

## **A study on the paradigm shift of Online Education; with reference to YouTube**

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### **Abstract**

Contrary to popular belief, online education is not a recent phenomenon, but rather born of the invention of e-mail. In fact, the 1980s and 1990s witnessed massive innovations in online education. Moreover, the coming of the World Wide Web in 1992 expanded accessibility to online education and emergence of new pedagogical methods. Today, one of the most instrumental tools utilised in online education is YouTube. The rise of YouTube as a significant platform for educational content has fundamentally altered the landscape of learning, moving beyond traditional institutional settings. The study will examine the paradigm shift in online education, focusing on the transformative role of YouTube as a social media platform. It will strive to explore how YouTube's accessibility and diverse content offerings have democratized access to education, impacting learning methodologies and student engagement. The research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the evolving relationship between technology, education, and social media, specifically focusing on YouTube as an indispensable platform of online education.

*Keywords:* Online Education, YouTube. Transformative role

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Online learning**

A general perception is that online education is a recent happening, given impetus by the Internet. But it has its origins way back in the early 1970s, with the invention of the e-mail. During its infancy, online education had been utilized only in universities as a part of curriculum and academic information exchange. However, the coming of the World Wide Web in 1992 brought with it greater accessibility to online education coupled with increased innovation and emergence

of new pedagogical models. Over time, progress with regards to computer accessibility led educators to establish that online space could be utilized for numerous purposes, including ‘online education’ to enhance students learning. [2]

The evolution of learning has undergone various phases of development and progress. From carrying a pen and a notebook to a classroom, also called the ‘traditional setting’ to supplementing it with tape recorders, DVDs and pen drives to better store and manage resources or lectures. Today, social media and technology has completely altered the pedagogical models and learning. [1]

## **1.2 Web 2.0**

“Web 2.0” is a phrase coined by O'Reilly Media in 2003 (O'Reilly, 2005). It refers to a perceived second generation of web-based interactions, applications and communities. It is considered to be inclusive of a shift from a World Wide Web that is “read only” to a Web that is being described as the “Read Write Web” (Gillmor, 2007). [4]

Prior to the advent of Web 2.0, the web’s content was of static nature. Now, it has become a platform of social networking, interlinking the whole world into a Global Village. The web today is interactive, has user- friendly interface and encourages users to become producers as well as consumers of content.

In a nutshell, O'Reilly (2005) expressed that "Web 2.0" means that the Internet is evolving from a collection of static pages into a vehicle for self-publishing, participation, and collaboration. [4]

## **1.3 YouTube**

YouTube is a social media platform and video sharing website where users can upload, view and share videos. Founded in 2005 by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen and Jawed Karim, to address the gap in the market to upload, share and view videos online. It presented a significant step in the democratization of content creation, allowing everyone to become broadcasters Moreover, its user-friendly approach has attracted users worldwide.

YouTube was launched with the concept of ‘User Generated Content’. This democratization of content creation has enabled a variety of voices and perspectives to be exchanged on the platform. Its content ranges from vlogs, entertainment, music, live streaming, educational videos, animated explanations, step- by- step tutorials, and so on.

### **YouTube as a Global Video Platform**

Today, YouTube stands as a dominant force in the digital landscape, with billions of users consuming and uploading videos daily.

The platform continues to evolve, embracing new technologies and expanding its reach.

- **User Base:** YouTube's user base has grown exponentially, with over 2 billion logged-in users visiting the platform each month.
- **Global Reach:** The platform is available in over 100 countries and 80 different languages, making it accessible to a vast and diverse audience.
- **Diverse Content:** YouTube hosts a wide variety of content, from music videos and educational tutorials to live streams and vlogs, catering to different interests and demographics.

Since its inception, YouTube has been constantly upgrading its platform. Notable timeline vis-à-vis new features are presented below:

**2005:** YouTube is founded by Chad Hurley, Steve Chen, and Jawed Karim.

The first video, "Me at the Zoo," is uploaded by Jawed Karim.

**2012:** YouTube's mobile app is released, enhancing the mobile viewing experience.

Gangnam Style becomes the first YouTube video to reach 1 billion views.

**2013:** YouTube launches a paid subscription service, allowing channels to offer premium content.

**2015:** YouTube announced the YouTube Kids program, providing a child-friendly version of the platform.

YouTube Red (later rebranded as YouTube Premium) is introduced, offering ad-free viewing, background playback, and exclusive content

**2016:** YouTube Live is enhanced, making live streaming more accessible and integrated with the main platform.

**2017:** YouTube TV is launched, offering live TV streaming

**2021:** YouTube introduces YouTube Shorts, a short-form video feature to compete with TikTok

### **1.2.2 Transformation to an essential platform of online learning**

In recent years, education has undergone a visible shift and YouTube is one such player. From a simple video-sharing website, YouTube has evolved to become an indispensable tool of online education. Owing to the availability of diverse content and resources, ease of access and flexibility, it has become an asset for both teachers as well as students. YouTube has become the modern

man's repository of knowledge with contents ranging from music, viral videos, vlogs to educational videos and tutorials.

Diana G. Oblinger, president of Educause stated, "Online education provides additional opportunities. It gives people greater opportunity for flexibility, for experiential learning, for illustrating things in multiple ways such as visualization." She emphasized that the study makes it quite obvious that colleges have to make sure to use online education and not insist on only offering courses using traditional, face to-face instruction. [3]

Brown (2000) observed that the Web has created a "new kind of information fabric in which learning, working, and playing co-mingle." He adds that the Web is also "two-way, push and pull." The old method of lecturing passive students is a "push" approach that does not work for many students. Brown (2000) asserts that young people today are always "multiprocessing" and conducting several tasks simultaneously. Many can be working on the computer, talking on their cell phones, and listening to music, all at the same time! The goal of education today, according to Brown, is to teach students information navigation, i.e., how to find useful information on the Internet. [3]

Following are some of the reasons how YouTube is playing a transformative role in education and online learning:

**Access to free educational content-** Educators and learners can find a wealth of educational videos on almost all subjects and topics. Owing to the availability of diverse resources, teachers can use it to access new teaching techniques, supplement lectures via audio-visual aid, which results in better learning. Moreover, there are videos for every learning level, from beginning to advanced, for learners of all ages.

**Personalized learning/ Flexibility-** YouTube allows learners to choose videos as per their preference and pace. One of the hallmarks of online learning is that it enables students to personalize the learning experience. It gives users the freedom to pause, forward, rewind and repeat videos as they wish, an innovative feature beyond traditional learning environment.

**Diverse content-** YouTube's educational content spans nearly all subject. From academic subjects like Maths, Science, Literature, History to technical videos, music production, guitar tutorials, live

videos, baking videos, DIYs, etc, YouTube. Learners can always find contents tailored to their needs.

**Cost-cutting** – The platform is available to all so long as one has access to internet connection. It has transcended geographical barriers. irrespective of whether the educator or the learner is based, information is democratized for all.

Selingo (2012) feels that “despite resistance to the idea from academics,” the evidence is there that online education has the ability to lower costs and improve the quality of education [3]

There are also some countries where YouTube is currently banned viz. North Korea, South Sudan, China (excluding Hong Kong and Macau), Iran, Turkmenistan and Eritrea.

## 2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Since its inception in 2005, YouTube has seen an exponential rise in the number of users to becoming the world’s second leading video platforms with more than 2.5 billion monthly users, the first being Facebook at 3.06 billion.

The table below displays YouTube’s rank among different social media platforms according to the number of platform users

| Social Media Platform | Number of Users |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Facebook              | 3.06 billion    |
| Youtube               | 2.5 billion     |
| Instagram             | 2.0 billion     |
| Whatsapp              | 2.0 billion     |
| TikTok                | 1.58 billion    |
| WeChat                | 1.34 billion    |
| Facebook Messenger    | 1.01 billion    |

| Social Media Platform | Number of Users |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Telegram              | 900 million     |
| Snapchat              | 850 million     |
| Douyin                | 755 million     |
| Kuaishou              | 700 million     |
| Twitter (X)           | 611 million     |
| Weibo                 | 598 million     |
| QQ                    | 554 million     |
| Pinterest             | 498 million     |

**Table 1 [6]**

Table 2 displays the countries with the highest number of YouTube users worldwide.

| Country       | Number Of YouTube Users |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| India         | 476 million             |
| United States | 238 million             |
| Brazil        | 147 million             |
| Indonesia     | 139 million             |
| Mexico        | 84.2 million            |
| Japan         | 79.4 million            |
| Pakistan      | 66.1 million            |

| Country     | Number Of YouTube Users |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| Germany     | 65.7 million            |
| Vietnam     | 63 million              |
| Philippines | 58.1 million            |

**Table 2 [6]**

Table 2 has shown that India has taken the lead in owning the largest number of users. With around 476 million of its population accessing the platform, it becomes imperative to study how YouTube has transformed from a video- sharing platform to an indispensable platform of online learning.

### 3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are intended to gather a comprehensive understanding on the evolving relationship between online education and social media, with specific focus on YouTube.

#### Broad objective:

To study whether YouTube is an indispensable platform for online education or learning.

#### Specific objectives:

- 1) To look into the various purpose for which users access YouTube.
- 2) To identify reasons why learners prefer to use YouTube for educational content.
- 3) To find out if YouTube democratizes access to information.
- 4) To investigate if it has altered the landscape of learning beyond traditional setting.

### 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a mix of qualitative as well as quantitative approach. Survey method is taken up for the method of data collection and questionnaires were employed for collecting data. It is a mix of qualitative and quantitative in the sense that questionnaires comprised of both close-ended questions and open-ended questions and results are presented in both words as well as in numbers and graphs.

#### a. Sample design

The study focuses on students, teachers and professionals who utilize YouTube as a for learning, accessing resources and gaining knowledge. The researcher therefore adopted non- probability sampling.

### b. Sample size

A total of 152 responses were acquired from the online questionnaire and findings were analysed thereafter.

## 5. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The online questionnaire was disseminated to the target audience within the age groups of 23-40. A total of 9 questions were put up, comprising of 8 close-ended questions and 1 open-ended question, to gain respondent's perspective on the topic concerned. Data collected from the online survey are presented below.

**5.1 Access to YouTube:** Figure 1 shows that out of 152 respondents, 142 of them utilize YouTube for educational content, apart from leisure. While the remaining 10 respondents use it for other purposes. This indicates that apart from viewing and sharing video alone, majority of the participants regard it as a digital library for gaining access to education and knowledge online.

Do you access YouTube for educational content apart from leisure?  
152 responses

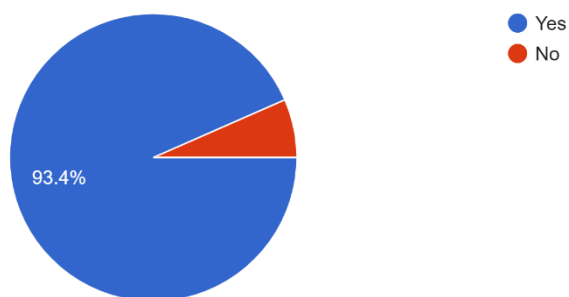


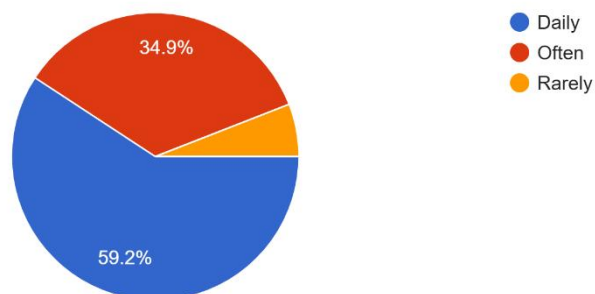
Fig1

**5.2 How often respondents utilized YouTube:** The numbers show that 90 respondents utilizes it on a 'daily' basis, 53 responded they used it 'often' and 9 of them rarely use YouTube.



How often do you utilize Youtube?

152 responses

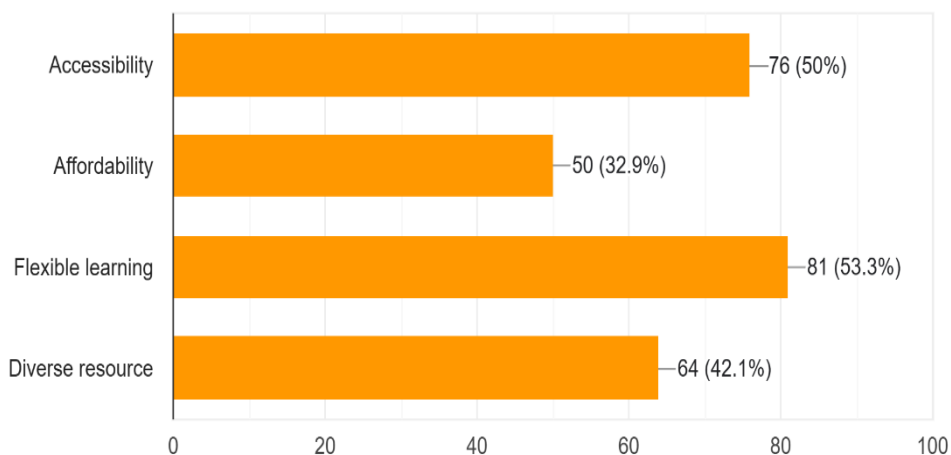


**Fig 2**

**5.3 Reasons for using YouTube as a platform for Online education:** In order to find out why users prefer Youtube as an essential tool for online learning, the researcher presented four reasons. It found that 53.3% used it as it enabled Personalized learning or ‘Flexibility’ as per their own pace and preference. 50% responded ‘accessibility’, 42.1% of respondents used the platform due to availability of a wealth of resources and materials while 32.9% preferred it due to ‘affordability’.

Why do you prefer to access YouTube for educational content?

152 responses

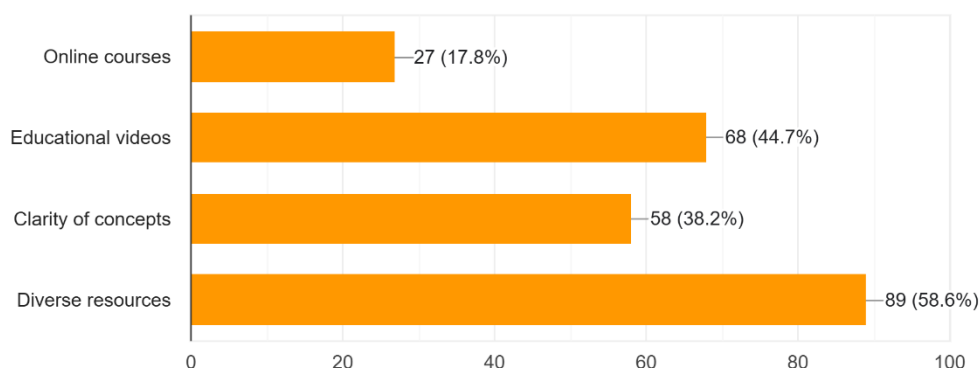


**Fig 3**

**5.4 Specific purpose of using YouTube:** The survey tried to highlight some of the core purposes of accessing the platform to gain a deeper understanding. The researcher presented four basic purpose and maximum number of responses show that 58.6% respondents used YouTube due to the availability of diverse resources, 44.7% use it to view educational content, 38.2% for clearing concepts and 17.8% utilize it as a platform for availing YouTube online courses.

For what purpose do you use Youtube?

152 responses



**Fig 4**

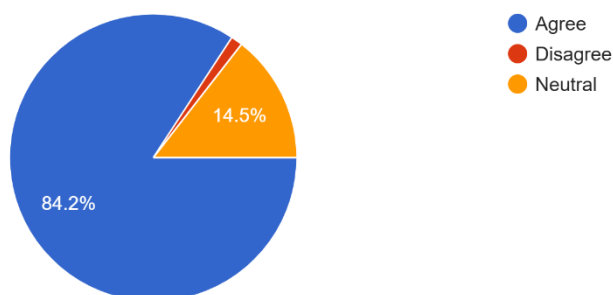
**5.5 Rise of innovative pedagogical models:** With the coming of Web 2.0, YouTube with its principle of User Generated Content, it has been observed that YouTube has witnessed a plethora of educational channels and videos. Educators and domain experts have increasingly adapted to technological advancements by moving towards the digital classroom by opening up their own channels. Or rather by updating their knowledge base and tailoring pedagogical models to the changing times.

The survey shows that out of 152 respondents, 128 agreed that Youtube as a repository of diverse content and resource has given rise to new pedagogical models. 22 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, while 2 had disagreed.

YouTube is increasingly being used by educators as a pedagogic resource and students alike. Of course, it is certainly not a replacement to traditional education system. But it has indeed proven to be a pivotal tool in supplementing education providing educators and students with a library of new teaching strategies and resources.

The emergence of diverse content and resources on Youtube has given rise to innovative pedagogical( teaching) models.

152 responses

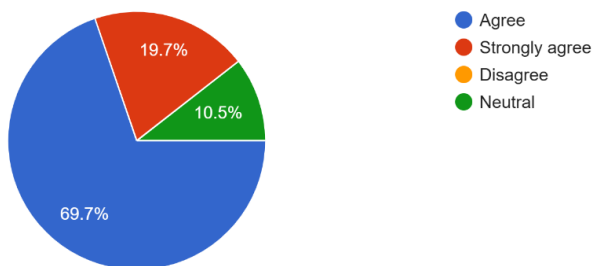


**Fig 5**

**5.6 Learning outcome:** Upon further investigation, 106 respondents agreed they have benefitted in terms of learning achievements. 30 respondents strongly agreed that they had achieved better outcomes from YouTube’s online education. While reaming 16 respondents were unsure.

With regards to learner’s achievements, is YouTube beneficial?

152 responses

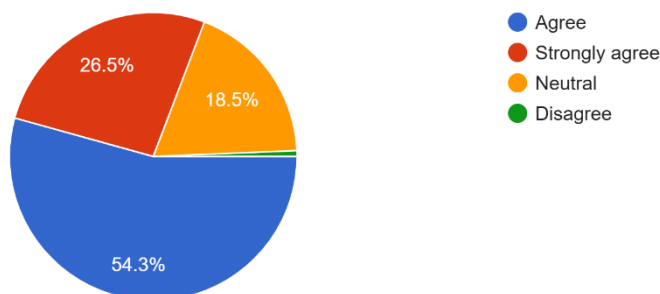


**Fig 6**

**5.7 In regards to whether YouTube has altered the landscape of education beyond Traditional setting,** the figure shows that 82 respondents agreed, 40 of them strongly agrees that YouTube has indeed brought about changes in the learning scenario. Next, 28 respondents held no opinion, while 1 respondent disagreed that YouTube did not bring changes in education. Today, anyone with a stable internet connectivity can gain access to educational videos and content, free online courses, explanatory content or tutorials at their fingertip.

Do you think YouTube has altered the landscape of learning beyond traditional settings(classroom)?

151 responses



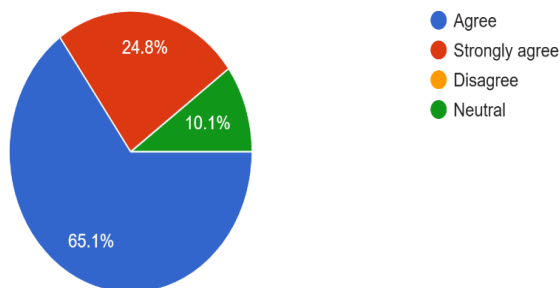
**Fig 7**

**5.8 Democratized access to information:** One striking feature of YouTube is the accessibility of content, anytime, anywhere. Unlike traditional learning environments that require physical presence, YouTube makes educational contents available to anyone with an internet connection. Whether you're in a remote village, a city, or a crowded classroom, or in the comfort of your bed, YouTube is a portal to knowledge that transcends geographic boundaries, while also allowing users to learn at their own pace.

The survey found that while 97 respondents agreed and 37 strongly agreed upon YouTube democratizing access to information, 15 respondents had a neutral stand and 3 of them disagreed YouTube democraatized access to information, by making it available to all.

YouTube has democratized access to information, by making it available to all transcending barriers.

149 responses



**Fig 8**

**5.9 Open- Ended Question:** Participants were asked to share their views on how YouTube has undergone a paradigm shift from a video sharing platform to becoming an essential learning platform. Data collected in response to this question is summed up briefly below:

**1. Accessibility and availability of countless educational videos-** It offers diverse educational content, from academic subjects to practical skills, making knowledge accessible to anyone with an internet connection. Now it offers tutorials, lectures, and educational content on almost any topic, making knowledge more accessible, flexible and free for everyone.

Moving from being mainly a casual video-sharing platform to becoming a global hub for learning, it has proved to be an essential part of modern education, from learning about subjects, learning new skills, learning new languages to baking videos, DIY videos, how to tutorials. There are also free online courses for aspirants as a substitute for expensive coaching services.

**2. Visual learning-** Human beings are visual learners. Visual aids contribute in better learning outcomes as it helps retain information better. Moreover, it breaks down the barrier of literacy as one need not be literate to grasp information provided.

**3. Flexible learning-** As long as one has a stable internet connectivity, anyone can have access to contents available on the platform irrespective of the time and place. Learning experience is tailored to fit one's own personal preference and pace, at their own convenience.

**4. Availability of content in diverse languages-** Language is now, no longer a barrier for learning. Videos are now available in diverse languages or even in one's own mother tongue. This provides for easy absorption of information.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS**

The findings indicated that a large chunk of the participants resort to YouTube as a platform for online learning. The study was constructed with the goal to figure out why YouTube is emerging as a vital tool for education, both formal and informal.

Data collected from the online questionnaire revealed that YouTube as a platform is gaining recognition in the realm of education due to varied reasons. First, it enables personalized learning experiences or flexibility, followed suit by other reasons such as accessibility, availability of vast resource and affordability.

The study has also shown that YouTube has helped democratized access to information and knowledge. Information and knowledge is now made available to everyone, anywhere and anytime

as long as one has access to internet connectivity. The platform has succeeded in breaking down traditional barriers to information, to a great extent. It is a learning platform as much as it is a source of entertainment.

## LIMITATIONS

The study is however associated with limitations. First, the present study is conducted on the basis of data collected from the online questionnaire, which was further supplemented with by secondary data. A greater sample size would have been better suited to generate even more concrete and substantial information.

Secondly, the study is more ‘how and why’ centric. It is confined to exploring and explaining the phenomenon. It does not dive into other aspects in relation to the study such as, challenges and effects. Future research is recommended on to explore the impacts and challenges of this particular study.

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