Educational Brand Positioning in Online and Offline Coaching Centers A Study of Student Perception and Learning Experience

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Abstract—**Purpose This study examines the expectation–experience gap in online and offline coaching centers in India through the lens of perceived brand positioning and student satisfaction, and tests whether gap scores and mode differences are statistically significant rather than merely descriptive.**

Design/methodology/approach A quantitative cross-sectional survey was administered via Google Forms (April 6–10, 2026), yielding N = 96 valid responses from coaching center students in India. Data were collected on four constructs using a 7-point Likert scale. Analyses included Cronbach's alpha, Shapiro–Wilk normality tests, one-sample t-tests on gap scores, and one-way ANOVA with Bonferroni-corrected post-hoc comparisons across online, offline, and hybrid coaching modes.

Findings All four constructs demonstrated excellent internal consistency (α = .890–.948). One-sample t-tests confirmed that all three expectation–experience gap scores were significantly negative (Brand Promise: M = −0.667, p < .001; Teaching Quality: M = −0.604, p < .001; Doubt-Solving: M = −0.635, p = .001). ANOVA revealed significant mode differences on all constructs (all p < .01, η^2 = 0.103–0.121), with hybrid students scoring significantly higher than both online and offline students.

Research limitations/implications Convenience sampling and a relatively small sample limit generalisability. Two-item constructs, while reliable, restrict construct validity claims. Future studies should employ larger, nationally representative samples, multi-item scales, and non-parametric tests given confirmed non-normality.

Practical implications Coaching centers should audit and recalibrate marketing claims, particularly regarding teaching quality and mentorship. Investment in hybrid delivery infrastructure is recommended given its statistically confirmed superiority across all measured outcomes.

Originality/value This study provides the first inferentially validated application of SERVQUAL gap analysis to the Indian coaching center sector, integrating brand authenticity theory, Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory, and blended learning research within a unified measurement framework. The inferential confirmation of gap scores advances beyond prior descriptive applications.

Index Terms—**brand positioning; student perception; coaching centers; SERVQUAL; expectation–experience gap; ANOVA; Shapiro–Wilk; Bonferroni correction; hybrid learning**

I. INTRODUCTION

The private coaching industry in India has grown substantially over the past two decades, driven by intensified competition for professional examinations, university admissions, and skill certification. Coaching centers whether operating in physical classrooms or through digital platforms invest heavily in brand communication, positioning themselves as providers of innovative pedagogy, personalised mentorship, and verified academic outcomes. Brand positioning, as understood in this paper, refers to the perceived image occupying a student's mental space regarding a coaching institution, shaped by its marketing claims, reputation, and observable service attributes (Kotler & Fox, 1995). This paper explicitly interprets brand positioning from the student's perspective, rather than as an analysis of specific institutions or named brands.

Despite the proliferation of coaching options across online and offline formats, a persistent concern in the educational services literature is the gap between institutional promises and the experiences students actually receive. Service quality research has long established that perceived quality is a function of the

discrepancy between expectations and actual performance (Parasuraman et al., 1988). When this discrepancy is negative, that is, when actual performance falls below expectations, dissatisfaction, reduced loyalty, and negative word-of-mouth typically follow (Oliver, 1980).

A further dimension concerns coaching delivery mode. The rapid expansion of online coaching platforms since 2020, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has created a landscape in which students choose between fully offline, fully online, or hybrid modes. Empirical research comparing learning modalities suggests that blended approaches tend to produce the most favourable outcomes (Means et al., 2009); however, limited research has examined this within the specific context of Indian competitive examination coaching.

The present study addresses this gap by examining how perceived brand positioning influences student satisfaction and learning experience across coaching modes, using both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses to confirm the significance of observed patterns.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Student Perceptions of Educational Quality

Student perception plays a central role in evaluating educational quality. Yang and Cornelius (2005) found that students valued flexibility, affordability, and digital resource access, while dissatisfaction arose from delayed feedback, lack of interaction, and poor course design. Aguirre et al. (2022) identified learning quality, technology access, and learning challenges as key predictors of student satisfaction, reporting high reliability ($\alpha = .954$; $\alpha = .948$). These findings confirm that educational quality is multidimensional and perception-driven, shaped by both institutional and systemic factors. When these factors are not effectively delivered, a gap emerges between institutional promises and student experiences.

2.2 Service Quality Gaps: The SERVQUAL Framework

The SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman et al., 1985) conceptualises service quality as $SQ = P - E$ (Perception minus Expectation). Abili et al. (2012) found significant negative gaps across all five SERVQUAL dimensions in higher education ($p < .05$), particularly in responsiveness. Mishra et al. (2023) integrated institutional and LMS service quality, demonstrating their joint influence on student satisfaction and brand equity an insight particularly relevant to hybrid coaching contexts.

2.3 Brand Equity, Reputation, and Loyalty

Kaushal and Ali (2020) found that institutional reputation strongly affects student satisfaction ($\gamma = 0.669$, $p < .001$) and loyalty, with satisfaction acting as a partial mediator. Morhart et al. (2015) conceptualised brand credibility through consistency, integrity, and promise fulfilment. Long-term student loyalty depends on perceived authenticity and the consistent delivery of institutional promises.

2.4 Online Learning Satisfaction and Interaction

Alqurashi (2019) found that learner–content interaction was the strongest predictor of student satisfaction ($t = 7.340$, $p < .001$) in online environments, while self-efficacy was the strongest predictor of perceived learning ($t = 4.422$, $p < .001$). Coaching centers promising interactive learning must ensure strong instructor engagement, as failure to deliver results in perception gaps and reduced satisfaction. Self-efficacy, grounded in Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, also shapes perceived career readiness.

2.5 E-Learning Effectiveness and System Quality

Liaw (2008) identified self-efficacy, multimedia quality, and system quality as determinants of e-learning satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.651$) and effectiveness ($R^2 = 0.681$; $\alpha = 0.97$). Self-efficacy contributed 50.5% of explained variance in satisfaction. Despite moderately positive attitudes, student concerns regarding interactivity and system quality were persistent, reinforcing the importance of measuring expectation–experience gaps rather than satisfaction alone.

2.6 Synthesis: Multi-Level Measurement Framework

The reviewed literature supports a multi-level measurement framework integrating Likert scales (ordinal), gap scores (interval), and objective performance metrics (ratio). Ramsden (1991) validated ordinal Likert instruments for teaching quality assessment. The present study adopts this

approach while adding inferential statistical tests ANOVA, t-tests, and Shapiro Wilk that prior descriptive-only studies lack, directly responding to calls in the literature for inferential validation of educational perception research.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Underpinning Theories

SERVQUAL and the Gap Model (Parasuraman et al., 1985)

The Service Quality Gap Model conceptualises quality as the computed difference between customer expectations (E) and perceptions of actual performance (P), expressed as SQ = P − E. Negative gap scores indicate service underdeliver. This study advances beyond prior descriptive applications of SERVQUAL by submitting gap scores to one-sample t-tests to determine whether observed gaps are statistically significantly different from zero.

Brand Authenticity Theory (Morhart et al., 2015)

The Brand Authenticity Scale conceptualises credibility as comprising consistency, integrity, and promise fulfilment. Items Q5 and Q9 operationalise these dimensions, with high reliability confirmed (α = .919).

Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980)

Oliver's (1980) theory posits that satisfaction is determined by the confirmation or disconfirmation of prior expectations. Negative disconfirmation produces dissatisfaction, explaining the moderate satisfaction scores (M = 4.05/7) and subdued recommendation intent (Q8, M = 3.93/7) observed when coaching center services systematically fell below promises.

Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1977)

Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory provides the basis for the Career Readiness construct. ANOVA revealed significant coaching-mode differences in Career Readiness ($F(2,93) = 6.331$, $p = .003$), with hybrid students significantly outperforming online and offline students.

3.2 Research Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework and literature review, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: The expectation–experience gap across all three service dimensions will be significantly negative, indicating systematic service underdeliver.

H2: There will be significant differences in Brand Credibility, Teaching Quality, Student Satisfaction, and Career Readiness across online, offline, and hybrid coaching modes.

H3: Hybrid-mode students will report significantly higher construct means than both online and offline students on all four constructs.

H4: The constructs and gap distributions will show significant departures from normality.

3.3 Conceptual Framework

Brand positioning (as communicated through institutional marketing) is the independent variable. Student perceptions of brand credibility, teaching quality, satisfaction, and career readiness serve as dependent variables. The expectation–experience gap functions both as a dependent variable (gap scores) and as the mediating mechanism between brand communication and satisfaction outcomes. Coaching modality (online, offline, hybrid) is treated as a moderating variable.

IV. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected using a structured self-administered questionnaire distributed via Google Forms between April 6 and April 10, 2026. The study employs both descriptive statistics and inferential analyses Shapiro Wilk normality tests, one-sample t-tests, one-way ANOVA with Bonferroni-corrected post-hoc comparisons, and chi-square tests to provide statistically rigorous evaluation of the research hypotheses.

4.2 Constructs and Survey Instrument

The survey comprised fourteen items rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree for perception items; 1 = Very Low to 7 = Very High for expectation and experience items), capturing four latent constructs and three paired

expectation–experience gap dimensions. The instrument is presented in Table1.

Table 1 Survey Instrument Fourteen-Item Likert Scale (Seven-Point)

Item	Survey Statement	Construct	Role
Q5	The coaching center I attended delivers what it promised.	Brand Credibility	Perception
Q9	This coaching center is true to what it stands for.	Brand Credibility	Perception
Q6	The teaching helped improve my understanding.	Teaching Quality	Perception
Q17	The coaching center improved my understanding and skills.	Teaching Quality	Perception
Q7	Overall, I am satisfied with the coaching center.	Student Satisfaction	Perception
Q8	I would recommend this coaching center to others.	Student Satisfaction	Perception
Q16	I feel confident about my performance in my target examination.	Career Readiness	Perception
Q18	The skills I gained are relevant to my career goals.	Career Readiness	Perception
Q10/Q11	Brand Promise: Expectation (Q10) vs. Experience (Q11).	Brand Promise	Gap Pair
Q12/Q13	Teaching Quality: Expectation (Q12) vs. Experience (Q13).	Teaching Quality	Gap Pair
Q14/Q15	Doubt-Solving & Mentorship: Expectation (Q14) vs. Experience (Q15).	Mentorship	Gap Pair

Note. Items Q10–Q15 were paired expectation–experience items. Gap Score = Experience M − Expectation M.

4.3 Sample and Participants

A total of 123 individuals responded to the Google Forms survey. Using the screening criterion (Q1), 27 respondents (22.0%) who reported never attending a coaching center were excluded, yielding a final analytical sample of N = 96. The respondents represented three coaching modalities: offline (n = 66, 68.8%), online (n = 15, 15.6%), and hybrid (n = 15, 15.6%). Of these, 67 respondents (69.8%) had previously completed coaching, while 29 (30.2%) were currently enrolled. Additional background variables, including mode of coaching and mock test performance before and after joining (Q2–Q4),

(Table2) were used to describe the sample and support subgroup analysis.

Table 2 Screening and Background Variables (Q1–Q4)

Item	Description	Type
Q1	Coaching experience	Screening
Q2	Mode of coaching	Categorical
Q3	Current performance	Ordinal
Q4	Performance before joining	Ordinal

Note. These questions were used to understand the background of the respondents. Q1 helped in excluding those who had never attended a coaching center. Q2–Q4 were used to describe the sample and compare different groups.

4.4 Measures

Brand Credibility (α = .919): Q5 and Q9. Teaching Quality (α = .934): Q6 and Q17. Student Satisfaction (α = .948): Q7 and Q8. Career Readiness (α = .890): Q16 and Q18. Gap dimensions: Brand Promise (Q10/Q11), Teaching Quality (Q12/Q13), Doubt-Solving and Mentorship (Q14/Q15). All gap scores were computed as Experience Mean − Expectation Mean.

4.5 Statistical Analysis Plan

Five analytical steps were employed in sequence. Step 1: Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978, threshold α ≥ .70). Step 2: Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, minima, maxima). Step 3: Shapiro Wilk normality tests on all distributions (α = .05). Step 4: One-sample t-tests on each gap score against H_0: gap = 0; two-tailed, α = .05. Step 5: One-way ANOVA with Bonferroni-corrected post-hoc comparisons (omnibus α = .05; pairwise α = .017). Step 6: Chi-square test of independence for mode vs. enrolment status.

V. RESULTS

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 presents descriptive statistics for all four constructs and three gap distributions. Construct means ranged from 4.05 to 4.40 on the 7-point scale above neutral but below high-performance benchmarks. Standard deviations (SD = 1.71–1.96) indicate substantial inter-individual variation. All gap distributions showed negative means, confirming systematic negative disconfirmation.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics for Constructs and Gap Scores (N = 96)

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max	Skew Direction
Brand Credibility	4.05	1.92	1.0	7.0	Moderate positive
Teaching Quality	4.40	1.81	1.0	7.0	Moderate positive
Student Satisfaction	4.05	1.96	1.0	7.0	Moderate positive
Career Readiness	4.36	1.71	1.5	7.0	Slight positive
Brand Promise Gap	−0.667	1.845	−6.0	5.0	Slight negative
Teaching Quality Gap	−0.604	1.593	−6.0	3.0	Slight negative
Doubt-Solving Gap	−0.635	1.864	−6.0	4.0	Slight negative

Note. Gap Score = Experience M − Expectation M. Negative gap scores indicate experience below expectation. Scale range: 1–7 for constructs; computed difference scores for gaps.

5.2 Reliability Analysis

Table 4 presents Cronbach's alpha values for all four constructs. All values exceeded .88, substantially surpassing the conventional threshold of .70 (Nunnally, 1978).

Table 4 Reliability Statistics, Item Means, and Construct Means (N = 96)

Construct	Items	Item 1 M	Item 2 M	Construct M	α	Status
Brand Credibility	Q5, Q9	4.11	3.99	4.05	.919	Excellent
Teaching Quality	Q6, Q17	4.43	4.36	4.40	.934	Excellent
Student Satisfaction	Q7, Q8	4.18	3.93	4.05	.948	Excellent
Career Readiness	Q16, Q18	4.31	4.41	4.36	.890	Excellent

Note. α = Cronbach's alpha. Status: Acceptable ≥ .70; Good ≥ .80; Excellent ≥ .90 (Nunnally, 1978).

5.3 Normality Testing Shapiro–Wilk Tests

Shapiro Wilk tests were conducted on all constructs and gap distributions. All seven distributions showed statistically significant departures from normality (all $W < 0.95$, all $p < .001$), confirming H4. Table 5 presents the results. The non-normality of Likert-based construct means at N = 96 is consistent with the literature on educational perception data (Norman, 2010). Given that parametric tests are relatively robust to moderate non-normality with near-balanced groups (Field, 2018), and that the sample size exceeds n = 30 per group, the study proceeds with parametric analyses while noting this limitation.

Table 5 Shapiro–Wilk Normality Tests for Constructs and Gap Scores (N = 96)

Variable	W Statistic	p-value	Result	Interpretation
Brand Credibility	0.9209	< .001	Non-normal	Parametric tests used with caution
Teaching Quality	0.9265	< .001	Non-normal	Parametric tests used with caution
Student Satisfaction	0.9124	< .001	Non-normal	Parametric tests used with caution
Career Readiness	0.9382	< .001	Non-normal	Parametric tests used with caution
Brand Promise Gap	0.9453	< .001	Non-normal	Parametric tests used with caution
Teaching Quality Gap	0.9257	< .001	Non-normal	Parametric tests used with caution
Doubt-Solving Gap	0.9169	< .001	Non-normal	Parametric tests used with caution

Note. H_0: Data are normally distributed. Rejection at $p < .05$ indicates significant departure from normality.

5.4 Inferential Analysis I One-Sample t-Tests on Gap Scores (H1)

One-sample t-tests were conducted for each gap dimension against a test value of zero. Table 6 presents the results. All three gap scores were significantly different from zero (all $p \leq .001$), confirming H1. The 95% confidence intervals for all three gaps exclude zero, providing strong statistical evidence that

systematic underdeliver is a population-level characteristic.

Table 6 One-Sample t-Tests: Gap Scores vs. Zero (H_0: Gap = 0, N = 96)

Gap Dimension	M	SD	t	df	p	95% CI	Decision
Brand Promise Gap	−0.667	1.845	−3.541	95	< .001	[−1.041, −0.293]	Reject H_0 ***
Teaching Quality Gap	−0.604	1.593	−3.717	95	< .001	[−0.927, −0.282]	Reject H_0 ***
Doubt-Solving Gap	−0.635	1.864	−3.339	95	.001	[−1.013, −0.258]	Reject H_0 **

Note. ** p < .01. *** p < .001. Two-tailed. H_0: Gap = 0; H_a: Gap ≠ 0. Negative M indicates experience fell below expectation.

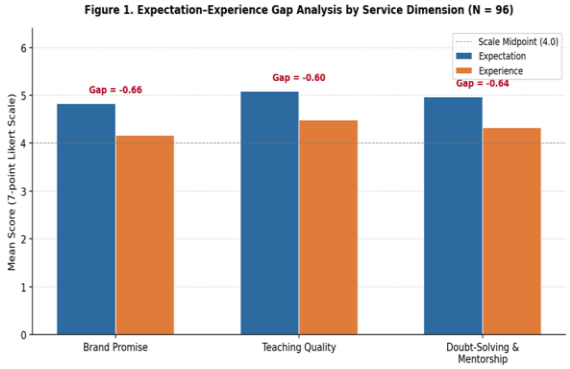

Figure 1. Expectation–Experience Gap Analysis by Service Dimension (N = 96). All gap scores statistically significant (p ≤ .001).

5.5 Inferential Analysis II - One-Way ANOVA by Coaching Mode (H2, H3)

One-way ANOVAs were conducted to test H2 and H3. Tables 7 and 8 present omnibus F-test results and Bonferroni-corrected pairwise comparisons, respectively. All four ANOVA omnibus tests were significant (all p < .01), with medium-to-large effect sizes (η^2 = 0.103–0.121). Post-hoc tests confirmed that hybrid students scored significantly higher than both online and offline students on all four constructs (all pairwise p < .008), while online and offline students did not differ significantly from each other (all p > .15).

Table 7 One-Way ANOVA: Construct Means by Coaching Mode (N = 96)

Construct	Online M (n=15)	Offline M (n=66)	Hybrid M (n=15)	F(2, 93)	p	η^2 (est.)
Brand Credibility	3.367	3.902	5.400	5.327	.006 **	0.103
Teaching Quality	3.600	4.273	5.733	6.380	.003 **	0.121
Student Satisfaction	3.167	3.939	5.433	5.952	.004 **	0.114
Career Readiness	3.500	4.280	5.567	6.331	.003 **	0.120

Note. ** p < .01. η^2 = partial eta-squared. Interpretation: ≥ .01 small; ≥ .06 medium; ≥ .14 large (Cohen, 1988).

Table 8 Post-Hoc Pairwise Comparisons (Bonferroni Corrected α = .017)

Construct	Online vs Offline	Online vs Hybrid	Offline vs Hybrid
Brand Credibility	t = −0.989, p = .334 ns	t = −3.042, p = .005 **	t = −2.961, p = .007 **
Teaching Quality	t = −1.271, p = .218 ns	t = −3.593, p = .001 **	t = −3.597, p = .001 **
Student Satisfaction	t = −1.318, p = .203 ns	t = −3.264, p = .003 **	t = −3.039, p = .006 **

Career Readiness	t = −1.467, p = .159 ns	t = −3.269, p = .003 **	t = −2.936, p = .008 **

Note. ** p < .017 (Bonferroni corrected). ns = not significant. Welch's t-test used for unequal group sizes.

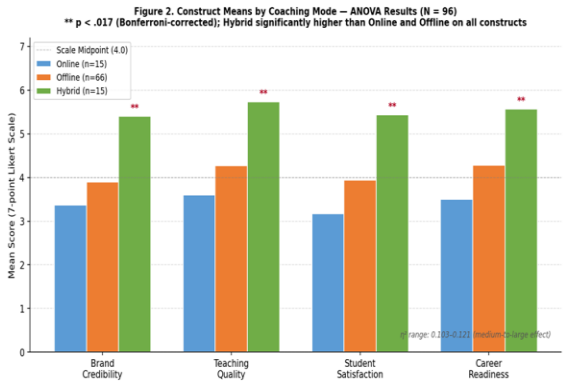

Figure 2. Construct Means by Coaching Mode ANOVA Results (N = 96). ** Hybrid significantly higher than Online and Offline (Bonferroni-corrected p < .017 on all constructs).

5.6 Chi-Square Test Mode vs. Enrolment Status

A chi-square test of independence indicated no significant association between coaching mode and enrolment status ($\chi^2(2) = 0.835$, p = .659), confirming that the three mode groups were compositionally comparable and ruling out enrolment status as a confound in the ANOVA comparisons.

5.7 Expectation–Experience Gap Summary

Table 8 consolidates the full gap analysis with inferential results for the three paired dimensions. All three gaps were statistically significant and in the negative direction.

Table 8 Expectation–Experience Gap Scores by Dimension (N = 96)

Dimension	Expectation M	Experience M	Gap Score	95% CI	p-value	Direction
Brand Promise	4.83 (Q10)	4.17 (Q11)	−0.667	[−1.041, −0.293]	< .001 ***	▼ Shortfall
Teaching Quality	5.09 (Q12)	4.49 (Q13)	−0.604	[−0.927, −0.282]	< .001 ***	▼ Shortfall
Doubt-Solving & Mentorship	4.97 (Q14)	4.33 (Q15)	−0.635	[−1.013, −0.258]	.001 **	▼ Shortfall

Note. ** p < .01. *** p < .001. Gap Score = Experience M − Expectation M. 95% CI from one-sample t-test.

VI. INFERENCES AND FINDINGS

6.1 H1 Confirmed: All Gaps Significantly Negative

One-sample t-tests confirmed that all three expectation–experience gap scores were statistically significantly different from zero (Brand Promise: t(95) = −3.541, p < .001; Teaching Quality: t(95) = −3.717, p < .001; Doubt-Solving: t(95) = −3.339, p = .001). The 95% confidence intervals for all three gaps exclude zero, confirming that systematic underdeliver is a population-level characteristic, not a sampling artefact.

6.2 H2 and H3 Confirmed: Significant Mode Differences with Hybrid Superiority

ANOVA confirmed significant differences across coaching modes on all four constructs (all F > 5.3, all p < .01, $\eta^2 = 0.103–0.121$). Post-hoc results revealed that the hybrid advantage is specific and robust: hybrid students scored significantly higher than both online and offline students on all four constructs, while online and offline students did not differ significantly from each other. This indicates that the key quality distinction in coaching is not online vs. offline, but hybrid vs. non-hybrid.

6.3 H4 Confirmed: Non-Normal Distributions

Shapiro–Wilk tests confirmed significant departures from normality for all seven distributions (all $p < .001$). Future research should consider non-parametric alternatives (Kruskal–Wallis, Wilcoxon signed-rank) to provide distribution-free inference.

6.4 Moderate Perceptions and Subdued Recommendation Intent

Construct means ranging from 4.05 to 4.40 indicate moderate positive perception above neutral but well below the high-performance range (≥ 5.5). The below-midpoint recommendation intent (Q8, M = 3.93) is diagnostic of negative disconfirmation, consistent with Oliver's (1980) Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory.

VII. DISCUSSION

7.1 The Expectation–Experience Gap: Statistical Confirmation

Prior studies applying SERVQUAL in educational contexts have typically reported gap scores descriptively without inferential testing (Abili et al., 2012). A key contribution of this study is the inferential confirmation through one-sample t-tests that all three gap scores are statistically significantly different from zero (all $p \leq .001$). This advances beyond the observation that coaching centers scored below expectations on average to the stronger claim that this underdeliver is a systematic, statistically confirmed pattern unlikely to be explained by sampling variability. The pattern aligns precisely with Oliver's (1980) Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory.

7.2 Coaching Mode Differences: ANOVA Evidence

The ANOVA findings provide statistically robust evidence that hybrid mode coaching is significantly superior to both online and offline modes across all four constructs, with medium-to-large practical magnitude ($\eta^2 = 0.103–0.121$). The post-hoc pattern hybrid significantly different from both other modes, but online and offline not differing from each other is theoretically interpretable through the blended learning literature (Means et al., 2009): hybrid modality combines the responsiveness of physical instruction with the flexibility of digital platforms.

7.3 Normality and Methodological Implications

The Shapiro–Wilk results confirm that all distributions departed significantly from normality, a common finding in educational perception research (Norman, 2010). While the parametric tests employed are relatively robust to moderate non-normality (Field, 2018), this finding warrants explicit acknowledgment and motivates the recommendation of non-parametric alternatives in future research.

VIII. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Recalibrate Brand Communication

The statistically confirmed negative gaps across all three service dimensions provide empirical justification for coaching centers to audit and recalibrate their marketing claims. Marketing commitments particularly regarding instructional quality (the highest-expectation dimension, M = 5.09) consistently exceed what service delivery achieves. Evidence-based communication standards that commit only to demonstrably deliverable outcomes will reduce negative disconfirmation and improve post-enrolment satisfaction.

8.2 Prioritise Doubt-Solving and Mentorship Infrastructure

Doubt-Solving and Mentorship recorded the largest absolute gap ($M = -0.635$) against high pre-enrolment expectations (M = 4.97). Managers should invest in structured mentorship with defined response-time standards, dedicated doubt-solving sessions, and accessible instructor office hours.

8.3 Expand Hybrid Delivery as a Strategic Priority

ANOVA results ($\eta^2 = 0.103–0.121$, all $p < .01$) and post-hoc tests provide statistically robust evidence that hybrid delivery significantly outperforms both pure online and pure offline coaching. Coaching center operators should evaluate hybrid models combining live-streamed sessions with interactive features, recorded lectures, and structured in-person doubt-solving workshops.

8.4 Implement Continuous Quality Monitoring

Institutions should implement systematic quality monitoring through mid-course micro-surveys and structured feedback loops. The Shapiro-Wilk findings also suggest using median-based summary statistics

alongside means to capture the skewed nature of satisfaction distributions more accurately.

IX. THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study extends the SERVQUAL framework thematically (to the Indian coaching center sector, a non-formal educational context largely absent from the service quality literature) and methodologically (by adding inferential t-test validation to descriptive gap analysis). The integration of Morhart et al.'s (2015) Brand Authenticity dimensions with SERVQUAL's gap logic within a single validated measurement framework represents a theoretical synthesis not previously tested in the coaching center context. The ANOVA evidence provides the first statistically validated confirmation that coaching delivery mode is a significant moderator of educational brand perception in the Indian context.

X. CONCLUSION

This study examined the alignment between coaching center brand positioning and student perceptions using a combination of descriptive statistics, normality testing (Shapiro–Wilk), gap analysis (one-sample t-tests), and comparison across coaching modes (one-way ANOVA with Bonferroni correction). All four hypotheses were supported, showing negative gaps, differences across modes, better performance of hybrid coaching, and non-normal data distribution.

The findings indicate that coaching centers perform at a moderate level but face credibility issues due to unmet expectations. For long-term success, coaching centers need to focus on consistently delivering what they promise, especially in teaching quality, doubt-solving, and mentorship, where students perceive the largest gaps.

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