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Role of YouTube in Competitive Exams Preparation by University Students

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Abstract:

The rise of digital platforms has revolutionized the education landscape, providing learners with new avenues for acquiring knowledge and skills. YouTube, in particular, has emerged as a popular platform for learning, offering a wide range of educational content. This research paper explores the role of YouTube in preparing for competitive exams. By examining the benefits, limitations, and user perceptions, this study sheds light on the impact of YouTube as a learning resource for competitive exam preparation. The findings suggest that YouTube can serve as a valuable supplement to traditional study methods, providing accessible and engaging educational content. However, certain limitations, such as the reliability of information and lack of personalized guidance, must be acknowledged. Overall, this paper provides insights into the effectiveness of YouTube as an educational tool and offers recommendations for leveraging its potential in competitive exam preparation.

Keywords: social media, YouTube, Videos, Education, competitive exams preparation, university students.

Introduction

YouTube is a social media platform by google where people can watch, like, comment and share the videos. This platform provides services where people can upload and share their own videos. YouTube reached 2.6 billion active users in 2022, making it one of the most popular apps in the world¹. India has the most YouTube users in 2023, estimated at 467 million². After Instagram, YouTube is the second most popular social media platform. Most people of age group 15-35 use YouTube to watch videos. The most frequently watched genres on YouTube are entertainment and education. YouTube, with its vast user-generated content, has emerged as a powerful medium for learning, entertainment, and engagement. While it initially gained popularity as a video-sharing platform, YouTube has gradually transformed into an educational hub, offering a diverse range of tutorials, lectures, and resources for various disciplines, including exam preparation.

Competitive exams have always been a crucial milestone for individuals seeking admission to prestigious institutions or securing employment opportunities. Historically, aspirants have heavily relied on traditional modes of learning, such as textbooks, coaching classes, and offline study materials, to enhance their chances of success. However, the advent of YouTube has disrupted these conventional approaches, offering a dynamic and accessible alternative for exam preparation. This research paper focusses on multifaceted role of YouTube in the preparation for competitive exams. By examining its influence on learning strategies, content accessibility, and interactive learning experiences, this paper aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of the platform's impact on the educational landscape. This research aims to shed light on the benefits and challenges associated with utilizing YouTube as a preparatory tool, thereby enabling stakeholders to make informed decisions regarding its integration into their study routines.

Literature Review

S Roodt and C Villiers (2011) explored in their research that YouTube as a learning tool has yielded impressive positive results among students, as a large percentage of them consider its utilization as an innovative learning technology to greatly enhance their overall knowledge. The incorporation of YouTube into undergraduate education has the potential to enhance knowledge and competency.

¹ <https://www.businessofapps.com/data/youtube-statistics/#:~:text=Pollstar%20via%20Forbes,YouTube%20users,and%20Facebook%20on%20total%20usage.>

² <https://www.globalmediainsight.com/blog/youtube-users-statistics/#:~:text=YouTube%20Users%202023%20by%20Country&text=According%20to%20the%20latest%20statistics,user%20base%20for%20the%20platform.>

They inferred that students have accepted YouTube as a part of educational pedagogy and a significant technology.

Chtouki et al. (2012) in their study found that when students watch videos that visually explain complex concepts, they understand and remember the information much better. A key benefit of YouTube is its availability as a free web service that offers concise content on specific concepts. Educators as well as students can easily search and review videos related to a specific topic. Regularly looking for educational videos encourages students to search for similar content.

P Khurana (2019) stated in her research that students rely on social media as their go-to source of information because it's seen as convenient, effective, and trustworthy. Students view online learning platforms as positive and innovative digital resources for learning and gaining knowledge.

Liu et al. (2020) explored in their research that online learning platforms play a vital role in education. Using online platforms for education led to improvement of academic performance with more than 50% students raising their grades. They stated that online educational platforms make education easier to access and more convenient.

J Ansari and N Khan (2020) found in their study that students are increasingly using social media as a means of communication to connect with peers, teachers, and as a convenient way to share resources. They use social media platforms to enhance their knowledge. They emphasized that using social media helps students become more creative, dynamic, and connect around the world for collaborative learning. This further helps them in better academic performance.

These literature reviews provide insights into various aspects of YouTube's role in education and exam preparation, including its impact on motivation, engagement, content quality and collaborative learning.

Objectives

This research focusses on how YouTube has revolutionized the way students prepare for competitive exams by providing access to a wide range of educational content. It involves analyzing the role of YouTube videos, channels, and playlists in terms of improving exam readiness, knowledge retention, and overall exam performance. It also aims to identify the limitations associated with using YouTube as a primary resource for competitive exam preparation. It involves examining issues such as quality control of content, the reliability of information, potential distractions faced by students.

The objectives of this research are:

1. To study the role of YouTube in preparing for competitive exams by university students.
2. To identify the challenges and limitations of relying on YouTube for competitive exam preparation.

Research Methodology

The study was conducted in Lucknow city of Uttar Pradesh. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect data from the university students who are preparing for competitive exams. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to sample the respondents as the intention of the study was to find out the role of YouTube on their exam preparation. A total of 100 respondents were selected. A structured survey questionnaire was designed to collect quantitative data and analyze the role of YouTube in competitive exam preparations and the challenges faced by the respondents.

Result and Discussion

A total of 100 respondents were selected who were preparing for competitive exams on the basis of their education. The study participants were distinguished according to three age groups: 16-21 years, 22-30 years, and 30-40 years. The demographic data is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents' Profile

Gender	
Gender	Number
Male	59
Female	41
Age	
Age Group	Number
16-21	36
22-30	63
30-40	1
Education	
Education	Number of respondents

Undergraduate (Pursuing Bachelor's Degree)	32
Graduate (Passed Bachelor's Degree)	17
Post Graduate (Pursuing and Passed both)	51

The respondents were asked how frequently do they use YouTube for preparing for competitive exams. A total of 97 respondents use YouTube for exam preparation ranging from always to occasionally. Only 3 respondents responded that they never use YouTube for preparation. More than 50% of respondents use YouTube regularly for the preparation. The data suggests that YouTube is frequently used by students for exam preparation. Table 2

Table 2

Frequency of using YouTube for competitive exam preparation	Number of respondents
Never	3
Occasionally	12
Sometimes	27
Often	24
Always	34

The respondents were asked about the competitive exams they are preparing for among multiple options such as entrance & qualifying exams (CAT, MAT, GATE, NET, University Entrance), UPSC & State Upper PCS and Other government jobs (SSC, Railways, SSSC, Police, Banks, Army etc.). The data shows that respondents were proportionally indulged in preparing for all the above exams. Since the respondents are university students, they tend to prioritize their career for better future. Hence, they try to get in any available opportunities. Table 3

Table 3

Competitive Exam preparing for	Number of respondents
Entrance and Qualifying Exams(CAT, MAT, GATE, NET, University Entrance etc.	57
UPSC and State Upper PCS	22
Other government jobs (SSC, Railways, SSSC, Police, Banks, Army etc.)	44

The respondents were asked to select multiple options on how they discover educational content on YouTube. The respondents selected all multiple options among which the best way to discover topic is to search specific topic or keywords on YouTube followed by subscribing the educational channels. The respondents also discover content through recommendation from friends and peers. The least way respondents use for getting content is recommendation from YouTube algorithm.

Table 4

Table 4

Discovering educational content on YouTube	Number of respondents
Searching specific topics or keywords	79
Recommendations from friends or peers	26
Recommendations from YouTube algorithm	17
Subscribing to educational channels	47

The respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of educational content available on YouTube for competitive exam preparation. All the respondents rated positively for the content available. None of the respondent rated the content is poor. The content available on YouTube was rated good and excellent by 85 respondents and remaining 15 respondents rated it as fair. This shows that YouTube has become an important mode for competitive exam preparation. The students significantly use YouTube and find better content for their studies. Table 5

Table 5

Quality of educational content available on YouTube for competitive exam preparation	Number of respondents
Excellent	22
Good	63
Fair	15
Poor	0

The respondents were asked the benefits of YouTube for exam preparation. The data collected shows that majority of the students agreed that YouTube provides a convenient and accessible

platform for learning. They also agreed that YouTube videos offer visual explanations that help in better understanding and provides a variety of instructional styles and teaching approaches. They acknowledged the fact that YouTube videos are engaging and help maintain interest in the subject matter and acts as a supplement to traditional study methods. Table 6

Table 6

Statements regarding the benefits of YouTube for competitive exam preparations	Number of Respondents				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
YouTube provides a convenient and accessible platform for learning	20	46	19	4	11
YouTube videos offer visual explanations that help in better understanding	28	42	12	5	13
YouTube provides a variety of instructional styles and teaching approaches	18	47	20	8	7
YouTube videos are engaging and help maintain interest in the subject matter	20	47	23	3	7
YouTube videos supplement my traditional study methods effectively	12	51	20	8	9

The respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of YouTube videos/channels/playlists in improving your understanding of exam-related topics. Only 4 respondents did not find YouTube effective at all. 96 respondents find YouTube effective. Most of them stated YouTube being very effective in preparing for competitive exams. Table 7

Table 7

Effectiveness of YouTube videos/channels/playlists in improving understanding of exam-related topics	Number of respondents
Not effective at all	4
Somewhat effective	22
Moderately effective	51
Extremely effective	23

The respondents were asked about evaluating the credibility and reliability of educational content on YouTube for exam preparation. It was a mix response adding to the reliability on YouTube. 10 respondents mentioned that they relied on user ratings and comments on videos while 24 respondents stated that they cross reference the content with other sources. 35 respondents said that they look for credentials and expertise of the content creator while 26 respondents trusted the contents based on the number of views and likes. Overall, the respondents were positive about the credibility of the educational content on YouTube. Table 8

Table 8

Evaluating the credibility and reliability of educational content on YouTube for exam preparation	Number of respondents
I rely on user ratings and comments	10
I cross reference the information with other sources	24
I look for credentials and expertise of the content creator	35
I trust the content based on the number of views and likes	26
Other	5

The respondents were asked about advantages of using YouTube for exam preparation compared to traditional study materials. The most opted answer was the ability to learn at your own pace and replay videos if needed selected by 27 respondents. 26 respondents believed that YouTube provides visual and multimedia-based explanations for better understanding. While 23 respondents stated that it gives accessibility to wide range of content on various topics. 22 respondents viewed YouTube as the opportunity to learn from different educators and teaching styles. Table 9

Table 9

Advantages of using YouTube for exam preparation compared to traditional study materials	Number of respondents
Accessibility to a wide range of content on various topics	23
Visual and multimedia-based explanations for better understanding	26
Ability to learn at your own pace and replay videos if needed	27
Opportunity to learn from different educators and teaching styles	22
Other	2

The respondents were asked if YouTube should be used as the only means of exam preparation or should it be combined with additional resources. 85 respondents were in favour of using YouTube in conjunction with other study materials and resources while 15 of them believed that YouTube alone can be the sole source of preparation for competitive exams. The data shows that YouTube can be very helpful in learning process when utilized with proper resources. Table 10

Table 10

YouTube as a means of exam preparation	Number of respondents
Only source of preparation	15
In conjunction with other study materials and resources	85

An important question was asked to respondents regarding the improvement in their exam readiness or performance after utilizing YouTube. 32 respondents said there was significant improvement while 61 of them responded that they got some improvement. Only 5 respondents shared that they had no noticeable improvement. This shows that YouTube has helped the students' performance and their exam preparation. Table 11

Table 11

Any improvement in your exam readiness or performance after utilizing YouTube for exam preparation	Number of respondents
Significant improvement	32
Some improvement	61
No noticeable improvement	5
Not applicable, as I haven't used YouTube for exam preparation	2

Another important question was put forward to respondents regarding satisfaction with overall quality of educational content available on YouTube for exam preparation. 70 respondents were satisfied with the quality of educational content on YouTube. This implies that YouTube provides a good quality content for competitive exams. Table 12

Table 12

Satisfaction with overall quality of educational content available on YouTube for exam preparation	Number of respondents
Very Satisfied	15
Satisfied	55
Neutral	29
Dissatisfied	0
Very Dissatisfied	1

The respondents were asked to select multiple options on the limitations and challenges they have experienced while using YouTube for exam preparation. Distractions from entertaining videos and time management issues was the major challenge responded by the students. Students generally have difficulty in finding specific content related to their topic. Another limitation for the students is the lack of personalized guidance. Though they get content for study but they lack proper counselling. Few students have the difficulty in accessing the reliability of the YouTube content. This is because of the abundance of content available on a particular topic. Another major challenge faced by the students is the internet connection. Though there is a boom in telecommunication industry where cheap internet data is available, still the internet connection is very slow and lagging due to huge population using it. Table 13

Table 13

Limitations or challenges while using YouTube for exam preparation	Number of respondents
Difficulty in assessing the reliability and credibility of the information	17
Lack of personalized guidance or individualized feedback	30
Distractions or time management issues while using YouTube	49
Difficulty in finding specific or niche content	35
Internet connection issue	27

The respondents were asked if they have difficulty in differentiating between trustworthy educational content and inaccurate or misleading content. 58 respondents said that it depends on the topic being searched on YouTube. While 31 respondents faced challenges in understanding

the content to be trusted or not. 11 respondents mentioned that they can usually identify the content. The reason behind this is abundance of information and content available on YouTube and various approaches to deal with such content may lead to differentiate between correct information and misleading content. Table 14

Table 14

Difficulty in differentiating between trustworthy educational content and inaccurate or misleading content	Number of respondents
Yes, it is challenging	31
Sometimes, it depends on the topic	58
No, I can usually identify reliable content	11

Related to above question, the respondents were asked if it is challenging to select most relevant material from the abundant YouTube content to which 54 students replied that it depends on the topic. 29 students find it challenging to get exact material they are looking for while 17 students did not have any difficulty in collecting content. The data shows that extracting the relevant content for study may be challenging especially when the students are looking for particular topic. There are multiple contents in various forms available on YouTube for any particular topic. It becomes easy to search out the needed information when the student is aware of the topic and has a general idea about it. Table 15

Table 15

Available content on YouTube makes it challenging to select the most relevant material for your exam preparation	Number of respondents
Yes	29
No	17
Depends on the topic	54

The respondents were asked if they seek guidance or clarification from educators or subject matter experts outside of YouTube to supplement your exam preparation. According to data obtained, maximum number of students took advice from educators apart from learning through YouTube.

This show that proper guidance from teachers along with online study on YouTube may further boost their learning process. Table 16

Table 16

Seeking guidance or clarification from educators or subject matter experts outside of YouTube to supplement your exam preparation	Number of respondents
Always	13
Often	21
Sometimes	51
Rarely	11
Never	4

At last, the respondents were asked if they would recommend YouTube for competitive exam preparation to others. 78 students responded affirmative while only 2 responded no to recommend YouTube. 20 students responded with maybe they would recommend YouTube for preparing for competitive exams. YouTube provides adequate content with different ways to learn and acquire knowledge on particular topic. The students preparing for competitive exams often use YouTube as their source of learning and hence they recommend positively YouTube for exam preparations.

Table 17

Table 17

Recommend YouTube for competitive exam preparation to others	Number of respondents
Yes	78
No	2
Maybe	20

An open ended questions was asked to respondents about any specific YouTube channel or content creator that they find particularly helpful for competitive exams. The students mentioned popular names such as Unacademy, Adda247, Khan Sir, Online Guruji, Dhristi IAS, Mrunal, Byjus that help students in preparing students for competitive exams.

Conclusion

The role of YouTube in facilitating preparedness for competitive exams has proven to be significant. The platform's accessibility and user-friendly features have enabled students to effectively utilize its extensive educational resources, thereby improving their exam preparation journey. YouTube's large content empowers learners to explore different teaching styles and approaches, enabling them to find the most suitable resources that align with their individual learning preferences. Students can engage with content creators, ask questions, seek clarification, and exchange knowledge with peers, creating a supportive virtual learning environment. This collaborative aspect of YouTube enhances the learning experience, promoting engagement, motivation, and a sense of belonging.

However, it is important to note that while YouTube offers numerous benefits for exam preparedness, it also poses certain challenges. The abundance of content, varying quality, and potential misinformation necessitate a cautious approach when selecting and relying on YouTube resources. Students need to exercise critical thinking skills, verify information, and seek reputable sources to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the material they access. The role of YouTube in preparing for competitive exams cannot be underestimated. Its accessibility, diverse content, collaborative features, and personalized recommendations have impacted the way students approach exam preparation. By utilizing YouTube as a valuable educational tool, students can enhance their knowledge, skills, and confidence, ultimately improving their chances of success in competitive exams.

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