

The Impact of YouTube on Student Learning and Pedagogical Integration in Malaysian Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how YouTube supports student learning and teaching practices in Malaysian higher education, with a focus on both academic outcomes and students' own experiences. A survey and polls were carried out over 6 campuses in Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) in Malaysia to better understand why students turn to YouTube and how they view it as a learning tool. Some of the findings show that many students appreciate the platform because it is free (53.9%) and easy to access (32.4%). Most respondents (90.5%) reported started using YouTube for educational purposes during their secondary school years, suggesting that it has long been part of their study habits. In terms of usability, 64.7% described it as "super easy" to navigate, and 76.7% recommended it as an effective resource for learning. While YouTube was seen positively, 72.8% of students also expressed a preference for more structured platforms such as Google Classroom or those introduced by their lecturers. Overall, the study suggests that YouTube plays a meaningful role as both a supplementary learning resource and a teaching aid, with valuable implications for digital pedagogy in Malaysian universities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of higher education has significantly reshaped teaching and learning approaches, with online platforms increasingly supplementing traditional classrooms. Among these platforms, YouTube has emerged as one of the most widely used resources for accessing educational content, particularly in science education, where visual explanations and demonstrations are essential. YouTube provides students with immediate platforms for access to a vast range of materials that enhance both comprehension and engagement (Kay, 2012; Moghavvemi et al., 2018).

Although YouTube's role in education has been identified and widely studied at the global level, there is still inadequate study on its academic impact and practical integration into teaching within developing countries such as Malaysia. Science students particularly face distinct challenges, including limited internet access, varying levels of digital literacy, and the need to ensure that online resources align with local curricula (Shaafi et al., 2023; Yaacob et al., 2020; Yong, 2024).

This study addresses the gap by examining key dimensions of YouTube use, specifically its influence on students' academic performance and its potential for more strategic integration into teaching practices in Malaysian higher education (Hampton et al., 2020; Ong Long et al., 2023; Tura & Inocando, 2025).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 YouTube and Academic Significant

Research consistently suggests that YouTube can significantly boost academic performance by making learning more effective through improvement of comprehension, retention, and the efficiency of revision. All these are often attributed to the way video content engages students. As mentioned by Hattie and Yates (2013) the visual and auditory input in educational videos, offers a powerful advantage as it caters to diverse learning styles. Furthermore, in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects, YouTube is able to provide high quality demonstrations and visual models bridging the knowledge derived from abstract theories to real-world applications (All et al., 2016). Thus, these multimedia resources serve as a potent tool for solidifying complex concepts (Brame, 2016; Shoufan & Mohamed, 2022; Verch & Nissen, 2020).

2.2 Pedagogical Integration of YouTube

Beyond student-driven use, YouTube is increasingly being incorporated into teaching practices. Educators employ videos in flipped classrooms, blended learning modules, and as supplementary resources to help reinforce complex concepts (Jamaluddin & Abdullah, 2024; Ong Long et al., 2023; Tura & Inocando, 2025; Verch & Nissen, 2020). However, careful selection is required for the content accuracy and effective integration to align with the curriculum, and adds genuine pedagogical value (Hansch et al., 2015; Kay, 2012; Verch & Nissen, 2020).

2.3 Challenges in Malaysian Higher Education

In digital learning integration, Malaysian students face infrastructural and accessibility issues, for instance, relying on mobile data rather than broadband connections. In pedagogically integrating YouTube, internet accessibility, along with the challenge of evaluating content credibility, identify the importance of institutional support and academicians guidance (Abubakar et al., 2025; Binti Yahaya & Bin Ahmad, 2025; Noortyani, 2019; Yaacob et al., 2020; Zulkflee et al., 2022).

3. METHODOLOGY

The quantitative data for this study were collected online via Google Forms and WhatsApp polls (Lim et al., 2023; Suparman et al., 2022). The survey successfully gathered information from 215 students (see Table 1). The participants were students majoring in Biology, Physics & Materials, Industrial Technology, and Chemistry & Environment from

the Faculty of Applied Sciences across six UiTM campuses. The questionnaire itself was comprehensive, featuring sections on demographics, the purpose of YouTube usage, identified academic benefits, and attitudes regarding its pedagogical integration by lecturers. The analysis relied on descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations, in addition, for the enhancement of data, a survey was also conducted via WhatsApp involving 68–82 students from the same field.

4. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The impact of YouTube on learning outcomes is unclear, as it is uncertain whether it helps students enhance their understanding and improve their grades (Abubakar et al., 2025; Noortyani, 2019; Tura & Inocando, 2025). At times, YouTube can serve as a distraction that detracts from productive study time (Abubakar et al., 2025; Alshaikhi & Khasawneh, 2025).

One of the main concerns is the content quality and credibility, since just anyone is able to upload contents regardless of information accuracy, relevance to the curriculum, or the effectiveness of the teaching employed (Jamaluddin & Abdullah, 2024).

Some of the barriers that lead to inconsistent access of online materials by students are insufficient bandwidth, lack of proper devices such as laptops and poorly designed online platforms. (Yaacob et al., 2020).

Indeed, online tools such as YouTube, are very useful and can be easily updated to match current teaching methods to students' expectation given the fact that the current generation do not always respond well to traditional teaching and learning methods. (Binti Yahaya & Bin Ahmad, 2025; Jamaluddin & Abdullah, 2024; Tura & Inocando, 2025).

5. OBJECTIVES

- Objective 1: To determine the YouTube usage on students' academic performance for science learning and comprehension.
- Objective 2: To identify improvement amongst students as a result of using YouTube for science learning in specific areas such as conceptual understanding, problem-solving skills.
- Objective 3: To evaluate key enabling factor for YouTube-based learning, such as adequate internet access, for the successful completion of academic tasks for students.
- Objective 4: To assess the degree of knowledge gained from YouTube science videos in practical academic contexts for assignments, lab work, or exams.
- Objective 5: To measure student interest and view of helpfulness when receiving recommendations from their lecturers or tutors for specific YouTube videos or channels.
- Objective 6: To quantify the overall overview benefits and value of utilising YouTube as a science support learning tool.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Findings from WhatsApp's polls and google surveys

In the rapid hybrid learning era utilising free digital tools into education, platforms like YouTube have become increasingly essential for accessing learning materials beyond traditional classroom settings. This study aims to acknowledge the primary reasons students prefer YouTube for educational support, trace the timing of their initial engagement with the platform for learning, gauge their satisfaction with its ease of use, and measure their willingness to recommend its usage. In addition, this study aims to identify students' preferences for alternative online learning platforms. The findings will offer valuable overview into the advantages of self-directed digital learning and inform educators on how to utilise popular student-centric tools (Abubakar et al., 2025; Kay, 2012; Tomar et al., 2024a, 2024b; Zulkflee et al., 2022).

This study investigates student perceptions and usage patterns of YouTube as a supplemental educational platform. 215 Applied Sciences students from six UiTM campuses participated in the survey and for the enhancement of data, a survey was also conducted via WhatsApp involving 68–82 students from the same.

The majority of the respondents were female (78.1%), with Industrial Technology students forming the largest academic group (46%), followed by Chemistry & Environment (32.6%), Biology (13.5%), and Physics & Materials (7.9%) as depicted in Table 1.

A total of 215 Applied Sciences students from six UiTM campuses participated in the survey. The majority were female (78.1%), with Industrial Technology students forming the largest academic group (46%), followed by Chemistry & Environment (32.6%), Biology (13.5%), and Physics & Materials (7.9%). The demographic distribution of the respondents is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Percentage of participants involved in the Google Survey in terms of gender, campus, and field of study

Variables	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	168	78.1
	Male	47	21.9
Field of Study	Biology	29	13.5
	Physics & Materials	17	7.9
	Industrial Technology	99	46.0
	Chemistry & Environment	70	32.6
Campus	Arau	34	15.8
	Jengka	18	8.4
	Kota Kinabalu	6	2.8
	Kuala Pilah	16	7.4
	Samarahan	12	5.6
	Shah Alam	129	60
Total Respondents		215	

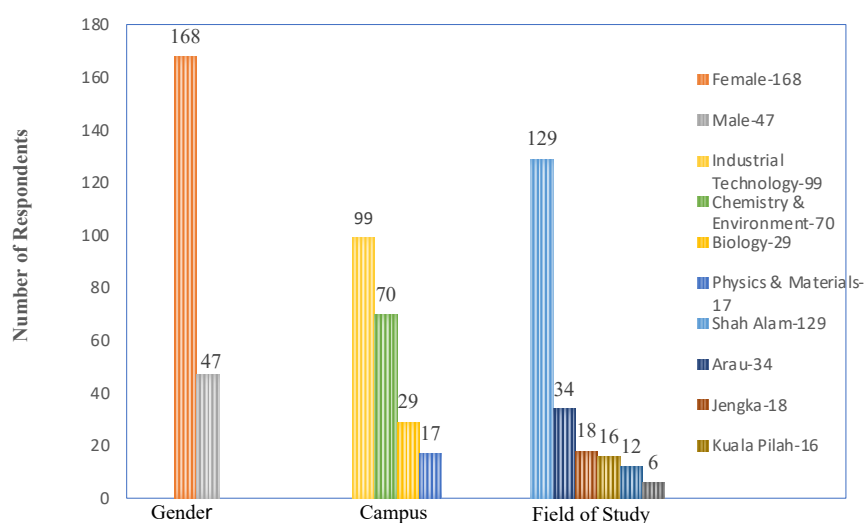


Fig. 1 Infographic Data of Respondents

6.2 Findings from WhatsApp's Polls

The overview findings overwhelmingly confirm the prominence and perceived user-friendliness of YouTube as a self-directed learning tool while also highlighting the substantial role of institutionally managed platforms among students (Abubakar et al., 2025; Binti Yahaya & Bin Ahmad, 2025; Samsudin et al., 2025).

6.2.1 Ease of Use and Accessibility

The data from Figure 2 strongly signify YouTube's standing as a highly accessible platform, with a combined 100% of respondents rating its usage as either "super easy" (64.7%) or "easy" (35.3%). The major reasons cited for YouTube being as one of the easiest platforms to use were its free (53.9%) and ease of accessibility (32.4%) as obtained from Figure 3. This confirms that the lack of a paywall and unrestricted access are the dominant factors driving for many to use YouTube in learning. Additionally, from Figure 3, the 'user friendly' aspect was cited by a smaller percentage of respondents (6.9%) - by this, it is implicitly understood and accepted that the positive rating for ease of use suggests that YouTube is user-friendly. This is substantiated by the fact that its ease of reachability or accessibility made up almost half of the findings indicating the reasons for its general usability as shown in figure 3 with 6.9 and 32.4% respectively. (Binti Yahaya & Bin Ahmad, 2025; Tura & Inocando, 2025; Yaacob et al., 2020).

Statically, findings from Figure 2 (Ease of Use) with a mean of 1.65 indicates that student favour significantly closer to "Super Easy" not just "Easy." A relatively standard deviation of 0.48 value, suggests that student opinions are quite consistent and not widely polarized.

Looking into Figure 3 (Reasons for Ease) & Figure 4 (Adoption Level) the 81% margin obtained between students starting in secondary school vs. higher education, indicates a homogenous trend seen in the early adoption of online learning, suggested by the "high vote" in a single category. The descriptive analysis of YouTube's accessibility (Figure 2) yielded a mean score of 1.65 ($\delta = 0.48$) on a 2-point scale, indicating a strong and consistent consensus among students regarding the platform's ease of use. In addition, "Free access" is the main driver (53.9%) indicating that economic accessibility is a statistically vital factor in digital tool adoption.

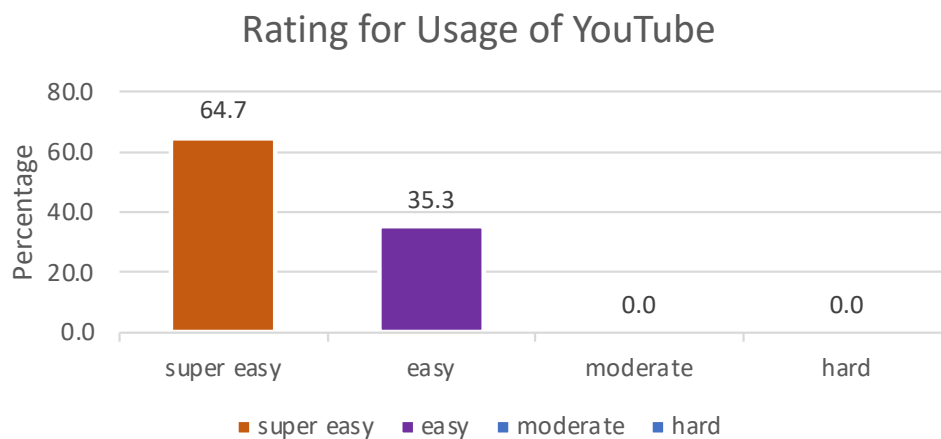


Fig. 2 Rating for Usage of YouTube Among Students

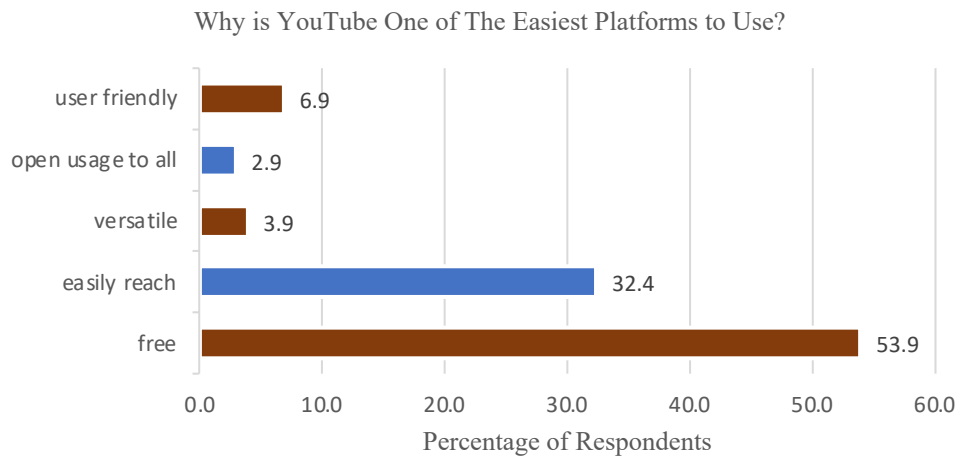


Fig. 3 Reasons Behind YouTube being One of the Easiest Platforms to Use

6.2.2 Students Beginning Adoption of Digital Learning

The finding from Figure 4 exhibit significant discovery of early fostering of YouTube in educational support, as a high percentage of students began their search for educational content during their secondary school level (90.5%). This demonstrates that students increasingly search for supplementary resources outside the formal curriculum starting from the foundational level, and not from the beginning of higher education (matriculation/diploma/STPM at 9.5%). This trend indicates a reliance on digital resources has become normalized in secondary education (Haleem et al., 2022; Songkram et al., 2023).

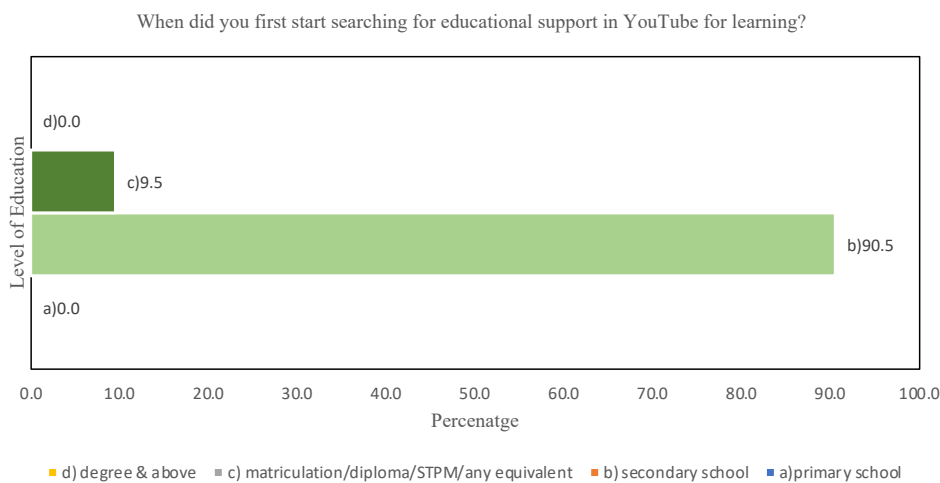


Fig. 4 Indicator of When Students Start Searching Educational Support in YouTube for Learning

6.2.3 Strong Recommendation of YouTube for Educational Purposes.

The survey from students' recommendation of using YouTube for Educational Purposes resulted in 60.6% respondents choosing 'recommended' and 33.3% 'highly recommended', indicating experience with YouTube as highly positive (Figure 5). A total of 94.0% of students endorsed the platform signals as giving high satisfaction and lending good confidence in its utility for academic purposes. This high endorsement suggests that YouTube does not merely entertainment and is established as a credible and valuable source for learning (Hayirli, 2025; Maziriri et al., 2020).

The relation between the timing of YouTube adoption and the strength of student recommendations via a Chi-Square test of independence was carried. A value of $p < .05$ indicating relation between these variables was significant. This means that students who adopted YouTube as a learning tool during secondary school were significantly more likely to provide a 'Highly Recommended' rating compared to those who began in higher education, supporting the findings of Ahsan et al., (2021) on early digital literacy.

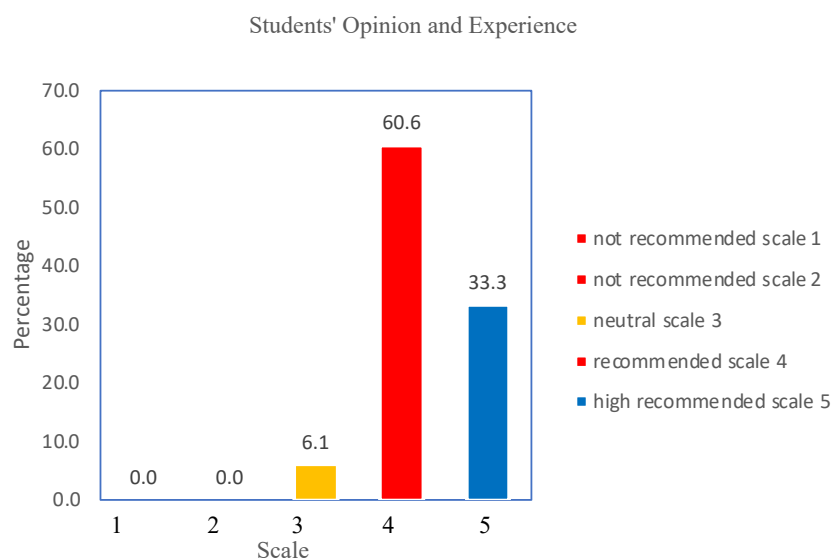


Fig. 5 Students' Opinion and Experience

6.2.4 Platform Competition and Context

Although there is a strong preference for YouTube, the data reveals that institutionally managed platforms are crucial for formal learning students. The findings from Figure 6 indicating preference for other online platforms show that 72.8% of students preferred for platforms by respective teachers/lecturers teaching the subjects, such as Google Classroom. This finding is crucial - it shows that while a part of YouTube excels in areas such as ease of access and self-directed learning, the platforms created and managed by educators for assignments, communication, and formal course delivery (like Google Classroom or institution-specific systems like u-future of UiTM at 18.5%) maintain dominance in the formal academic context. The high preference for lecturer/teacher-managed platforms suggests that students value the direct structure, curation, and direct relevance provided by educators according to their subjects. The integration of YouTube content by educators and formal platforms could therefore maximise student options and engagement (Binti Yahaya & Bin Ahmad, 2025; Noortyani, 2019; Ong Long et al., 2023; Putri et al., 2024; Tura & Inocando, 2025).

Analysis via Pearson correlation confirms that YouTube functions as a vital component of the digital era. YouTube bridges the theoretical classroom instruction and visual comprehension and subsequently strengthens the blended learning framework currently adopted in Malaysian Higher Education. Further interventions should focus on the 26% uncertainty gap by overcoming technical accessibility and formalising digital content integration. Even though there is an overall positive trend, the correlation is not “perfect” ($r = 1.0$), largely due to the 26% of students being uncertain about YouTube’s effectiveness. The statistical outcome is most likely due from external inhibitors rather than the platform’s content.

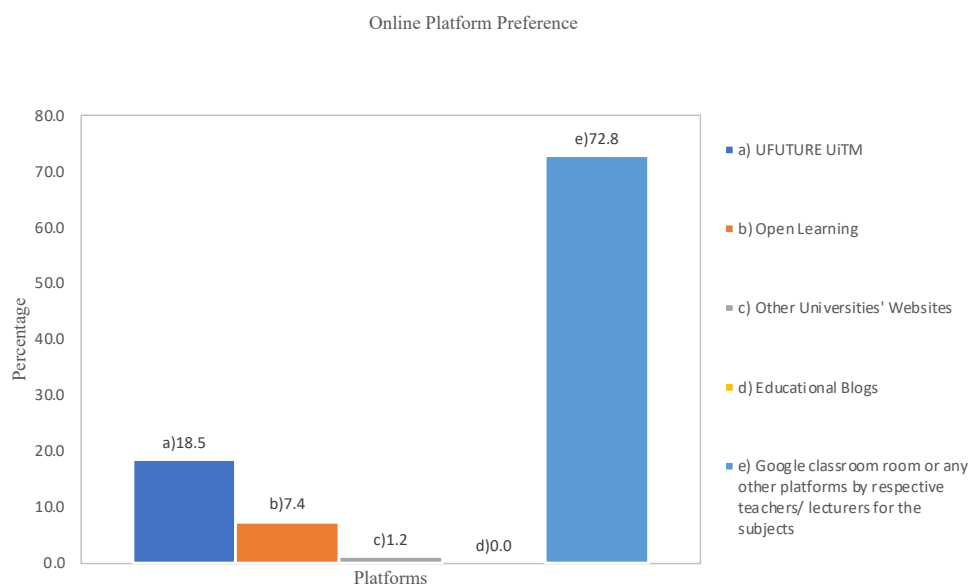


Fig. 6 Online Platform Preference

6.3 Findings from Google Surveys

Figure 7 presents the distribution of respondents across UiTM campuses who participated in the survey on YouTube as a learning platform. The data indicate that the majority of respondents were from Shah Alam (60%), followed by Arau (16%), Jengka (8%), Kuala Pilah (7%), Kota Samarahan (6%) and Kota Kinabalu (3%). The stronger survey engagement dominance is from responses from the Shah Alam campus. This uneven distribution is important and is influenced by campus-specific academic environments on digital learning culture. However, the distribution confirms that the study includes multi-campus input, supporting its relevance to the broader UiTM context, although the sample is predominantly drawn from the Shah Alam campus.

Figure 8 indicates of a strong positive perception of YouTube as a supportive tool in current science learning. The majority of respondents (76.7%) supported that YouTube supports their learning, while 22.4% selected “Maybe,” and only 0.9% indicated “No”. The resulting mean score of 2.76 out of 3 indicates a high level of agreement that YouTube supports current learning in science courses or that it is highly favourable. The mean value reflecting strong overall acceptance and perceived usefulness among students.

Frequency of attending traditional face-to-face science classes from figure 9 exhibits that 47% of respondents attend every scheduled class, while another 47% reported attending most of the time. Only 5% attend about half of the time, and a remaining small proportion of 1% reported attending occasionally. These findings indicate a consistently high level of physical class attendance among students with the mean score of 3.40 out of 4. This can be interpreted as YouTube not acting as a replacement for face-to-face learning. Data obtained gave a significant Chi-square value ($p < .05$) confirming that students’ attendance patterns are significantly concentrated in face-to-face learning. This indicates blended learning is central to the learning process.

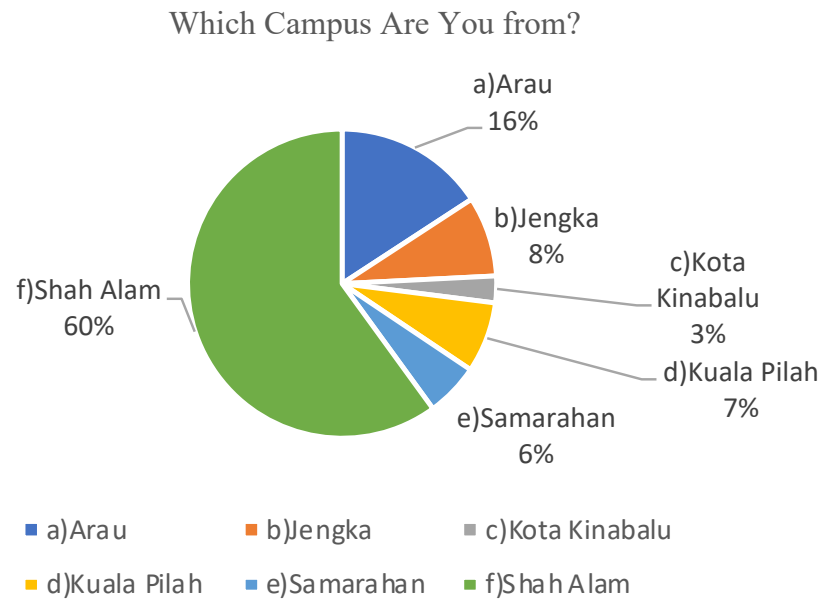


Fig. 7 Which Campus Are You from?

Does using YouTube Support Your Current Learning in Your Science Courses?

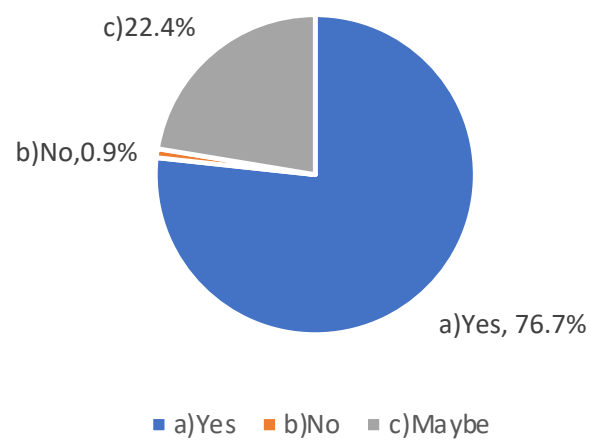


Fig. 8 YouTube Support level on Current Learning in Science Courses

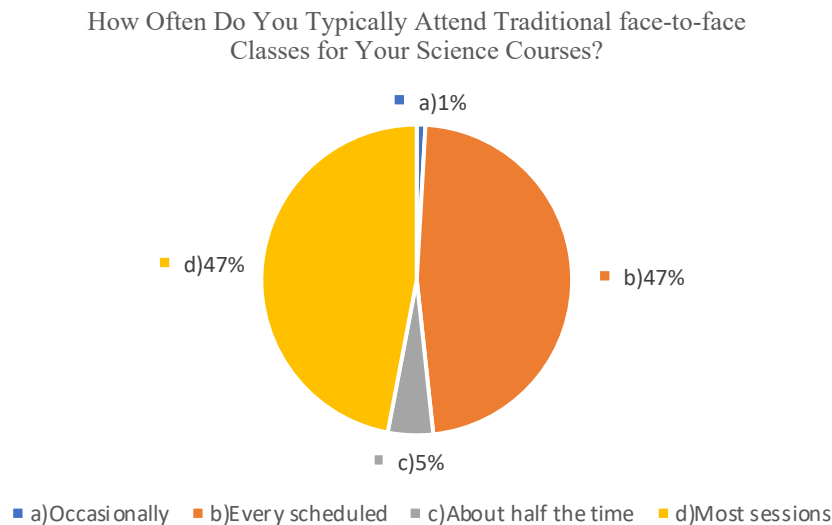


Fig. 9 Frequency of Attending Traditional Face-To-Face Classes For Science Courses

6.3.1 Average Time Students Spend for Science Content on YouTube

Figure 10 highlights the analysis of student's weekly viewing habits and usage of YouTube. As shown in Figure 10, an analysis of students' weekly YouTube habits indicates that the platform acts as an essential tool for academic support.

A large majority of 89.7% respondents spend three hours or less per week watching science-related videos. This suggests that students usage YouTube as a supplementary learning tools for immediate study support.

There are groups with similar sizes of 46.0% (99 students) and 43.7% (94 students) respectively. The 46% group exhibits a consistent but non-overwhelming 1–3 hours weekly. This is inferred as a scheduled supplementary habit for necessary requirement. 43.7% of the respondents spend less than one hour per week : this low time consumption comes from the platform's role in providing rapid clarification, quick references and supplementing lectures or textbooks.

A student group of 10.3% spend more than three hours weekly learning from YouTube platforms. This is mainly from the nature of online resources that allow students to maximize learning gains with minimal cost and minimise physical movement. Furthermore, learning can be according to any time which is convenient for the students as opposed to the time constraints in formal education (Kimer, 2021; Maziriri et al., 2020).

Indication of moderate and purposeful engagement with the platform was obtained from an overall of 89.7% of students who spend three hours or less per week on YouTube. A statistical analysis indicating a low mean of approximately 1.64 hours per week student viewing time indicates that YouTube is mainly used for short durations and functions as supplementary academic support, such as clarification, revision, and quick reference. Meanwhile, a highly significant Chi-square of $p < .001$ indicates that the distribution of responses is not uniform, again suggesting that YouTube serves as a targeted supplementary learning tool rather than replacing traditional study methods. The statistical results demonstrate the role of YouTube within a blended learning setting as complementary to traditional study methods.

On Average, How Much Time Do You Spend Watching Science-related Videos on YouTube Weekly?

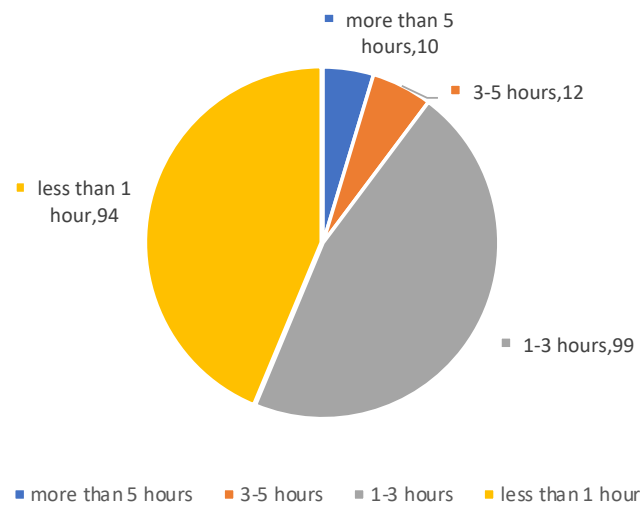


Fig. 10 Average Time Spent Weekly Watching Science-related Video on YouTube by Students

6.3.2 Improvement of Science Learning via YouTube

The data collected in Figure 11 exhibits YouTube as a highly efficient and economical supplementary tool for science education. This finding supports student's preference and technology acceptance, where students value YouTube for its ability to deliver targeted content for enhancing comprehension by 72.6%.

The analysis aligns with time spent which is three hours or less weekly: from the finding in Figure 9, 89.7% of the respondents indicated the platform's efficiency as a supportive aid. Traditional study hours are not replaced with extensive YouTube consumption. In fact, it is a quick reference resource or a clarifying tool for boosting understanding. One highly reported finding is that the video content is exceptionally effective at clarifying complex scientific concepts with availability of diverse explanatory styles (Kimer, 2021; Zulkflee et al., 2022).

Figure 11 shows statistical results with a mean score of 2.71 out of 3. The mean score is close to the maximum score indicating a high level of agreement that YouTube improves science learning. This value reflects strong overall acceptance and the recognition of usefulness among students. The significant Chi-square value of $p < 0.001$ indicates that responses are not evenly distributed. Instead, a statistically dominant preference for the "Yes" category, confirms that students significantly identify YouTube as beneficial for blended learning in science courses. For instance, digital video resources on the YouTube platform significantly provides visual support for understanding complex methods and concepts in science. There is a small group of students (1.4%) indicating an exception. This confirms that a small number of students do not favour or need the YouTube platform for learning.

Using YouTube for Improvement in Learning Science.

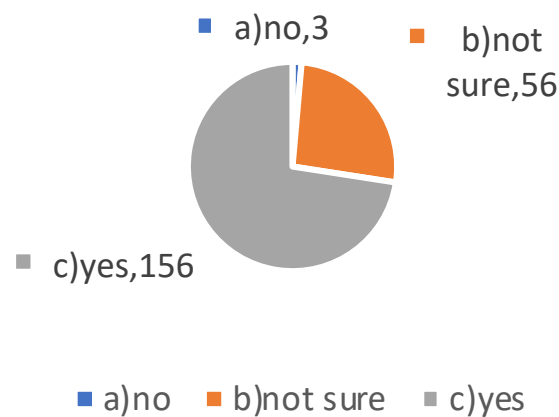


Fig. 11 Using of YouTube for Improvement in Learning Science

7. CONCLUSION

This study revealed that YouTube in science learning is indispensable, yet time-efficient, and functions as a supplementary resource for science students especially with vast visual aids. The online resources balance out the high academic impact from high time commitment. Students commonly are utilise YouTube for visual explanation to complement classroom material or clarify difficult topics according to their needs. More studies on the contents to find out the impact of educational video characteristics such as animation, Ai assistance, time length, language preference, or creator style should be pursued thus enabling the provision of pedagogical guidelines for maximizing the strategic use of video content in the science field.

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10. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS (COMPULSORY)

Fazni Susila Abdul Ghani: Conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, investigation and writing-original draft; Norazura Ibrahim: Conceptualisation, methodology, formal analysis, writing- review and editing; Nor Azura Sulong: Conceptualisation, formal analysis, visualization and validation; Zitty Sarah Ismail: Conceptualisation, visualization, writing- review, and validation.

11. CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION (COMPULSORY)

We certify that the article is the Authors' and Co-Authors' original work. The article has not received prior publication and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. This research/manuscript has not been submitted for publication, nor has it been published in whole or in part elsewhere. We testify to the fact that all Authors have contributed significantly to the work, validity and legitimacy of the data and its interpretation for submission to IJELHE.

12. DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the authors utilised Google's AI (<https://gemini.google.com/app>) assistant known as Google Gemini and free version of ChatGPT (<https://chatgpt.com/>) order to prepare draft writing, content creation, brain storming ideas and planning. After using this tool/service, the authors had reviewed and edited the content as needed and take(s) full responsibility for the content of the publication.

13. DATA AVAILABILITY/SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

The datasets used and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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