● Better

Students feel that the remote-learning experience is not better than the in-class learning, and if the University would've told that the entire course would be online, then almost 70% of students wouldn't

have gone ahead with the decision to pursue their master's since they believe they aren't getting what they're paying for. At-most 3 stars are given if they're to recommend this mode of education to anyone.

How likely are you to recommend a friend to opt for a remote learning mode?

Number of stars	Number of responses
5	3
4	9
3	25
2	13
1	11

General demographics:

Gender

- Female: 31 (50.82%)
- Male: 29 (47.54%)
- Non-binary: 1 (1.64%)

Age distribution

- Under 22: 25 (40.98%)
- 25-28 years: 19 (31.15%)
- 22-24 years: 16 (26.23%)
- Above 28: 1 (1.64%)