



Designing your own future

Education UK Virtual Exhibition 2012
28 November - 07 December

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1 About virtual exhibition

Despite the rising costs of education and certain visa restrictions on post-work study, the countrys' students still see the UK as a preferred destination for academics. Pakistan remains an important and rewarding market for UK education institutes.

Given the current security environment in the country however, it has become challenging to hold physical exhibitions. With a rapid increase in the number of Internet users and Internet Service Providers, virtual exhibitions therefore have a role in developing a flexible, sustainable approach that is appropriate to the unique operating context in Pakistan.

In this regard, Education UK organised its third Virtual Exhibition in Pakistan in 2012 from November 28th to December 7th, 2012.

It was formally launched in Lahore by Richard Weyers, Director Punjab and EUK Pakistan team. The event was attended by different stakeholders as well as members of the media and thus was widely reported in the local media.

Richard Weyers said on the occasion, *"The British Council is delighted to be leading the way in providing virtual opportunities for students to connect with UK universities. We have a record breaking 32 UK universities involved in this year's exhibition and we hope this will benefit many thousands of potential students in Pakistan."*



VE 2012 Launch Ceremony in Lahore

2 Participating institutions

Our exhibitors were 34 UK institutions, IELTS Pakistan and British Council English for Impact. List of exhibitors participating in the event:

Aston University	University for the Creative Arts
Bangor University	University of Abertay Dundee
Bournemouth University	University of Birmingham
British Council English for Impact	University of Bristol
Brunel University	University of Dundee
Cardiff University	University of Glasgow
De Montfort University, Leicester	University of Hull
Glasgow Caledonian University	University of Kent
IELTS	University of Leeds
Kingston University	University of London International Programmes
Leeds Metropolitan University	University of Manchester
Liverpool Hope University	University of Northampton
Loughborough University	University of Reading
Manchester Metropolitan University	University of Sheffield
Northumbria University	University of Southampton
Sheffield Hallam University	University of Surrey
Staffordshire University	University of the West of England
The College of Law	

3 Key statistics

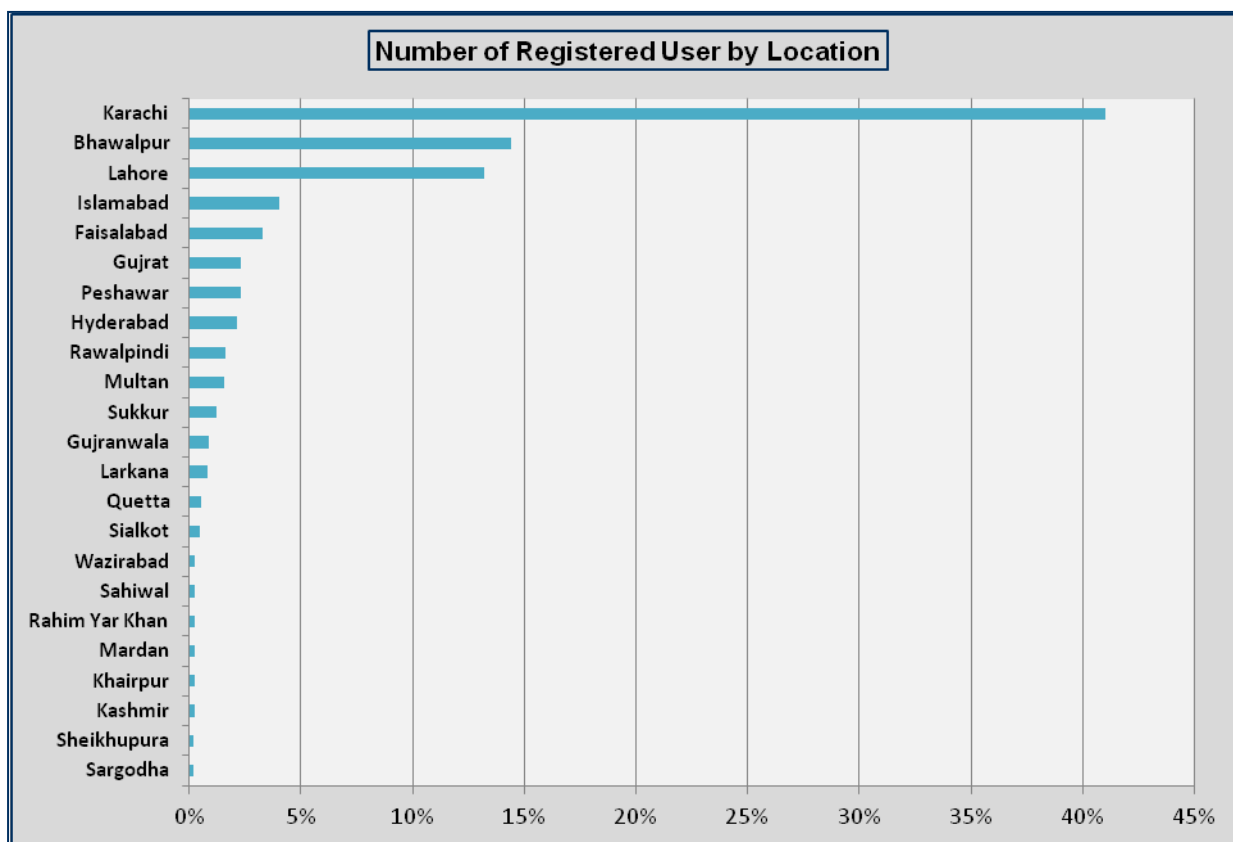
	Year 2010	Year 2011	Year 2012
Website	www.eukvirtualexhibition.com.pk		
Duration	22 November - 4 December 2010	21 November – 30 November 2011	28 November – 7 December 2012
No. of exhibitors	45 UK Institutions	38 UK Institutions	32 UK Institutions
Unique Visitors	12,773	20,001	6,867
Active/registered users (registered visitors who actively engaged with content of the platform via downloading information/offline query/online chat)	2391	2347	2982
Chat sessions held	566 hours	674 hours	727 hours
Offline queries answered	1039 answered of 1450	189 answered of 274	372 answered of 438
Visitors origin (Number of cities covered)	Over 15 cities	Over 15 cities	Over 25 cities

4 Registered visitors analysis

The virtual platform was open to all visitors. However, a visitor was required to register if they wished to use the 'Query Centre' or 'Online Chat Sessions' features.

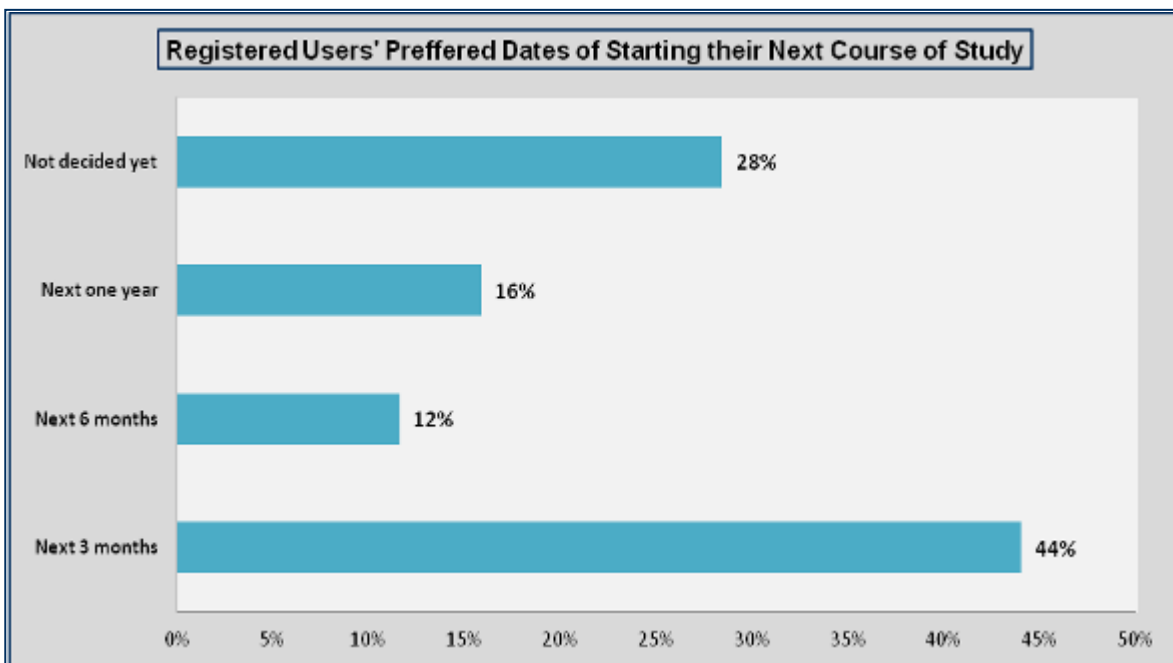
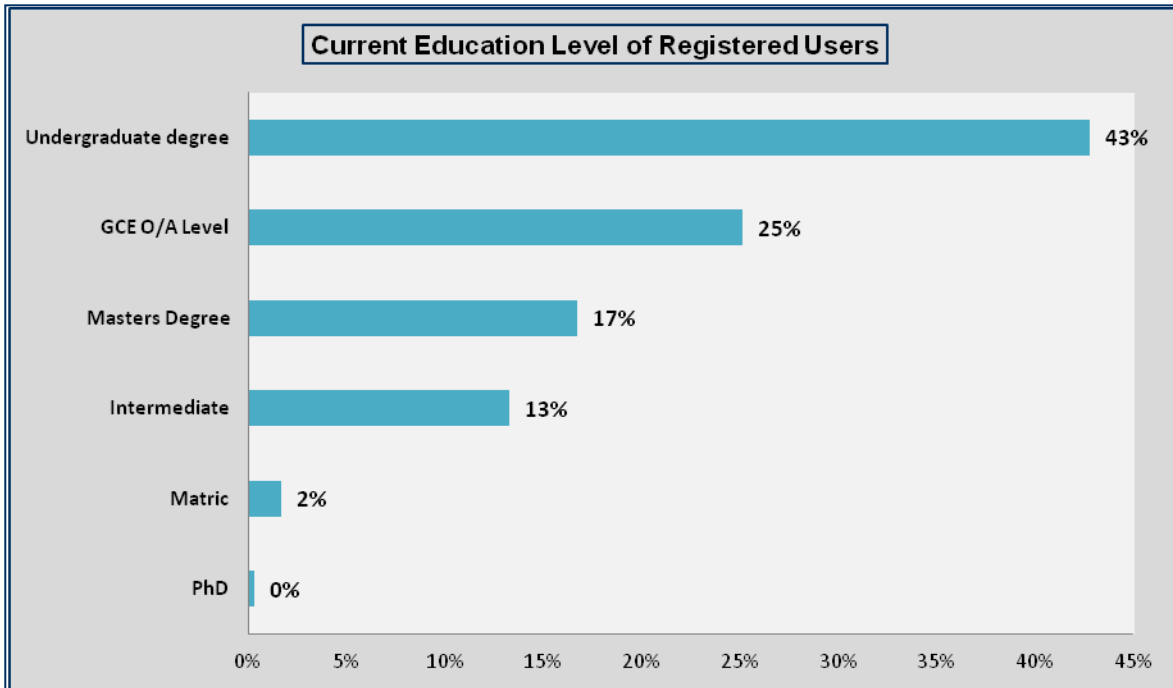
The analysis provided in this section relates to the total 2982 registered users who actively engaged through Offline queries or online chat sessions.

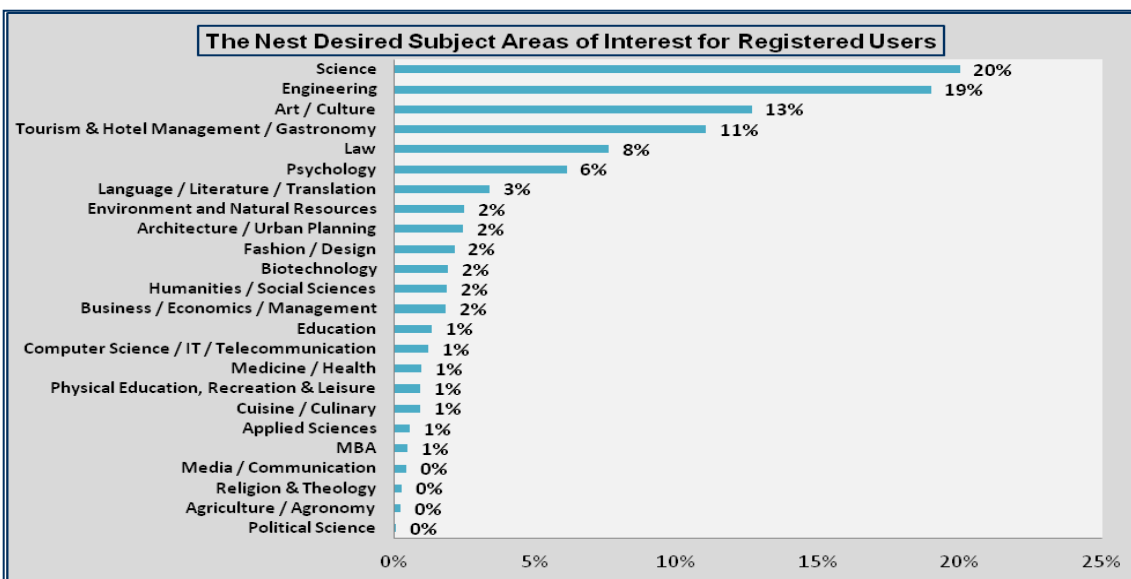
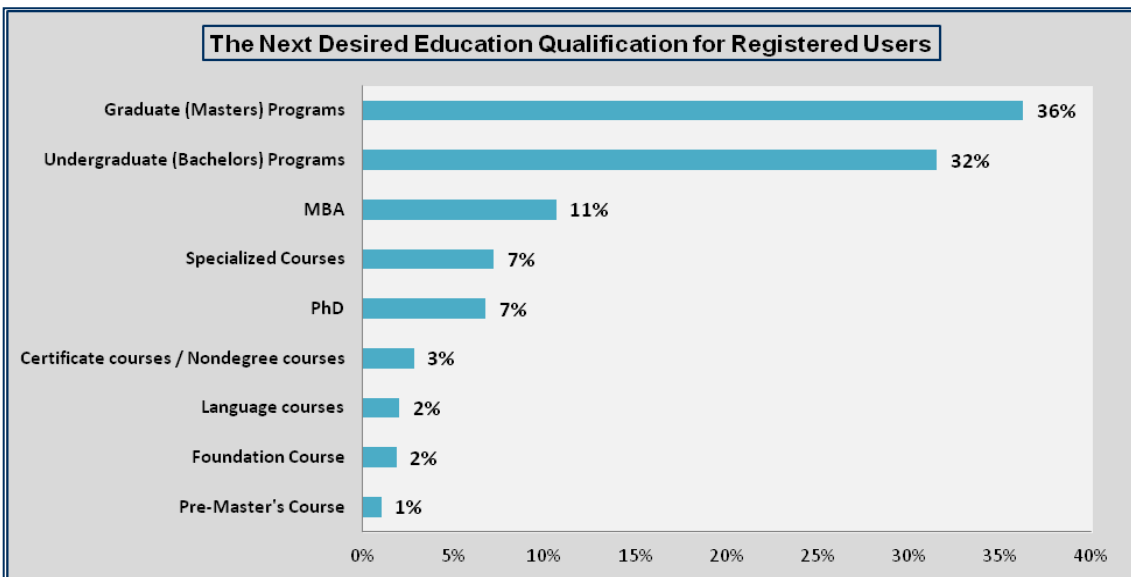
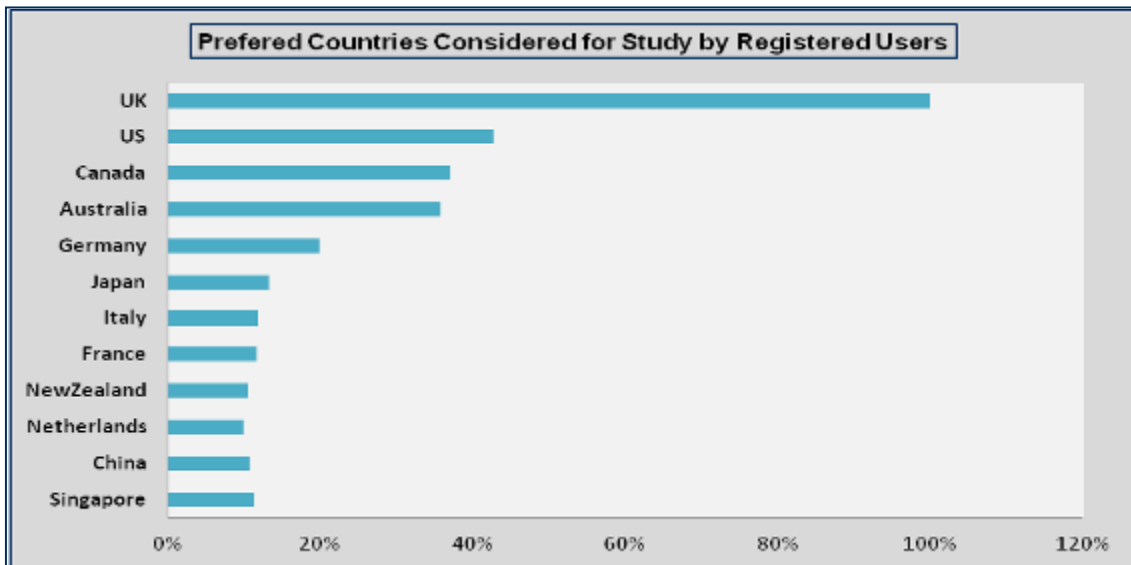
Out of the total registered users 32 per cent were female whereas 68 per cent were male. It was observed percentage of female users in 2012 was high as compared to 2011 exhibition (i.e. 23 per cent female users in 2011).



The highest numbers of registered users – more than 41 per cent were from Karachi. An encouraging number of visitors were from cities and towns other than the major cities of Pakistan. Besides the towns mentioned in the above graph there were visitors from Abbottabad, Bannu, Charsadda, Gilgit, Jhelum, Khanewal, Kharian, Kohat, Mansehra, Muzaffargarh, Nowshera, Swabi, and Taxilla.

Following are a series of graphs depicting data gathered from registered users:





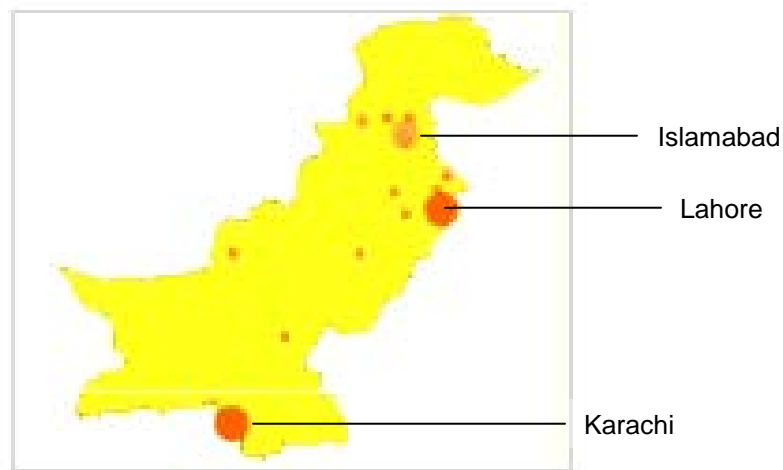
5 Analytics of VE 2012 platform

A total of 10,929 visitors clicked onto www.eukvirtualexhibition.com.pk. Out of these, unique visitors were more than 6,867 as web analytics show:

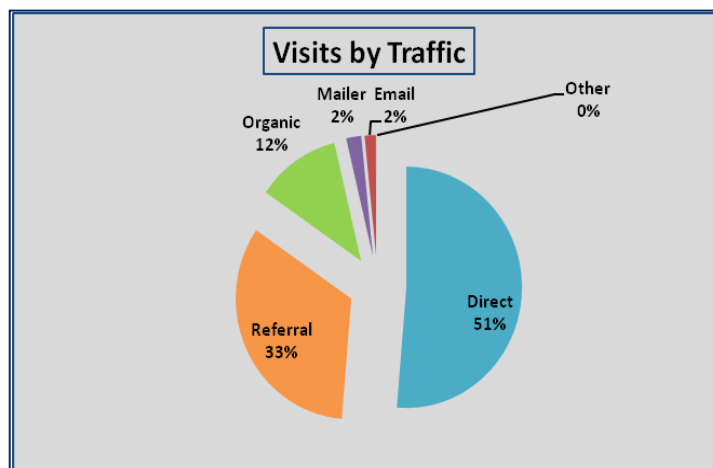
Out of these, unique visitors were more than 6,867 as web analytics show:

Visits	10,928
Unique Visitors	6,867
Total Page Views	62,543
Pages Viewed per Visit	5.72
Average Duration of a Visit	9 minutes and 14 seconds

These Unique Visitors were from all over the country:



Like registered users, it was encouraging to see participation from semi-urban towns and smaller cities across the country. These visits, when analysed by source of traffic, were overwhelmingly done by visitors who directly typed the website address; Direct traffic accounted for 51 per cent of all traffic to the site. 33 per cent of the entire traffic were referrals:

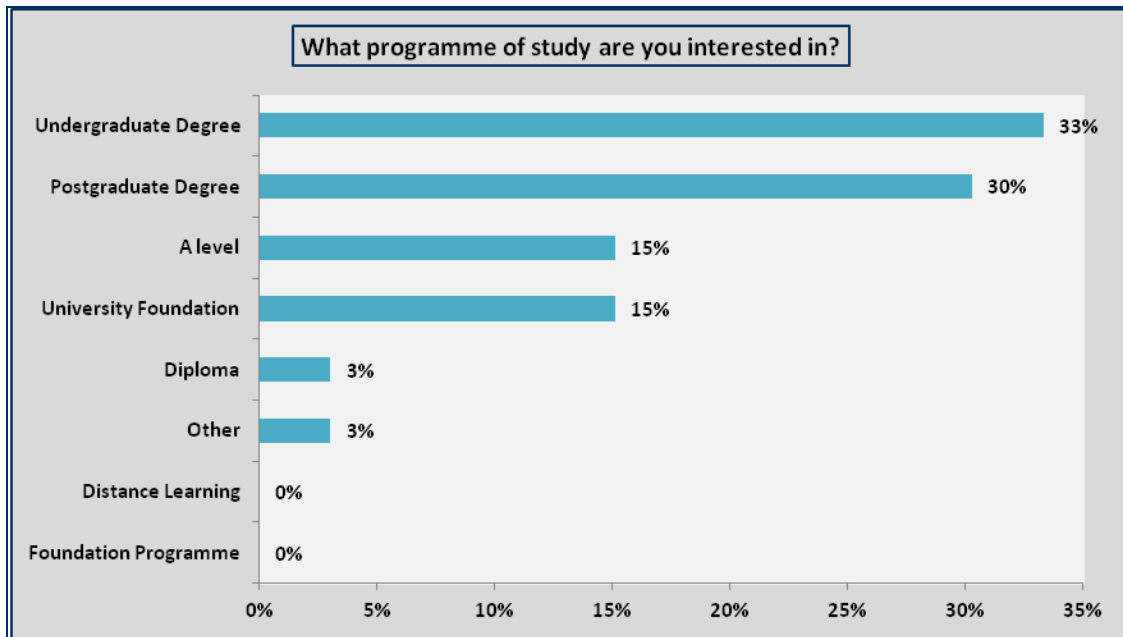


6 Feedback Survey Analysis

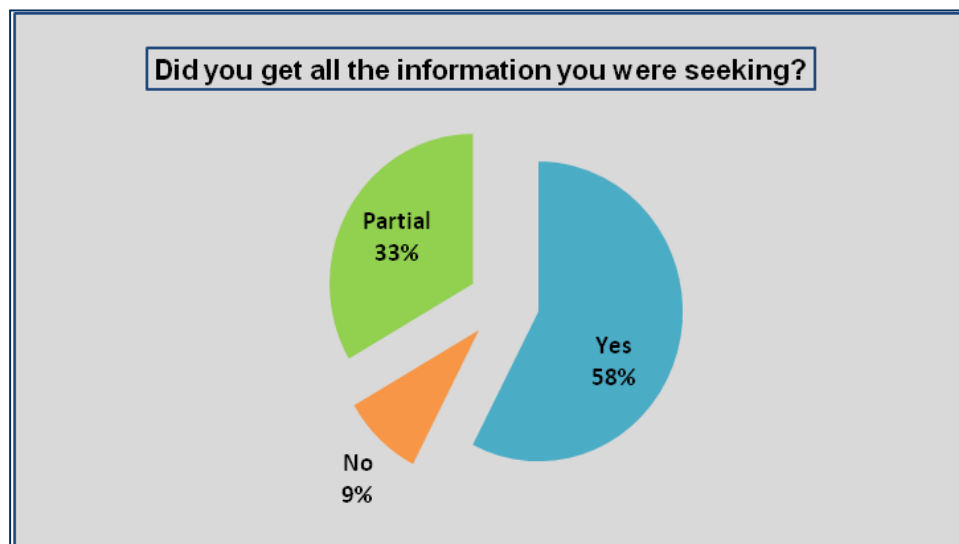
6.1 Visitors survey

All registered users were asked to fill out a post-event survey form; a total of 33 registered visitors filled out the online document online. The series of charts that follow below show feedback obtained from these 33 visitors:

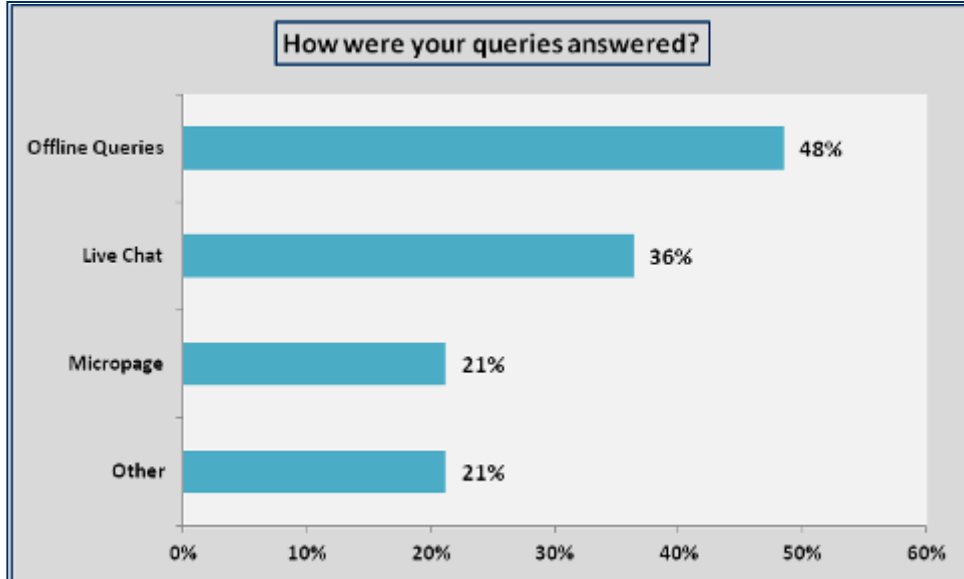
Question Asked: What programme of study are you interested in?



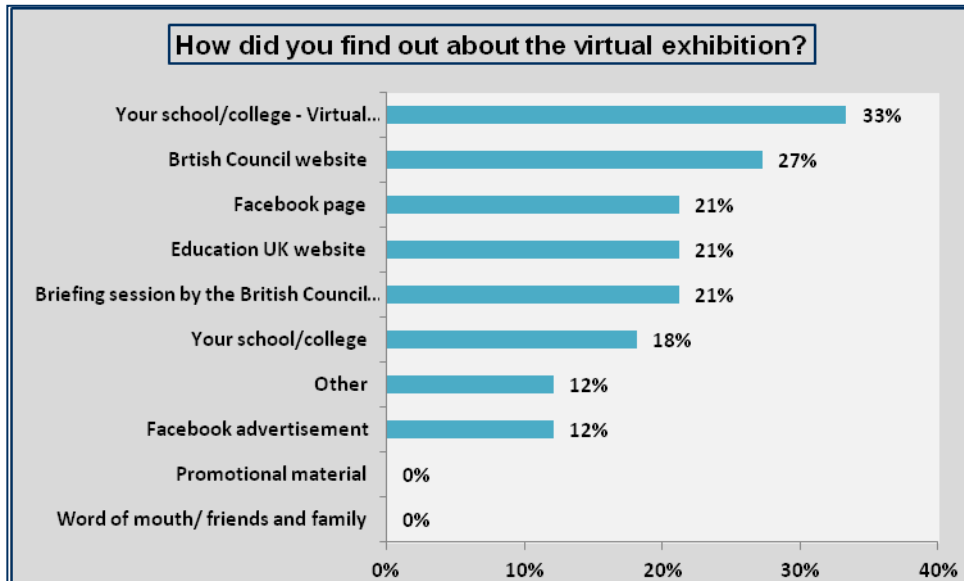
Question Asked: Did you get all the information you were seeking?



Question Asked: How were your queries answered?



Question Asked: How did you find out about the virtual exhibition?



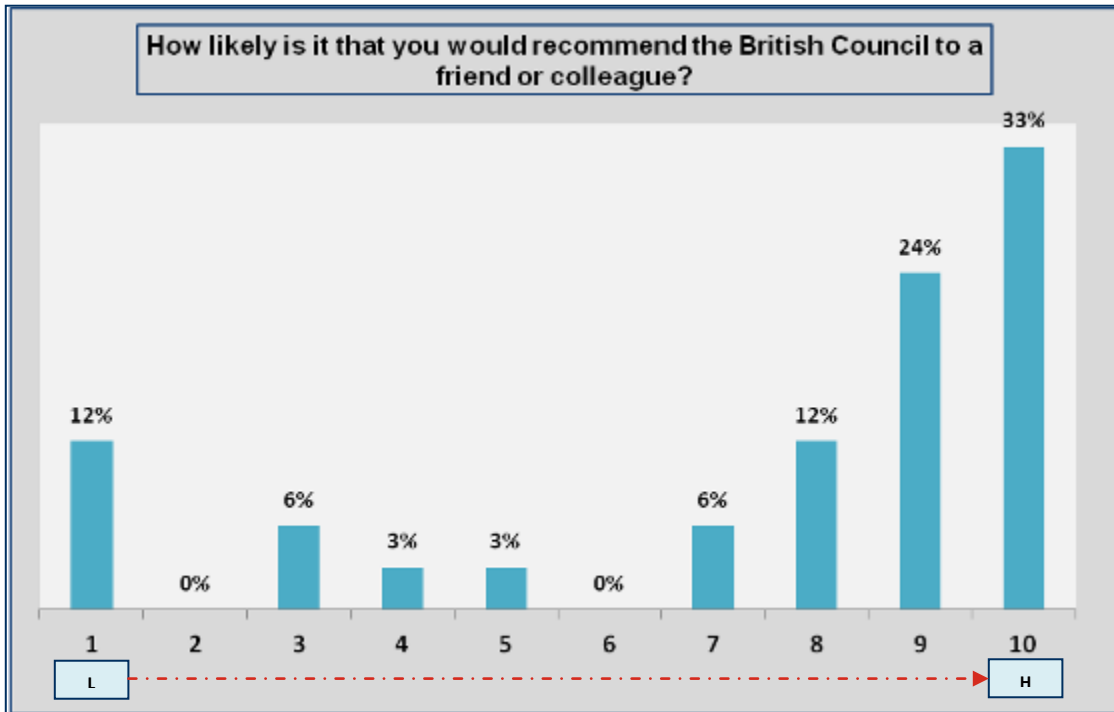
Some comments from our visitors:

"Good channel for the students should continue in future as well".

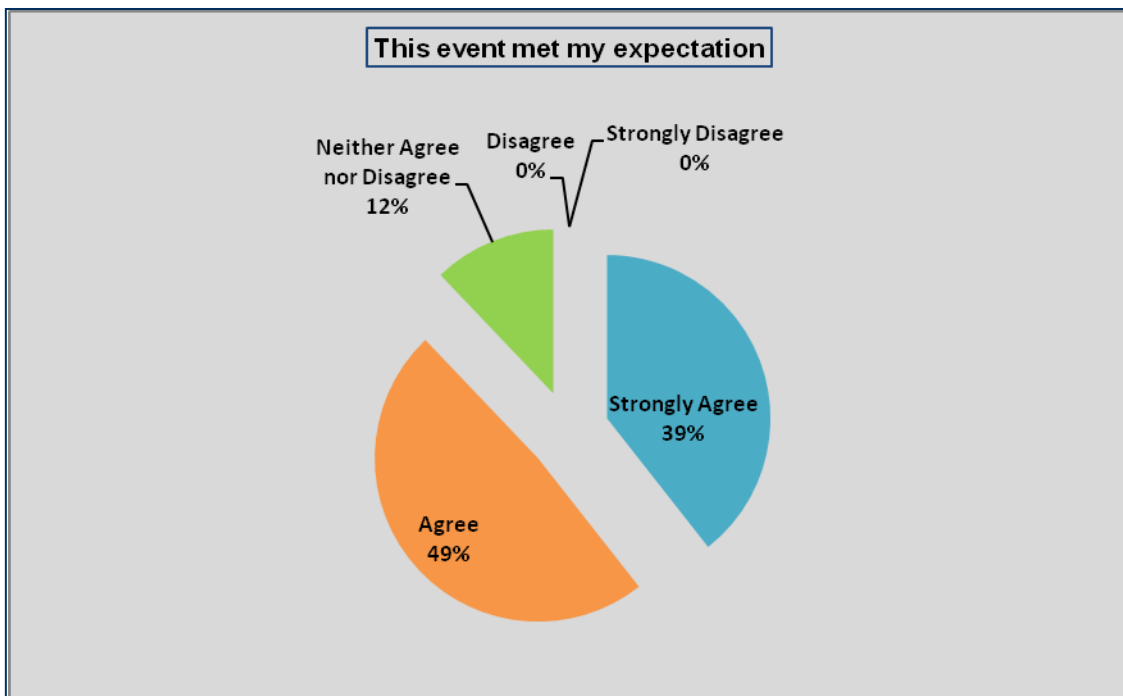
"Exhibition was very good".

"British Council and Education UK are doing their best and their all services are of world-class quality".

Question Asked: How likely is it that you would recommend the British Council to a friend or colleague?



Question Asked: This event met my expectations?

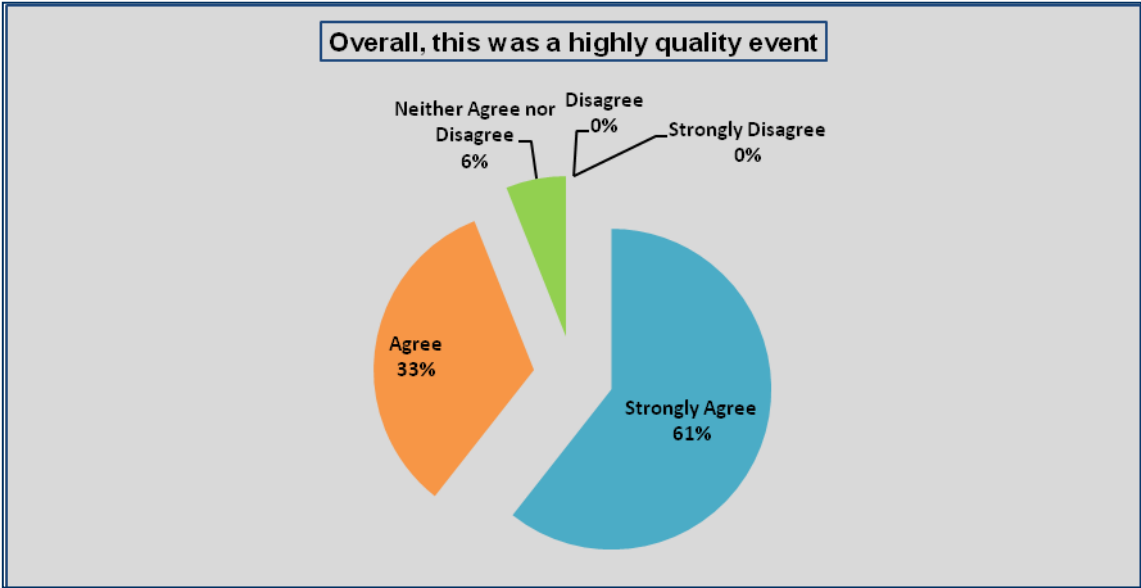


Some comments from our visitors:

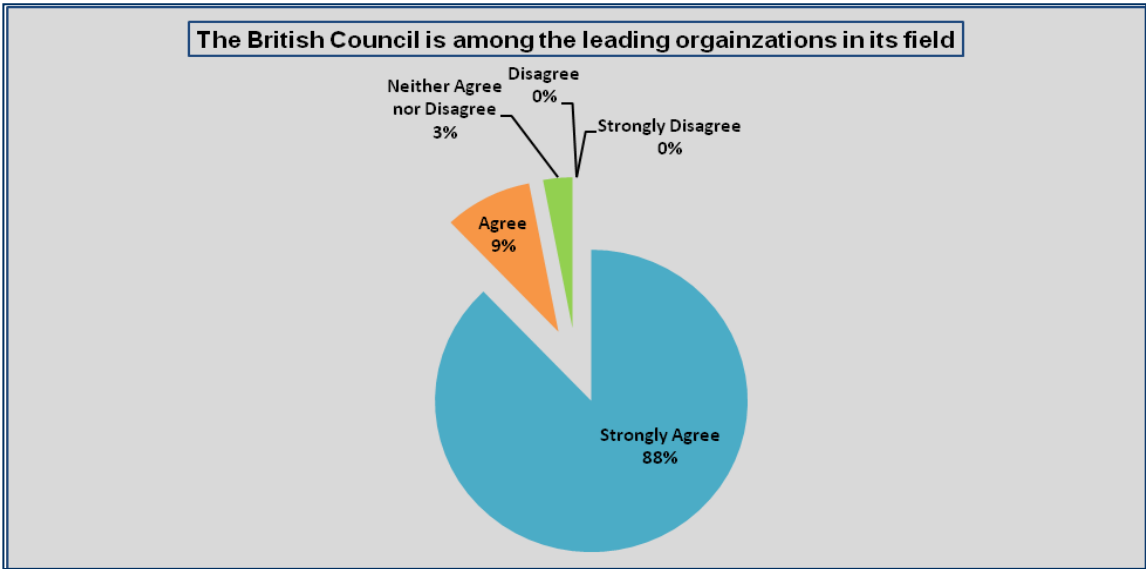
"The session was pretty helpful and made exposure possible to a diversified field of our interests in terms of academics. Such a session is bound to be helpful. It will be more preferable if these are scheduled within months of lighter workload".

"Being a student, I found the session useful and suggested other students to register, but I found that registered students including me did not get our questions promptly answered on live chats and also had to wait long for questions to get answered".

Question Asked: Overall, this was a high quality event?



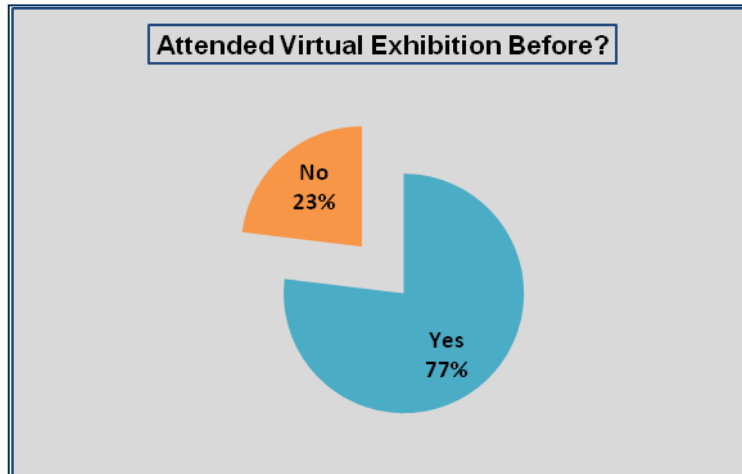
Question Asked: The British Council is among the leading organizations in its field?



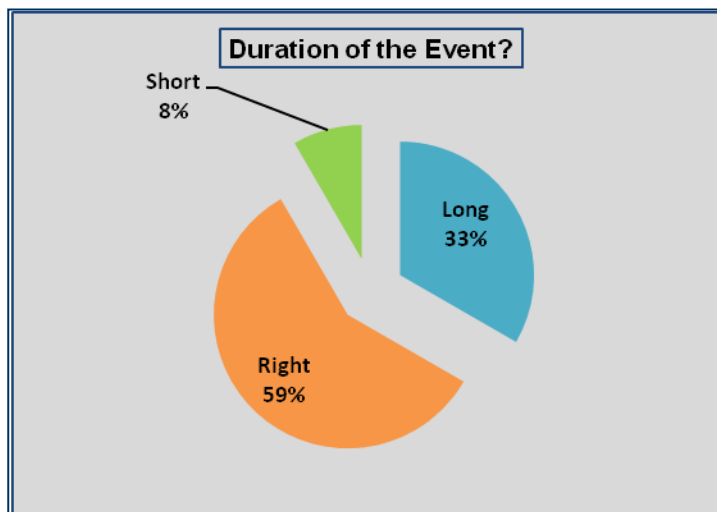
6.2 Exhibitors Survey

This section presents feedback collated from the exhibitors.

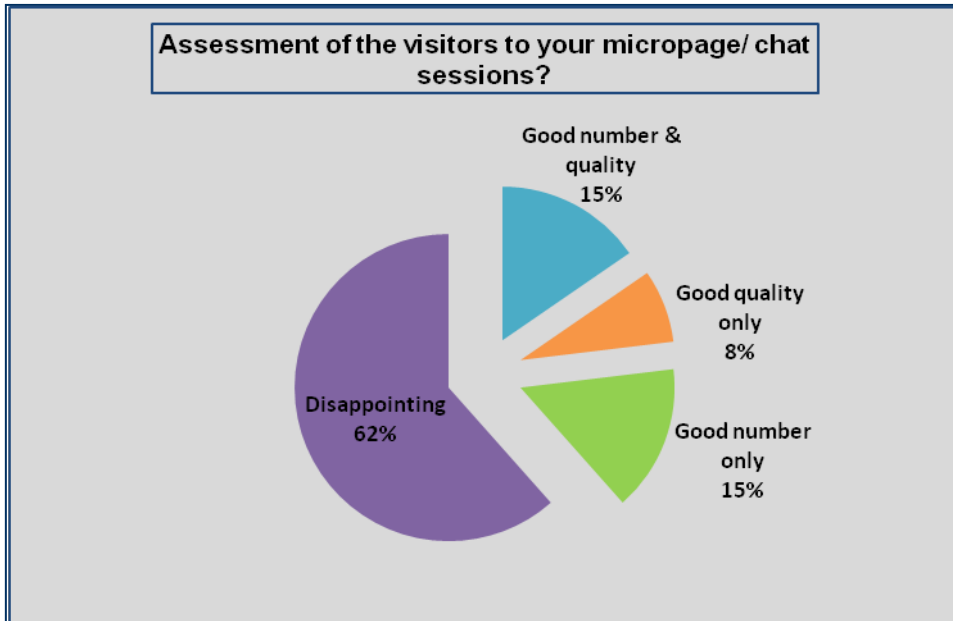
Question Asked: Has your institution attended any virtual exhibition before?



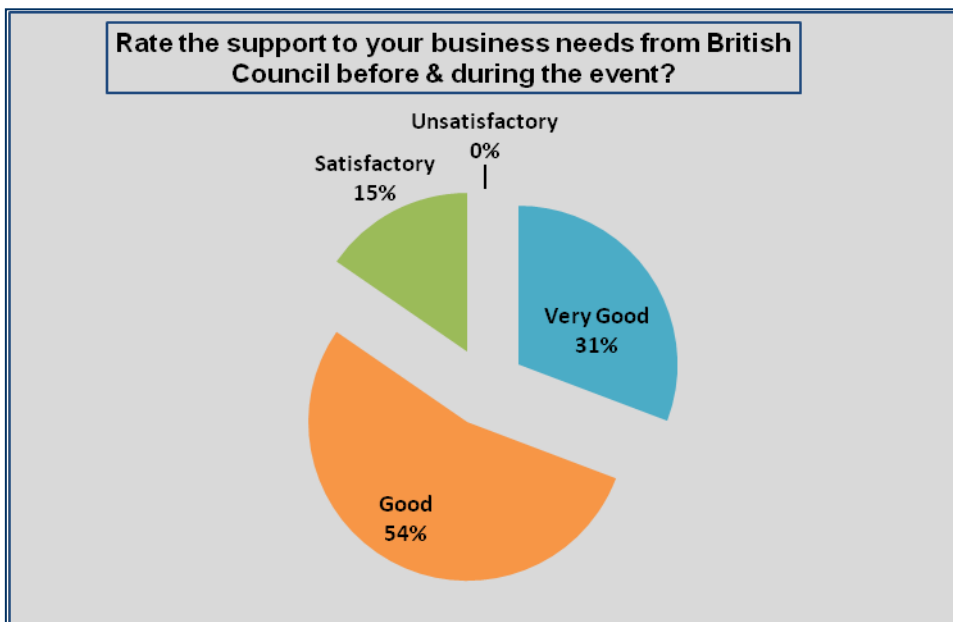
Question Asked: How would you rate the duration of the event?



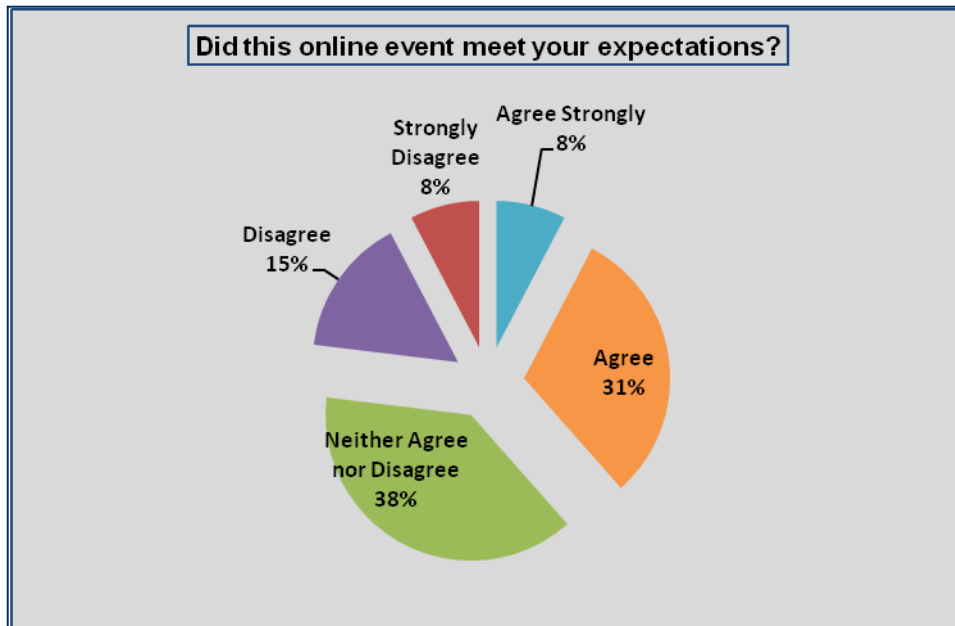
Question Asked: What is your assessment of the visitors to your micropage/chat session?



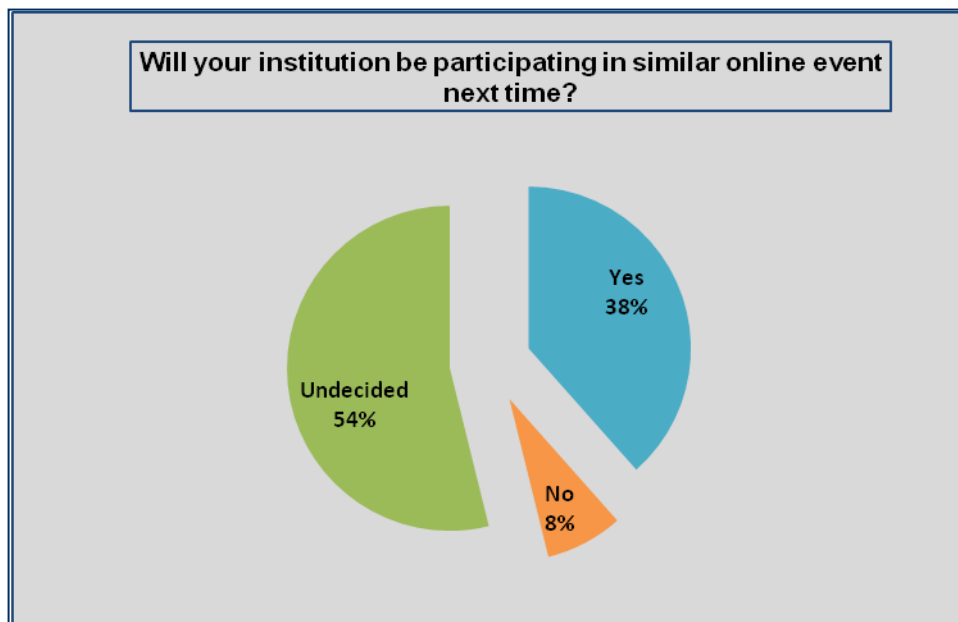
Question Asked: How do you rate the support to your business needs from British Council before and during the event?



Question Asked: Did this online event meet your expectation?



Question Asked: Will your institution be participating in similar online event next time?



When asked for an ideal duration for the Virtual Exhibition, respondents had a variety of suggestions – from 12 days to 3-4 days.

When asked about scheduling of the event, respondents again had a variety of suggestions:

- "Between November to May".
- "November is perfect".
- "The ideal time is May".
- "January might be a better time of the year."
- "February to April".
- "Event should be held twice a year. One in November-December and other in May-June".

Comparing VE 2012 to VE 2011, respondents shared:

- "More visitors this time".
- "Everything was pretty much the same though we were disappointed that there was no video chat software as this was trailed last year".
- "Number of students were better but the quality was little lower than last year".
- "On a par with regards to the format of the microsite and the chat facility however there were a lot less enquiries this year".
- "It was as good as last year".
- "Similar - maybe fewer online chat participants".

Giving suggestions for improvement, respondents wrote:

- "Video sessions to be part of the event as well".
- "A shorter event with more live video streaming/video chats would be better. By the end of 7 days people are barely signing in to the web chats. Maybe each University could be given an appointment to stream a live presentation via web cam".
- "The attendance levels were disappointing despite having run 24/7 chat sessions. I believe more could have done in terms of on ground marketing and promotion so that the students were aware of this".
- "Many Pakistani institutes were unaware of this event, please make sure all Pakistani institutes management and students are aware in advance".

A few other comments from our exhibitors:

- "Support was excellent".
- "I found the quality and number of questions posted were not high. A lot of them had very poor English, and were simply asking about scholarships to all universities. However, I think this is a country issue, as the Indian Virtual Fair was good in numbers".
- "Technical support was speedy however advice about the schedule for the event and what technology would be available to use was very difficult to get hold of and took a long time to get".
- "I thought the event was very worthwhile and it was great to be able to chat with the students online and answer queries. Here at Birmingham it was a team effort and I felt my colleagues enjoyed and fully supported the event too".

These comments and suggestions are valued and it is EUK Pakistan's effort to incorporate as much input received, into our efforts for VE 2013.

7 Marketing and promotion

Marketing for the event was done through various print, radio and social mediums. The graph below shows responses by registrants when asked "From where did you hear about Virtual Exhibition 2012"

Source	Number of registrations
VE ambassadors	1417
Any other	521
School	390
British Council Pakistan website	304
Facebook	257
Blanks / No response	89
Twitter	7
Total	2985

For those who registered and checked 'Any Other Sources' for an answer, please see sources below. This table shows that adverts placed in the national newspapers Dawn and Jang as well as regional newspapers such as Mashreq and others were quite successful in spreading awareness about VE 2012.

Those that listed 'other sources'	
Source	Number of registrations
Newspaper	201
Random response, No response or Blank	180
Listed VE ambassador name	44
University or employer	30
Friends, peers, siblings or parents	22
Radio	15
Email (could be from EUK or universities)	11
VE seminar or EUK Lahore office	6
Internet	6
SMS	4
Teacher or tutor	2
Newspaper	201
Total	521

7.1 VE ambassadors

This marketing activity engaged students from A'level schools, colleges and universities around the country. Briefing sessions for these students were held in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad, where they were encouraged to devise marketing plans and implement them, both before and during VE 2012. As data gathered from registered users showed, this marketing activity proved to be extremely successful. There were a total of 242 ambassadors from the three major cities in the country – Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad.



VE ambassadors work on their marketing plan at a session organized by EUK in Karachi



*Above Left: At the Ambassadors Certificate Distribution Ceremony in Islamabad
Above Right: Ambassadors presenting their marketing plans in Lahore*



8 Summary and learning points

- The event started at a good pace attracting 27 per cent more registered users compared to the previous year.
- VE ambassador played a vital role in the promotion of the virtual exhibition.
- A good number of registrants participated from second tier cities.
- A significant proportion of the registered users marked their current education level as GCE O/A level and Intermediate which clearly implies the exhibition reaches the right target audience.
- Majority of the visitors strongly agreed that the event met their expectations and they got all the information which they were looking for.
- Offline queries were the most popular method of communication, rising by nearly 60 per cent compared to the previous year. A few visitors shared a concern that they had to wait in long queue in order to get their questions answered through live chat. This can be improved by having a separate page with frequently asked questions (FAQs) which would help to avoid duplication in both online and offline queries.
- 62 per cent of the exhibitors were disappointed by the kind of interaction they had with visitors and similarly a low number of exhibitors, only 38 per cent, agreed it met with their expectations. This has to do with the quality of questions asked and the way students engaged with exhibitors; we feel this can be improved by helping train youngsters in how to best utilize what the VE offers them. Our marketing efforts which include a presentation on what the VE offers could also include a tutorial on how students should avail the opportunity to ask questions, download the material etc.