

Perception towards Online Classes during COVID-19: A comparative study among the Teachers of different age groups

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Abstract

The primary objective of the present study is to analyze the perception of teachers about online classes based on their age. The study was carried out among teachers of different schools of Lakhimpur district of Assam, India and teachers are equally divided into two age groups, i.e., from 20 to 40 years and 41 to 60 years. A descriptive survey method was used in this study. For the collection of data, the researchers used a self-constructed closed-ended questionnaire. The Chi-square test was used to analyze the data. The result of the study revealed that at 0.05 significance level, there is a significant difference seen among teachers' perception towards online classes based on their age. However, in some areas, no significant differences were found among them. Moreover, the result also revealed that the perceptions of teachers of age group 20-40 years were more positive towards online classes than the teachers aged between 41 to 60 years.

Keywords: Covid-19, Online class, Age group,

1. Introduction

Covid-19 became the most dangerous disease across the world. It is an infectious disease caused by the newly discovered coronavirus (WHO,2020). It made the whole world static for a few months and the situation went out of control for those few months. According to Espino-Díaz et al. (2020), due to the unexpected circumstances created by the Covid-19, a series of transformations were seen in different spheres of social, political, education, labor and economic life. It also changed the habit, lifestyles, behaviour and relationships of the human being. The Covid-19 pandemic has created the enormous disruption of education systems in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents, (UN Report, 2020). Many governments across the world had temporarily closed the educational institutions to reduce the spread of Covid-19. For that reason, no teacher and student were allowed to come to their educational institutions.

In our society, from kindergarten to class 12, the majority of the classes begin with a teacher who delivers a lesson in front of the students which usually end with a bell. It became a habit for all. Dawadi et al. (2020) explained that with the compulsory closure of the educational institutions for a noticeable period, the whole education system of India had changed overnight from physical class to online class. Though the online learning concept is not new, it is practically entirely new in some remote areas of India. People in remote areas usually don't want to welcome new technologies over traditional methods. Because of the adverse condition of Covid-19 disease, the government of India became bound to close down all educational institutions from pre-primary section to university level in both sectors, i.e., public and private to save the citizens from the pandemic. The government decided to execute online classes or learn from home mode through various e-learning platforms. Barbour et al. (2020) illustrated that effectiveness of online classes depend on several factors, for example - technological equipment, internet facilities, technical knowledge of teachers, technical knowledge of students, student-teacher ratio, e-learning pedagogy, desirable attitude and interest of teachers and students towards online classes, etc. The present online classroom design is not a planned classroom design rather, it is a temporary solution for filling up the gap of the education sector during this pandemic situation. Due to the sudden execution of unplanned online classrooms, both students and teachers had faced many obstacles in adopting this education procedure.

Popovici (2015) explained that in recent years, the higher education of the universities implemented new pedagogies related to technologies in their education system for continuous and comprehensive development of the students. For this, e-learning is seen as an essential factor in accomplishing the activities of the universities. But in the case of schools, e-learning or online classes are not seen as an indispensable part before Covid-19. Therefore, teachers of schools faced many challenges as most of the students had no technological devices, no internet access, inadequate knowledge of online classes, etc. Not only students but also teachers who have limited knowledge regarding online classrooms. In such scenarios, age plays a vital role in adequately implementing online classes in school.

According to Beatty (2006); Li (2005), in recent years, so many schools and colleges offering numerous online courses due to the popularity of the online class. Bennet (2006) found that with the rise of technology and digital platform in recent years, students

demand to accomplish online classes along with regular courses. Agustina (2017) found that online classes are considered a progressive means but not enforced to schools to implement with traditional classes. According to Kulal (2020), teachers faced hardship in executing online classes because of the inadequate training and development for doing online classes. Priyadarshini (2021) found that teachers faced problems in doing online classes due to a lack of sufficient preparation and growth for handling online. A study by Subedi et al. (2020) found that lack of technological equipment and network issues were the main reasons for the failure of online classes in Nepal. Most of the respondents suffered problems related to the internet and electricity during online classes, also the students were compelled to use data packs for their online classes. The study also found that online classes were new for teachers and students in many colleges of Nepal.

Dubey (2020) found that teachers' perception regarding online classes depends on various factors such as diversifying knowledge, technical knowledge, comfortability, communication gap, teacher's burden and working hour. According to the researchers, teachers admitted that online education helps in diversifying knowledge and increasing technical knowledge but also has increased the working hours of the teachers because online linkage has decreased the communication gap between students & teachers throughout the day. Suri (2016) found that teachers of Punjab University supported merging e-learning with the current teaching method. They also found that there is no significant gender difference in teachers' attitudes towards computers and e-learning. According to Birisci et al. (2009), there is a positive attitude among teachers towards computer and internet use. Panda (2007) found that extensive use of computers and email has a high relationship with positive attitudes towards e-learning. Mahdizadeh et al. (2008) found that teachers' attitudes towards e-learning can be measured by their opinions regarding web-based activities, computer-assisted learning and the perceived added value of e-learning circumstances. Liaw et al. (2007) explained that there is an encouraging and positive perception towards using e-learning as a teaching assisted tool among instructors.

A study by Gupta et al. (2020) reveals that online classes can succeed as a substitute for the physical class through practice, system upgrading and capacity building of the student-teacher. The study also shows that teachers should arrange online classes in such a way that the students find more interest in studying online and for that, adequate training is necessary for both course recipients and providers. Bassfar et al. (2012), in their research, found that there is no significant difference in the teacher's attitudes and self-efficacy toward e-learning based on gender and age group. In the study on Egyptian public schools, Bakr (2011) highlighted that teachers had a positive attitude towards computers and there were no significant differences in terms of gender and teaching experience. Dubey (2020) reported that young teachers are more actively engaged in online education due to their familiarity with the technology. Overall study says that the teachers are taking online education positively and are actively involved in teaching students during COVID-19 lockdown.

From these reviews, it can be said that teachers' perception toward online classes is positive but there are also several factors that negatively impact in the proper implementation of online classes. One such factor, as seen in previous studies, is the teacher's age. However, none of these studies provided a clear picture of teachers' perception on online classes during the Covid-19 pandemic based on age. This study attempts to fill this gap.

1.2 Objective of the present study

The main aim of this study is to analyze teachers' perceptions about online classes based on their age. For that, the null hypothesis (H_0) is taken as there is no significant difference in teachers' perception towards online classes based on their age. Therefore the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is there is a significant difference in teachers' perception towards online classes based on their age.

2. Materials and Methods

A descriptive survey method was used in this study. The study was conducted among different school teachers in the Lakhimpur District of India. The data required for the study has been collected from primary sources. The researcher used a self-structured closed-ended questionnaire having with a five-point Likert scale with responses Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and Strongly Agree. A pilot study was carried out to know the feasibility of the questionnaire. The data were collected from 60 participant teachers equally divided as their age from 20 to 40 years and 41 to 60years. The researcher used a simple random sampling method in this study. To analyze the data, the researchers used the Pearson Chi-Square test in the present study.

3. Results and Discussion

The demographic details of teachers were collected to know their backgrounds like age, gender, previous experiences with online classes, types of technological equipment and networks they have used during online classes. The following table explains the demographic background of the respondents.

Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents

Variables	Divisions of Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20 years to 40 years	30	50%
	41 years to 60 years	30	50%
	Total	60	100%
Gender	Male	22	36.67%
	Female	38	63.33%
	Total	60	100%
Previous experiences with online class	More than one year	4	6.67%
	Less than one year	39	65%
	No experiences	17	28.33%
	Total	60	100%
Technological equipment used	Laptop	11	18.33%
	Mobile	49	81.67%
	Other	0	0%
	Total	60	100%
Internet Facility	Mobile Internet	60	100%
	Wi-Fi	0	0%
	Other	0	0%
	Total	60	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table No. 1 indicates the demographic profile of the respondents, which shows that the numbers of respondents are equally divided in both ages, i.e. from 20 to 40 years (50%) and 41 to 60 years (50%). The majority of the respondents are female teacher (63.33%). The table also shows that 28.33% respondent teachers had no previous experiences with online classes, 65% teachers had less than one year previous experiences due to the Covid-19 pandemic of last year i.e. 2020 and only 6.7% teachers had more than one year previous experience with online classes. The majority of respondents (81.67%) used a mobile phone for online classes and 100% of respondents do online classes through mobile internet.

3.1 Online class is flexible in nature.

The one thing that is of prime necessity to educators is the flexibility to gain knowledge and skills to do their jobs better (Asiasociety, n.a). The online class encourages this flexibility by allowing the teachers to share their ideas and opinions in various ways without maintaining any strict discipline. Online classes help the teachers to balance their schoolwork family obligations while also excelling in their hobbies. The teacher can take his class from the comfort of his own home and any other place he wants.

Table 2: Teachers' perception on the flexibility of online class

Age	Responses					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
From 20 years to 40 years	1	5	3	14	7	30
From 41 years to 60 years	3	11	8	6	2	30
Total	4	16	11	20	9	60
Percentage	6.7%	26.7%	18.3%	33.3%	15%	100%
Chi-Square Test						
X^2 calculated value	Degrees of freedom (df)		Significance level (α)		X^2 tabular value	
11.5	4		0.05		9.49	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

From table 2, 6.7% respondents strongly disagreed that online class is flexible in nature and 26.7% respondents found to disagree with that. On the other hand, 18.3% respondents were found to be neutral. 33.3% respondents agreed that online class is flexible in nature and 15% respondents strongly agree with this statement. Regarding this statement, most of the respondents (33.3%) were found to agree. In total, 48.3% respondents agreed that online classes are flexible in nature. Therefore we can say that, regarding the statement on flexibility of online classes, most of the respondents (48.3%) agreed the statement in comparison to its disagreeing respondents (33%).

At 0.05 significant level, the statistical value of Pearson Chi-Square test (11.5) is greater than the table value (9.49). Therefore, we reject null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Thus, we can say that there is a significant difference between teacher's perceptions on the flexibility of online classes based on their age.

3.2 Online class saves time

Time is one of the most precious commodities for educators. The online class helps the teacher to teach at their own pace, rather than moving with the pace of the classroom. There is no travel needed for teachers for the online class. By eliminating travel, a teacher can save enough time and utilize this time in good productive work.

Table 3: Teachers' perception on online classes saves time

Age	Responses					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
From 20 years to 40 years	0	5	6	12	7	30
From 41 years to 60 years	7	7	10	2	4	30
Total	7	12	16	14	11	60
Percentage	11.7%	20%	26.7%	23.3%	18.3%	100%
Chi Square Test						
X^2 calculated value	Degrees of freedom (df)		Significance level (α)		X^2 tabular value	
16.3	4		0.05		9.49	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Tables 3 show that 11.7% respondents strongly disagreed that online class saves time and 20% respondents disagreed to it. 26.7% respondents were found to be neutral. On the other hand 23.3% respondents agreed that online class saves time and 18.3% respondents strongly agree with this statement. Regarding this statement, higher numbers (26.7%) of respondents were found to be neutral. In total 41.6% respondents agreed that online class saves time and 31.7% respondents disagreed with it. Therefore we can say that, regarding the statement on saving of time in online classes, most of the respondents (41.6%) agreed the statement in comparison to its disagreeing respondents (31.7%).

At 0.05 significant level, the statistical value of Pearson Chi-Square test (16.3) is greater than the table value (9.49). Therefore we reject null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Thus we can say that based on their age there is a significant difference between teacher's perceptions on the statement that online class saves time.

3.3 Online class is far better than traditional class

In these pandemic days, online classes became extremely popular due to the sudden closedown of all educational institutions. However, many people willingly do not attend online classes primarily due to their misconceptions. While some people find online classes are more appropriate, the rest of others don't want to welcome online classes over traditional classroom methods. A study by Karki et al. (2021) found that the majority of the students found the physical class was more effective than online class in terms of accessibility, easy-to-use resources and importance to enhancing teaching-learning habits. According to Alawamleh et al. (2020), students still prefer physical classes over online classes due to various challenges they have to deal with when taking online classes, such as lack of motivation, understanding of the material. The study also found that online classes decrease in communication levels between the students and teacher and develop a feeling of isolation among students.

Table 4: Teachers' perception on online class is far better than the traditional class

Age	Responses					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
From 20 years to 40 years	9	14	6	1	0	30
From 41 years to 60 years	17	8	5	0	0	30
Total	26	22	11	1	0	60
Percentage	43.3%	36.7%	18.3%	1.7%	0%	100%
Chi-Square Test						
X^2 calculated value	Degrees of freedom (df)		Significance level (α)		X^2 tabular value	
5.19	4		0.05		9.49	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 4 indicates that 43.3% respondents strongly disagreed that online class is far better than traditional class and 36.7% respondents disagreed to it. 18.3% respondents were found to be neutral. On the other hand only 1.7% respondents agree that online class is far better than traditional class and no one (0%) strongly agreed with this statement. Regarding this statement, higher numbers (43.3%) of respondents were found to strongly disagree. In total 80% respondents disagreed that online class is far better than traditional class and only 1.7% respondents agreed with it. From this result we can say that majority of the teacher denied that online class is far better than traditional class.

At 0.05 significant level, the statistical value of Pearson Chi-Square test (5.19) is lesser than the table value (9.49). Therefore we accept null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis. Thus we can say that based on their age; there is no significant difference between teachers' perceptions on the statement that online class is far better than a traditional class.

3.4 Online class is easy to communicate

For effective communication, whether in a face-to-face class or online class, teachers have to build a good rapport with their students. Communicating with students on an online platform requires a little more effort and planning than sharing with students in a face-to-face environment due to the absence of body language in the online platform. According to a survey by Hindustan Times (2020), over 80% of teachers expressed the impossibility of maintaining emotional connections with children during online classes.

Table 5: Teachers' perception on online class is easy to communicate

Age	Responses					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
From 20 years to 40 years	2	4	4	11	9	30
From 41 years to 60 years	13	8	3	6	0	30
Total	15	12	7	17	9	60
Percentage	25%	20%	11.7%	28.3%	15%	100%
Chi-Square Test						
X^2 calculated value	Degrees of freedom (df)		Significance level (α)		X^2 tabular value	
20.01	4		0.05		9.49	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

During the survey, 25% respondents strongly disagreed that online class is easy to communicate and 20% respondents disagreed to it. On the other hand, 11.7% respondents were found to be neutral. 28.3% respondents agreed that online class is easy to communicate and 15% respondents strongly agreed with this statement. Therefore we can say that, regarding the statement on easy communication in online class, most of the respondents (45%) disagreed the statement in comparison to its agreeing respondents (43.3%).

At 0.05 significant level, the statistical value of Pearson Chi-Square test (20.01) is greater than the table value (9.49). Therefore we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Thus we can say that there is a significant difference between teachers' perceptions on easy communication of online classes based on their age.

3.5 Students fully participate in the online class

Ensuring active student participation is challenging in any classroom situation. But in this pandemic situation, it became more challengeable for the teachers when it comes to encouraging participation of students virtually. For full participation of students in the online class, the teacher should create an active online environment where students can get all opportunities to share their opinions ideas without any hesitation. But some issues such as lack of technological equipment, lack of technical ability, lack of internet connection and lack of willingness to participate can create a barrier in full participation of students in the online class.

Table 6: Teachers' perception on student's full participation in online class

Age	Responses					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
From 20 years to 40 years	12	8	5	4	1	30
From 41 years to 60 years	14	11	3	2	0	30
Total	26	19	8	6	1	60
Percentage	43.3%	31.7%	13.3%	10%	1.7%	100%
Chi-Square Test						
X^2 calculated value	Degrees of freedom (df)		Significance level (α)		X^2 tabular value	
2.8	4		0.05		9.49	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 6 indicates that 43.3% respondents strongly disagreed that students fully participate in online class and 31.7% respondents disagreed to it. 13.3% respondents were found to be neutral. On the other hand only 10% respondents agreed that students participate fully in online class and 1.7% respondents strongly agreed with this statement. Regarding this statement, higher numbers (43.3%) of respondents were found to strongly disagree. In total 75% respondents disagreed that students fully participate in online class and only 11.7% respondents agreed with it. From this result we can say that majority of the teacher denied that students participate fully in online class.

At 0.05 significant level, the statistical value of Pearson Chi-Square test (2.8) is lesser than the table value (9.49). Therefore we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis. Thus we can say that there is no significant difference between teachers' perceptions on students' full participation in online classes based on their age.

3.6 Online class is more personalized than the traditional method

Personalized learning is about the facilitation of students by the teacher. Truly personalized learning requires one-on-one tutoring for every student based on their need, interests, capacity and pace. The online class helps the teacher in the differentiation of the student's interest if the teacher is working in a group as he needs not to pay attention to all the students within a limited time. But in a traditional setting, it is harder to personalized instruction because they are constrained by time and space. All 25 to 30 students in a class need the teacher's time and attention simultaneously.

Table 7: Teachers' perception on online class is more personalized than the traditional method

Age	Responses					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
From 20 years to 40 years	1	5	8	10	6	30
From 41 years to 60 years	3	9	13	5	0	30
Total	4	14	21	15	6	60
Percentage	6.7%	23.3%	35%	25%	10%	100%
Chi-Square Test						
X^2 calculated value	Degrees of freedom (df)		Significance level (α)		X^2 tabular value	
10.9	4		0.05		9.49	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

During the survey, 6.7% respondents strongly disagreed that online classes are more personalized than traditional method and 23.3% respondents disagreed to it. On the other hand, 35% respondents were found to be neutral. 25% respondents agreed that online classes are more personalized than traditional method and 10% respondents strongly agreed with this statement. Regarding this statement, higher numbers (35%) of respondents were found to be neutral. In total 35% respondents agreed up and 30% respondents denied that online classes are more personalized than traditional method. Therefore we can say that, regarding the statement on personalization of online classes in comparison to tradition classes, most of the respondents (35%) agreed the statement and similar percentage of respondents (35%) remained neutral in comparison to its disagreeing respondents (30%).

At 0.05 significant level, the statistical value of Pearson Chi-Square test (10.9) is greater than the table value (9.49). Therefore we reject null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. Thus we can say that there is a significant difference between teachers' perceptions on the statement that online class is more personalized than the traditional method based on their age.

3.7 Online examination is easy to conduct

During the Covid-19 situation, it is now impossible for teachers to conduct examinations like they used to. Written examinations which had a large syllabus have now been ineffective. Online examination had become easier as there is no requirement of using any kind of paper and pencil. A teacher can conduct an examination no matter where he is; the time and place are not barriers. The online examination also helps in eliminating the stress from students' minds.

Table 8: Teachers' perception on online examination is easy to conduct

Age	Responses					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
From 20 years to 40 years	9	9	9	3	0	30
From 41 years to 60 years	19	6	5	0	0	30
Total	28	15	14	3	0	60
Percentage	46.7%	25%	23.3%	5%	0%	100%
Chi-Square Test						
X^2 calculated value	Degrees of freedom (df)		Significance level (α)		X^2 tabular value	
8.31	4		0.05		9.49	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 8 indicates that 46.7% respondents strongly disagreed that online examination is easy to conduct and 25% respondents disagreed to it. 23.3% respondents were found to be neutral. On the other hand only 5% respondents agreed that online examination is easy to conduct and no respondents strongly agreed with this statement. Regarding this statement, higher numbers (46.7%) of respondents were found to strongly disagree. In total 71.7% respondents disagreed that online examination is easy to conduct and only 5% respondents agreed with the statement. The result indicates that majority of the teacher denied that online examination is easy to conduct.

At 0.05 significant level, the statistical value of the Pearson Chi-Square test (8.31) is lesser than the table value (9.49). Therefore we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis. Thus we can say that there is no significant difference between teachers' perceptions that online examination is easy to conduct based on their age.

3.8 Online class is compatible with current education syllabus

Effective online learning must consider various factors such as availability of technological equipment, internet speed, student-teacher ratio, e-learning pedagogy, technical knowledge of students and teachers and most importantly, desirable attitude and interest of teachers and students for online classes. Barbour et al. (2020) illustrated that the present online classroom design is not a planned classroom design rather, it is a temporary solution for fill up the gap of the education sector during this pandemic situation. Due to the sudden execution of unplanned online classrooms, both students and teachers had faced many obstacles in adopting this education procedure. Online class needs proper planning for their compatibility with the current education syllabus and its successful implementation.

Table 9: Teachers' perception on online class is compatible with the current education syllabus

Age	Responses					Total
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
From 20 years to 40 years	6	9	8	4	3	30
From 41 years to 60 years	4	14	8	1	3	30
Total	10	23	16	5	6	60
Percentage	16.7%	38.3%	26.7%	8.3%	10%	100%
Chi-Square Test						
X^2 calculated value	Degrees of freedom (df)		Significance level (α)		X^2 tabular value	
3.29	4		0.05		9.49	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 9 indicates that 16.7% respondents strongly disagreed that online class is compatible with current education syllabus and 38.3% respondents disagreed to it. 26.7% respondents were found to be neutral. On the other hand 8.3% respondents agreed that online class is compatible with current education syllabus and 10% respondents strongly agreed with this statement. Regarding this statement, higher numbers (38.3) of respondents were found to disagree. In total 55% respondents disagreed that online class is compatible with current education syllabus and total 18.3% respondents agreed with the statement. The result indicates that majority of the teacher denied that online class is compatible with current education syllabus.

At 0.05 significant level, the statistical value of the Pearson Chi-Square test (3.29) is lesser than the table value (9.49). Therefore we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis. Thus we can say that there is no significant difference between teachers' perceptions on the statement that online class is compatible with the current education syllabus based on their age.

4. Conclusion

From the study, it was found that the majority of teachers had only previous one-year experience with the online class due to the covid19 pandemic last year i.e., 2020. The result shows that based on their age groups- (20 to 40 years) and (41 to 60 years), teachers responded differently in some questions of the questionnaire. However, in some questions, teachers with both age groups responded similarly. On the flexibility of online class, the perceptions of the teachers were different, where the majority of teachers between the ages of 20 to 40 years agreed with the statement and the majority of teachers between 41 to 60 years disagreed it. On the statement that online class saves time, the majority of teachers between the ages of 20 to 40 years agreed to it

and the majority of teachers between 41 to 60 years disagreed with the statement. In the third statement, i.e., the online class is far better than the traditional class; both age groups of teachers' perceptions were almost similar. 80% of total teachers disagreed with the statement, only 1.7% of teachers agreed with it and the rest remained neutral on it. Again, there are different perceptions seen in both age groups of teachers on the online statement class is easy to communicate, where the majority of teachers between ages of 20 to 40 years agreed with the statement and majority of teachers between 41 to 60 years denied it. On the fifth statement i.e., students fully participate in the online class, 75% of total teachers disagreed with it and there is a similarity seen in teacher's perception on this statement. The majority of teachers between ages of 20 to 40 years agreed on the statement that online class is more personalized than the traditional method. On the other hand majority of teachers, between 41 to 60 years disagreed with it. The result shows that in the last two statements of the questionnaire, i.e., the online examination is easy to conduct and online class is compatible with the current education syllabus, there are no significant differences in teacher's perception between both age groups. After analysis of the result, we can say that there is a significant difference between teachers' perceptions towards online classes based on their age group. However, in some statements, it is also seen that there is no significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on their age group. Moreover, we can conclude that perceptions of teachers with age between 20 to 40 years are more positive towards online classes than the teachers with 41 to 60 years.

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