The use of YouTube for self-education in the UAE: Equal opportunities, different interests, and outcomes

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Abstract

This study explores the use of YouTube in self-education in the United Arab Emirates. Digital platforms and social media provide users with multiple opportunities to interact and access various information and services. However, due to the diverse interests of users and the various reasons for using these platforms, there is a variation in the extent of benefiting from them. One example of this is the use of YouTube as a platform to acquire and learn skills and experiences. In light of that, the study aims at discovering the reasons and motivations that lead users to adopt YouTube as a tool for self-education. It also explores the benefits that have been gained from that process and reveals the challenges that may limit its effectiveness. The study aims at describing the users' interests and the types of self-education they are targeting. Data from 175 respondents were analyzed after conducting an online survey form. Results indicate that users prefer using YouTube as it facilitates the self-education process by developing skills and generating solutions for daily life concerns. Results also indicate that YouTube is preferred as a self-education tool because of its ease of use and presenting visual content via different devices. Seeking knowledge and developing personal skills motivate users to use the platform. By measuring the correlation and regression among variables the results suggest that users intend to use YouTube as a self-education tool in a variety of fields such as technology, personal daily practices, and professional skills.

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Keywords
Self- education, YouTube, personal development, digital equality, learning skills, UAE.

Introduction
YouTube (launched in 2005) has become the most popular video-sharing platform in the digital world. It offers easy access to various types of videos with learning content (Habes *et al.*, 2019). Digital literacy and the use of media in the learning process are extremely crucial in the present education system. As more educational institutions are using social media platforms for the regular exchange of information, the digital skills of the students are also improving (Al-Jenaibi, 2020). YouTube has 8.73 million users in the UAE, which accounts for 87.4% of its Internet users (Globalmediainsight, 2021). YouTube can be used as an excellent source of information that aids in the learning process in any field like education, cooking, upgrading skills, and learning languages. There are various kinds of videos on YouTube that provide detailed instructions on different topics (Asselin et al, 2011). The study attempts to understand how YouTube assists in the self-learning process in the UAE. Digital Gravity 2022/2023 report indicated that 93.4% of Internet users in UAE use YouTube[2]. Users utilize YouTube for many reasons learning, knowledge enhancement, and improving performance (Mady, & Baadel, 2020). In the UAE using the platform supports the learning process, increases interest, and enriches content (Tamim, & Grant, 2013).

Tariq, Khan and Araci (2020) explored the transformative impact of self-directed learning in UAE with a focus on YouTube. The study examined challenges, trends, and opportunities, revealing the significant influence of fostering self-directed learning among students in higher education. Alghizzawi et al (2019) examined the impact of student social media use on e-learning platform acceptance at the British University in Dubai. The study revealed the positive effects of knowledge sharing and motivation on e-learning platform acceptance. A survey was conducted among UAE residents to explore the role of YouTube in the learning process and evaluate the effectiveness of the platform as a learning tool for learning new skills and developing new lifestyle practices. In the same context, Jamil and Alazrak (2023) indicated that the new generations in Egypt heavily use digital platforms, with various uses and reasons. This necessitates developers› attention to provide the required services, including educational solutions. In Russia, Gureeva et al (2022) pointed out that Russian

[2] URL: https://www.digitalgravity.ae

youth use digital platforms to search for information and skills beyond the local scope, extending to the international domain with the aim of acquiring new capabilities and knowledge. This has led to an impact on the daily lives of many individuals, especially the youth, in terms of relying on digital media to explore new fields or acquire different capabilities that traditional media may not have provided to them in the desired manner (Tolokonnikova, Dunas, & Kulchitskaya, 2020).

Understanding the use of YouTube in the UAE for learning purposes

To provide a deeper understanding of the YouTube usage process, the study acts on getting answers for the following questions:

1. Why do users use YouTube as a tool for acquisition skills?
2. How do YouTube benefit users to develop their skills and capabilities?
3. What are the challenges facing users when using YouTube as a tool for educating?
4. What are the motivations behind using YouTube as a tool in educating skills?
5. What are the preferred types of skills that push users to use YouTube as a tool for educating skills?

In order to answer the questions of this study, researchers conducted a survey, from May 2022 to July 2022, by using an online form via the SurveyMonkey platform. The methodology employed by the authors involved selecting a random sample with the intent of capturing a cross-section of target users that would faithfully mirror the traits and attributes of the broader population. However, it is essential to acknowledge that a random sample does not assure a perfect match to the population's characteristics and may encounter functional constraints in specific scenarios. Nonetheless, it does empower researchers to draw meaningful conclusions about the larger population by extrapolating from the observed characteristics within the sample (Bhardwaj, 2019) The construction of the measurements went through three stages. Firstly, the researchers developed five items to measure the reasons leading users for using YouTube in educating and acquiring new skills. Then, ten items were developed, to indicate the benefits gained by using YouTube in educating and acquiring new skills. Next, five items were developed to discover the challenges that users face during self-education, and other ten items were developed to measure the motivation that pushes users to use the platform for self-education. Lastly, a scale from 1 to 5 was used to measure the extent to which the respondents agree

with the statements of the scales (strongly agree, agree, natural, disagree, and strongly disagree).

The researchers assured the survey content validity by asking two colleagues to revise the instrument to get their comments and suggestions. Content validity often involves expert judgment to assess the instrument's items for their relevance and comprehensiveness. These experts evaluate whether the items cover the entire range of the construct under investigation (Almanasreh, Moles, & Chen, 2019). Authors modified the measurements based on the experts' revision by adding sentences or modifying wording. Reliability was tested by asking 20 respondents to refill the questionnaire one week later. Authors used Test-retest reliability to quantify the stability of the measurement, using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient which was 0.94. The results had been analyzed by using SPSS.28 to generate frequencies, means, standard deviation, correlations, and regression.

Sample

Table 1 presents a summary of the sample characteristics depending on the sex, age, profession, nationality, and number of years living in UAE.

Table 1

Sample characteristics

Sample	Characteristics	F.	%
Sex	Male	79	45.1
	Female	96	54.9
Age	18-25	112	64.0
	25-35	25	14.3
	35-50	26	14.9
	Above50	12	6.9
Profession	Government institution	15	8.6
	Private institution	26	14.9
	Freelancer	8	4.6
	Student	100	57.1
	Housewife	16	9.1
	Unemployed	10	5.7
Nationality	Emirati citizen	90	51.4
	Resident	85	49.6
Years of living in the UAE	Less than 5 years	44	51.7
	More than 5 years	41	49.3

Source: Authors.

Self-directed learning (SDL)

Self-directed learning is a process in which individuals take the initiative to diagnose their learning needs, and goals, identify resources for learning and choose methods for implementation and evaluation (Bojan, no date). SDL is a concept that the learner develops and controls the learning environment to build constructive knowledge (Jennings-Arey, 2020). SDL enables learners to take the responsibility to set learning goals and define outcomes even inside or outside institutions (Loeng, 2020). According to Greer (2013) there are two motivations leading learners in self-directed learning: Intrinsic motivations such as the person's interests and Extrinsic motivations such as the person's aim to achieve rewards or consequences. Abraham et al (2018) outlined three dimensions for SDL: Characteristics of learners that affect their tendency toward SDL, Learners' context that influences their tendency toward SDL, and the cognitive aspect of SDL that enables them to involve and adapt to the process. The attitude toward self-directed learning is raising among adults under the rapid changing in social concerns and the spread of using many easy digital platforms in learning and education (Morris, 2019). Digital platforms and new technologies are key drives for changing SDL conditions to facilitate the process of self-management and self-monitoring to be more competent (Sung, Chang, & Liu, 2016). Digitization has caused a change in self-directed learning and education with more immersion and presence using many accessible sources. SDL became more flexible and faster with more effective operations, which enabled all types of learners to get benefited and participate in the process (Morris, & Rohs, 2021).

Media Richness Theory

Media Richness Theory (MRT) presented by Daft and Lengel (1986) proposes that technology-based channels of information are rich text sources more than the other media. Media richness theory is about "richness in communication" and that the communication process should involve a rich source for "effective communication". Communication process takes time and goes through different framing techniques and methods so the source of information should be rich enough to convey it properly. The presenter of the theory described the richness as function of media due to its "capacity for immediate feedback", "the number of cues and channels available", "variety of language" and "the degree to which the receiver can focus" (Daft, & Lengel, 1986).

Media Richness affects users' continuance intention in online learning platforms, plays as a moderating influence of individuals' need for cognition, and shapes the virtual user experience particularly social presence (Wang, 2022). The theory may be used to assess many learning platforms to discover how they

benefit from the characteristics of the medium. Hence, YouTube serves as an information-rich platform offering an extensive collection of videos in multiple languages. It enables instant feedback through comments and provides highly engaging video content. The combination of visuals and voiceovers makes it easy for viewers to comprehend the video's message. (Ishii, Lyons, & Carr, 2019).

Digital technologies: Differences in access, use and benefits

The spread of Internet platforms and applications has created opportunities for uses to obtain knowledge and acquire skills. Digital equalities and inequalities refer to the differences in access, use, and benefits related to digital technologies among individuals, and communities. Digital equalities refer to the fair and equitable distribution of digital technologies, as well as equitable opportunities for digital skills development, and participation in the digital economy and society. On the other hand, digital inequalities refer to unequal opportunities and outcomes. This includes the digital divide and disparities in digital skills, online engagement, and participation (Haight, Quan-Haase, & Corbett, 2014; Heeks, 2022; Ruiu et al, 2023).

Media, including documentaries and tutorial videos, help the audience acquire new skills and knowledge. The cognitive need is fulfilled when the students use YouTube for guidance and information regarding their studies. YouTube is also used to broadcast live videos, chat with other users and share information. The students also use the university's social media platforms for staying informed regarding college-related news and academic information, participating in discussions, and being engaged in the online learning environment. Videos and tutorials often influence the learning process of the students and the educational decisions made by them (Habes, Salous, & Al Jwaniat, 2022).

YouTube and Facebook[3] are the most popular social media platforms among Internet users in the Middle East (Habes et al, 2019). It is reported that the use of YouTube promotes the exchange of information, self-development, knowledge enhancement, creativity, and technical skills (ibid). YouTube is also known to increase the academic performance of students and increase their collaborative learning. YouTube functions as a stimulating learning tool in the education process and provides positive outcomes for the learning outcomes of students (Habes, Elareshi, & Ziani, 2021). Digital media promotes a self-regulated learning process, which implies the learner can assimilate the information on his own with the help of the information and instruction provided by the media platform (Moghavvemi et al, 2018). The process also includes evaluating the learning process and providing feedback and judgment to oneself, while maintaining high motivation level (Al-Jenaibi, 2020).

[3] Belongs to Meta company, banned at the territory of the Russian Federation.

Due to pandemics, online learning became a compulsory mode of learning along with the traditional mode of learning. Due to its simplicity of sharing information through videos, YouTube gained popularity (Habes, Elareshi, & Ziani, 2021). During the lockdown restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic, as online learning or e-learning gained more importance, many education institutions opted for e-learning and the use of the Internet to communicate with the students and conduct their courses (Habes et al, 2020). YouTube is often used to illustrate various ideas and share information through various videos. It may not be feasible for teachers to create videos for every lesson (Dewanti, & Sujarwo, 2021). In such a scenario, YouTube can provide learning support, which is stimulating for the students.

YouTube helps learn a language for bilingual people. There are various tutorial videos, which are rich in teaching materials required for learning a new language. Due to access to the necessary infrastructure and Internet, many Internet users spend a considerable amount of time online. YouTube also boosts creativity by showing many instructional videos on various arts and crafts, and paintings. This encourages acquiring of new skills and abilities (Weeks, & Putnam Davis, 2017; Listiani et al, 2021).

Self-efficacy is an important driving force in a successful learning process, as it determines personal motivation level, thinking process, and effort to achieve the goals. Computer self-efficacy is one of the key factors in digital ability. YouTube users can acquire excellent learning value from the informal learning platform provided by the YouTube (Wang, Ye, & Ye, 2021). YouTube has also provided an excellent platform for musicians. While it helps the musicians share their work, many audiences use the platform to learn music. YouTube provides an informal music learning platform where interested students can learn at their own pace. There are online communities that share their musical experience and knowledge (Cayari, 2018). YouTube provides a huge scope for acquiring new skills and knowledge, provided the audience is motivated enough. Self–learning requires goal setting, motivation, and discipline. While YouTube provides ample resources, the learner also needs to have adequate knowledge about keywords and Internet navigation to reach their learning goals. YouTube offers a huge amount of learning materials on an endless number of topics (Iftikhar, Riaz, & Yousaf, 2019). oklar and Cihangir (2021) found that people often stop watching educational YouTube videos because they find them boring or poorly done by the instructor. They also mentioned that viewers are annoyed by too many ads and negative comments. While Osman et al (2022) showed that YouTube helps people improve skills, get interested in topics, and stay engaged while learning, Ram rez-Ochoa (2016) indicated that YouTube helps learners in developing their seeking skills, selecting and evaluating audiovisuals learning sources.

Results

Table 2

YouTube for self-education: Reasons, benefits, challenges, motivations

	Variables	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. D.
	Reasons for using YouTube in educating yourself and acquiring new skills					
1	YouTube is a suitable tool that saves time and effort when searching for new skills	175	1	5	3.90	.969
2	YouTube is a beneficial tool for learning new solutions to challenging problems.	175	1	5	3.85	1.167
3	YouTube is an effective tool for developing my current skills	175	1	5	3.83	1.008
4	YouTube provides me with new and useful skills in my life	175	1	5	3.80	.959
5	YouTube provides many creative alternative options to improve my lifestyle	175	1	5	3.66	.998
	Achieved benefits of using YouTube in educating yourself and acquiring new skills					
1	Learning visually by YouTube enables me to use the platform whenever and wherever I want.	175	1	5	3.95	.982
2	I can use different devices to learn by YouTube.	175	1	5	3.85	.937
3	Learning visually by YouTube allows me to understand what is being taught better	175	1	5	3.77	.991
4	Learning by YouTube gives me the flexibility to develop my skills and does not force me to attend physically	175	1	5	3.75	1.106
5	Learning visually by YouTube offers many learning tools and options.	175	1	5	3.71	.858
6	Educational videos on YouTube provide me with many practical skills	175	1	5	3.67	1.013
7	Educational Videos on YouTube embrace me with the entrepreneurial spirit	175	1	5	3.42	1.136
8	I developed many skills in my life through YouTube	175	1	5	3.39	1.183

9	I save or share educational videos on YouTube on other social platforms	175	1	5	3.31	1.138
10	Learning visually by YouTube enables me to contact and interact with instructors and YouTubers	175	1	5	2.99	1.152
	Challenges you face in educating yourself and acquiring new skills					
1	Some videos spread the wrong beliefs or may be used for the wrong purposes	175	1	5	3.79	1.015
2	Some videos are not reliable or convincing	175	1	5	3.65	1.056
3	Some information is conflicting with other information	175	1	5	3.60	1.028
4	Some videos are not suitable for my values	175	1	5	3.38	1.065
5	Internet connection sometimes prevents me to watch YouTube content	175	1	5	2.83	1.270
	Motivation for using YouTube to develop or acquire new skills					
1	To increase my knowledge	175	1	5	3.66	.849
2	To develop my skills	175	1	5	3.63	.924
3	It is a way to get more experience with my personal interests	175	1	5	3.63	1.074
4	To enhance my lifestyle skills	175	1	5	3.54	.999
5	YouTube is the most proper platform for self-education	175	1	5	3.43	1.167
6	To understand people and society	175	1	5	3.42	1.068
7	To create more opportunities for myself	175	1	5	3.22	1.218
8	To prepare myself for the professional market	175	1	5	3.17	1.106
9	In self-education no need for a tutor or a specific location	175	1	5	3.16	1.173
10	To solve my daily life problems or issues	175	1	5	3.05	1.139

Source: Authors

The results in the *Table 2* explore four variables

1. Reasons for using YouTube in educating and acquiring new skills;
2. Achieved benefits of using YouTube in educating and acquiring new skills;
3. Challenges that users face in educating themselves;
4. Motivation for using YouTube to educate and acquire new skills

Reasons: The results indicate that several reasons encourage users to use YouTube for self-education. The first reason "YouTube *is a suitable tool that saves time and effort when searching for new skills*" is the important one with a mean (3.90) on a scale from 1 to 5. The second reason is "*YouTube is a beneficial tool for learning new solutions to challenging problems*" with a mean (3.85), the third reason is "*YouTube is an effective tool for developing my current skills*" with a mean (3.83), the fourth reason is "*YouTube provides me with new and useful skills in my life*" with mean 3.80, and the last one is "*YouTube provides many creative alternative options to improve my lifestyle*" with a mean 3.66.

Results assure that YouTube is a platform that help users save their self-education process as well as save their time by learning new skills that help in performing tasks quickly and effectively. Results also assure that YouTube is a very effective tool for educating new skills, opens many chances, and offers new solutions to users.

Benefits: By analyzing the results of the achieved benefits of using YouTube in educating and acquiring new skills, researchers might categorize the benefits onto 4 categories. **First type** of benefits is that related to the characteristics of the platform; the ability to use it via many devices and whenever they want, help users understand the content. The highest three means were achieved in the following benefits: "*Learning visually by YouTube enables me to use the platform whenever and wherever I want*" mean (3.95), "*I can use different devices to learn by YouTube*" mean (3.85), and "*Learning visually by YouTube allows me to understand what is being taught better*" mean (3.77). **Second type** of benefits is related to the usage of YouTube as a fixable platform with many alternative and interactive tools and options. That result may be reflected on the following benefits: "*Learning by YouTube gives me the flexibility to develop* my *skills and does not force me to attend physically*" mean (3.75), "*Learning visually by YouTube offers many learning tools and options*" mean (3.71). **Third type** of benefits is related to the educational content of YouTube as it provides users with skills, ideas for lifestyle. That result may be reflected on the following benefits: "*Educational Videos on YouTube provide me with many practical skills*" mean (3.67), "*Educational Videos on YouTube embrace me with the entrepreneurial*

spirit" (3.42), "*I developed many skills in my life through YouTube*" (3.39). **Fourth type** of benefits is related to the users' ability to spread their experience by sharing, saving, and contacting with others and instructors. That result may be reflected on the following benefits: "I save or share educational videos on YouTube on other social platforms" mean (3.31), and "Learning visually by YouTube enables me to contact and interact with instructors and YouTubers" mean (2.99).

Challenges: The results indicate that ethical concerns are the most frequented challenges "Some *videos spread the wrong beliefs or may be used for the wrong purposes*" with mean (3.79) and "*Some videos are not reliable or convincing*" mean (3.65). This means that users have concerns about the beliefs or values presented in YouTube. While the ethical concerns may be considered as the main challenge: "Some *information is conflicting with other information*" mean (3.60) and "Some videos are not suitable for my values" mean (3.38). Net connection is the last challenges with mean (2.83).

Motivation: The results indicate that many motivations lead users to use YouTube in self-education which may divided onto the following categories: **First motivations** are related to the increasing knowledge, skills, and experience. "*To increase my knowledge*" mean (3.66), "*To develop my skills*" mean (3.63), "*It is a way to get more experience with my personal interests*" mean (3.63), and "*To enhance my lifestyle skills*" mean (3.54). **Second motivations** are related to social motivations "*YouTube is the most proper platform for self-education*" mean (4.43), "To *understand people and society*" mean (3.42), "*To create more opportunities for myself*" mean (3.22). **Third motivations** are related to preparing the user for the profession market "*To prepare myself for the professional market*" mean (3.17). **Fourth motivations** are related to the ability to be self-independent in life "*In Self- education no need for a tutor or a specific location*" mean (3.16), and "*To solve my daily life problems or issues*" mean (3.05).

The results indicate that there are many diverse opportunities available to YouTube users for learning. It is also associated with various reasons for using the platform, some of them are related to the ease, convenience, and flexibility of its use, while others are linked to users' needs for skill development. The achieved benefits from using the platform for educational purposes also vary, some are related to acquiring knowledge, while others are associated with acquiring skills that benefit the users in their daily life, social relationships, or professional field. Despite these benefits, there are several challenges that users face, some challenges are related to cultural differences, while others are associated with the quality of content encountered on the platform.

Table 3

Interests and preferred type of content and creators

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. D.
Interests in self-education					
Technological and Internet skills	175	1	4	2.87	.971
Cooking skills	175	1	4	2.75	1.122
Science and natural knowledge	175	1	4	2.69	1.108
Housekeeping and repairing	175	1	4	2.63	1.068
Social skills	175	1	4	2.47	1.178
Makeup and fashion skills	175	1	4	2.47	1.169
New Languages	175	1	4	2.36	1.105
Video & sound editing	175	1	4	2.26	1.154
Communication skills	175	1	4	2.24	1.184
First aid and Survival Skills	175	1	4	2.13	1.117
Money management skills	175	1	4	2.02	1.109
Learning how to play a music instrument	175	1	4	1.93	1.096
Car Driving lessons	175	1	4	1.73	1.141
The preferred type of content and creators					
Creators who speak English	175	1	4	3.33	.760
Emirates creators	175	1	4	3.18	.695
Creators from my country	175	1	4	2.75	.898
Creators who speak my mother language	175	1	4	2.70	.894
Creators from other countries	175	1	4	2.47	.876
Creators who offer regular online courses	175	1	4	2.42	.873
Creators who offer seminars and workshops	175	1	4	2.11	.999

Source: Authors

Results in the *Table 3* provide information about the users' interests in self-education and users' preferred type of content and creators. Results reveal that technological and Internet skills are the most important skills that users search to improve their capabilities. Cooking skills lie in the second rank and Science, natural knowledge skills lie in the third rank, and Housekeeping and repairing skills lie in the fourth rank. The means of the previous skills range from 2.87 to 2.63 on a scale from 1 to 4. Skills with mean range from 2.50 to 2 include: Social skills, Makeup and fashion skills, New Languages, Video & sound editing, Communication skills, First aid and Survival Skills, and Money management skills. While the mean of some skills was ranked below 2, including Learning how to play on a musical instrument and Car Driving lessons.

Regarding the users' preferred type of content and creators, Creators who speak English ranked first and Emirates creators ranked second. Both creators

from the resident's country and Creators who speak the respondent's mother language ranked third. Other types of creators were ranked from 6 to 8 such as, Creators from other countries, Creators who offer regular online courses, and Creators who offer seminars and workshops.

Table 4

Correlations among reasons, benefits, motivation, challenges

		Reasons	Benefits	Motivations	Challenges
Reasons	Pearson Correlation	1	.907**	.858**	.282**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001
	N	175	175	175	175
Benefits	Pearson Correlation	.907**	1	.847**	.339**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	n/d	<.001	<.001
	N	175	175	175	175
Motivations	Pearson Correlation	.858**	.847**	1	.207**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	n/d	.006
	N	175	175	175	175
Challenges	Pearson Correlation	.282**	.339**	.207**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	.006	n/d
	N	175	175	175	175

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
Source: Authors

Researchers tested the correlations among four variables (reasons, benefits, motivations, and challenges) via Pearson correlations. Results in the *Table 4* indicate that there is a strong positive correlation between the reasons for using YouTube in self-education and the achieved benefits from that method of education (r=.907), sig. (.001). In addition, there is also a strong positive correlation between the reasons for using YouTube for self-education and the motivations that push users to use the platform (r=.858), sig. (.001). On the contrary, there are weak correlations between reasons (r=.282), benefits (r=339), and motivations (r=207) with the challenges that face users when using the platform for self-education. The above results reveal that whenever there are reasons for using the platform for self-education, more reasons lead users to take the platform's advantages, and more benefits will be gained from the process.

Table 5

Regression among reasons, benefits, motivation, challenges

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	B	Sig.
Reasons and benefits	.907[a]	.823	.822	1.812	(Constant) 2.639 benifits.458	.001
Reasons and motivation	.858[a]	.736	.734	2.216	(Constant) 4.245 benifits.436	001
Reasons and challenges	.282[a]	.080	.074	4.135	(Constant) 13.689 benifits.310	.001

Source: Authors

To estimate the relationship between motivations, benefits, and reasons, the linear simple regression test was conducted. The results are presented in *Table 5* indicate there is a statically significant strong relationship among the 3 variables (p. value = .001) which leads to conclude that there is an effect at the population level. While the relationship with challenges is weak which means that YouTube will be more usable in the future in self-education overcoming the challenges.

Discussion

Despite YouTube providing everyone with the opportunity to access various types of educational and informational content, the audience's usage of such content differs based on their needs, interests, and cultural backgrounds. From the authors' perspective, this diversity enriches the platform by satisfying the educational needs of Internet users.

There is no doubt there is a great change in the landscape of all types of education. The proliferation of digital platforms and the users' need for developing and learning different skills lead to the rise of using YouTube and maybe other counterparts for self-education. This study investigates the use of YouTube in the UAE in that unconventional method.

Results reveal that YouTube is a promising method to render boundless opportunities for users to rely on the platform for self-education. This corresponds to what Phulpoto (2022) concluded, YouTube helps in solving students problems and meet their required goals of academics and learning. The results assure the findings of Lee et al (2017) that users considered it a preferable way of learning because of the attractive content presented via videos.

Through this study, which was conducted in the Emirati community on YouTube users for the purpose of learning, we can conclude that the most important *reasons* that push learners to use YouTube are related to the flexibility in using the platform and its rich visual content which enables the platform to provide users with effective and beneficial ways for self-education (Chintalapati, & Daruri, 2017). Furthermore, users find in YouTube flexibility for searching, selecting, and interacting. Among the *benefits* that have been achieved by YouTube, is the ease of exposure to the content in time, place, and devices. Another one is offering multiple alternatives in the self-education process in content, methods, educators, influencers, skills, and fields. Many previous studies assured that users prefer YouTube to get their self-education for many reasons. It is an easy way to share content, and it is a multi-purpose tool for free entertainment and getting new skills, as well as online learning environment (Khan, 2017; Tay, & Low, 2017; Yadav, Tiruwa, & Suri, 2017).

Users rely on YouTube for self-education for two kinds of motivations, Firstly, it helps them to find solutions for their social and daily needs. Secondly, it supports their knowledge, skills, and experience. Although the promising opportunities on YouTube, results indicate that the differences between online educators and users in their beliefs, culture, and interests may cause a sort of *challenges* that may face them. Users have many *interests* in self-education but technical skills are ranked first among them this gives an indication of the importance of technology in the users' daily life. At the same time, they have many interests in daily routine skills in the house, and personal care. That result agreed with Kousha, Thelwall and Abdoli (2012) as they found that YouTube provides users with different areas of interest such as health, art, and humanities. In addition, users prefer English language educating videos and this may be related to the UAE society with more than 200 nationalities, but they also prefer to follow the influencers from their home countries. By conducting the Pearson correlation and the regression among the three variables, reasons, benefits, and motivation, the statistics measurement indicates the strong relationship between the variables, it also predicts that YouTube will continue as an important tool for self-education (Duncan, Yarwood-Ross, & Haigh, 2013).

The results are consistent with Kuhn et al (2023) who indicated that digital platforms such as YouTube help in the human development paradigm and assist in prompting equality in online education by ensuring the accessibility to all individuals regardless of their socioeconomic status, culture, age, and gender. Offering courses and materials in multiple languages to diverse cultures should be ensured that the content is relevant and sensitive to backgrounds

and experiences. This confirms what has been concluded by Srinivasan et al (2021), that educational digital platforms have changed after the Covid-19 pandemic. They clarified that the shift to remote learning during the pandemic has impacted post-pandemic learning methods. Many digital platforms have been developed that offer various types of learning and skill development in numerous fields.

Conclusion

YouTube is an effective tool for developing personal skills. In this paper authors confirmed the reasons and motivations that lead users in the UAE to adopt YouTube as a tool for self-education. In addition, they explored the benefits gained in the process and revealed the challenges that might limit its effectiveness. It was very interesting to understand from the survey the users' interests and the types of self-education they were targeting. Seeking knowledge by developing personal skills, like technological skills, cooking skills, make up and fashion skills, new languages, communication skills, money management skills, social skills, showed the users' need to develop certain skills they did not develop during their traditional education.

While YouTube has the potential to provide equal opportunities for self-education, the platform usage patterns are diverse and are being shaped by users' interests, preferences, motivations, and language abilities. Some users learn new skills or gain knowledge in different areas such as programming, presentation skills, graphic design, social life, human relationships, and language learning. They tend to search for specific tutorials or channels, monitor them regularly and systematically, or interact with other users for more experience or clarifications, while other users use YouTube as a source of entertainment and passing time. In addition, the language barrier can also affect the use of YouTube for self-education as the platform offers content in multiple languages, so many users may prefer to watch videos in their native language, which can limit the range of available educational resources.

Concluding, the results suggest several avenues for further research. Firstly, using YouTube in developing skills in a specific field. Secondly comparing YouTube and other social platforms as effective tools for self-education.

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