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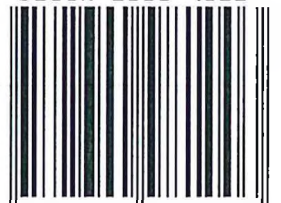
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The Role of Augmented Reality in Enhancing Student Engagement

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The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize the need for inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all (United Nations, 2021). However, a significant decline in student engagement and motivation has been observed, particularly following the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a study by UNICEF and UNFPA 2020, one in five Malaysian students lost interest in schooling post-pandemic, with children from single-parent households being disproportionately affected (Astro Awani, 2020). Furthermore, 10,160 students were absent from the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examinations in 2023 (Sinar Harian, 2024), and findings from the World Bank Group, (2024) indicate that 24% of students in Malaysia lack school-readiness skills, exacerbating challenges in academic participation and engagement.

The integration of Augmented Reality in education presents a transformative approach to mitigating student disengagement. According to McGraw Hill, (2022), 86% of educators affirm that Augmented Reality enhances student engagement, 76% believe it accommodates diverse learning styles, and 72% assert it fosters motivation. Empirical research conducted in Malaysia further supports these findings, demonstrating that Augmented Reality fosters a more interactive and immersive learning experience (Syafiq Yusof et al., 2022). By merging digital and physical realities, Augmented Reality cultivates engaging educational environments. Studies have shown that Augmented Reality applications allow students to visualize three-dimensional (3D) models of human anatomy in biology and virtually explore historical landmarks in geography, thus enhancing student attention and learning experiences (Zulfiqar et al., 2023).

One of the key advantages of Augmented Reality lies in its ability to simplify abstract and complex concepts through real-time visualizations. In mathematics, for instance, Augmented Reality enhances students' understanding of 3D shapes and vectors, making abstract ideas more tangible (Rohendi et al., 2025). Additionally, Augmented Reality facilitates personalized learning experiences, enabling students to progress at their own pace, which is particularly beneficial for those struggling in traditional classroom settings (Singh et al., 2024). Another significant advantage of Augmented Reality is its gamification potential, which involves incorporating interactive quizzes and challenges to create a competitive and stimulating educational atmosphere. Research has shown that this approach increases motivation among disengaged students (Singh et al., 2024).

Beyond its pedagogical benefits, Augmented Reality also contributes to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals by promoting equitable access to quality education, technological innovation, and sustainability awareness. In alignment with SDG4: Quality Education, Augmented Reality supports inclusive and equitable learning by adapting to diverse learning styles and enhancing engagement and comprehension. A study by Pan et al., (2024) demonstrated that Augmented Reality-based educational games significantly improved students' cognitive and affective learning outcomes, reinforcing its potential to contribute to SDG 4.

Beyond its pedagogical benefits, Augmented Reality also contributes to the achievement of several Sustainable Development Goals by promoting equitable access to quality education, technological innovation, and sustainability awareness. Furthermore, Augmented Reality supports SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure by reflecting a broader shift towards technological innovation in education. McNerney et al., (2023) developed an Augmented Reality-based remote sensing educational experience linked to the United Nations SDGs, illustrating how Augmented Reality can enhance digital learning infrastructures and prepare students for a technology-driven future. Additionally, Augmented Reality plays a role in fostering sustainability awareness, supporting SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production. Fridberg and Redfors, (2024) conducted an exploratory case study on preschool teachers utilizing Augmented Reality to teach sustainable development, highlighting Augmented Reality's effectiveness in promoting responsible consumption habits from an early age.

The integration of Augmented Reality in education represents a significant advancement in modern pedagogical approaches. By enhancing student engagement, simplifying complex concepts, and promoting personalized learning, Augmented Reality can effectively address the challenges of declining student motivation and participation. Furthermore, its alignment with SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) underscores its broader societal and development impact.

As educational institutions continue to embrace digital transformation, Augmented Reality stands as a powerful tool for fostering interactive, engaging, and sustainable learning experiences. Governments, educators, communities, and international organizations must work collaboratively to ensure that no child is left behind in education. By fostering inclusivity, we can build a more just and equitable world where every student, regardless of their abilities or background, has the opportunity to thrive.

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Navigating the Tides of Work Pressure in Modern Academia

Understanding the Challenges and Seeking Solutions

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Modern academia is portrayed by a dynamic and evolving landscape, where the roles and expectations of academicians have undergone significant transformations. The increasing demands for research productivity, administrative duties and the integration of technology into teaching have contributed to a swell in work pressure among faculty members. To understand the roots of the current work pressure, it is crucial to examine the historical context of academic work. Traditionally, the academic profession focused on teaching and research. However, the latter half of the 20th century witnessed a shift towards a more diverse set of responsibilities, including administrative duties and community engagement. The subsequent increase in workload set the stage for the intensification of work pressure among academicians.

Some of the factors that contributing to work pressure consists of the:



Increased of teaching load which is one significant factor contributing to work pressure among academicians is the heightened teaching load. The rising demand for higher education, coupled with limited faculty resources, has resulted in larger class sizes and more courses to manage (Smith, 2017). This has a direct impact on the time and energy faculty members can allocate to research and other academic pursuits.



Research expectations, whereas the pressure to produce high-impact research has escalated in recent years. Academic success is increasingly measured by quantitative metrics such as citation indices and h-indices, leading to a hypercompetitive environment (Jones et al., 2019). This focus on research productivity can then result in burnout and compromise the quality of scholarship.



Administrative burden that, in the evolving nature of academia, has brought with it an increase in administrative responsibilities for faculty members. From committee assignments to grant writing and departmental leadership roles, academicians find themselves stretched thin across various administrative tasks (Brown & Green, 2018). This administrative burden detracts from time spent on core academic activities.





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