The Impact of Digital Tools On Learners' Performance in Literature in Public Universities in Western Kenya

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Abstract- This study investigates the role of digital tools in enhancing the performance of Literature learners in public universities in Western Kenya. Digital tools, including learning management systems (LMS), video conferencing platforms, and collaborative applications, have transformed the educational landscape by fostering engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking. Using a descriptive survey design, data was collected from 277 learners and 32 lecturers through structured questionnaires and interviews. Findings reveal that 64.5% of learners agreed that digital tools improved their ability to analyze and interpret literary texts, while 60.6% found digital tools helpful for collaboration on literature projects. Similarly, 83.5% of lecturers emphasized the positive impact of video conferencing tools on learners' research skills. Despite these benefits, challenges such as limited access to technology, digital literacy barriers, and technical issues hinder optimal utilization. The study underscores the importance of integrating digital tools into literature education to foster enriched learning experiences and improved performance.

Index Terms- Digital Tools, Literature Education, Academic Performance, Public Universities, Western Kenya

I. INTRODUCTION

Digital tools refer to technological resources and platforms that facilitate learning, such as learning management systems (LMS), video conferencing platforms, educational apps, and collaborative tools. In literature education, these tools provide learners with opportunities for interactive learning, personalized instruction, and collaboration. This study examines the impact of digital tools on learners' performance in literature courses in public universities in Western Kenya, focusing on comprehension, collaboration, research skills, and academic success.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital tools have been widely adopted in education to enhance learning experiences and outcomes. Research by Dhawan (2020) highlights the versatility of digital tools in accommodating diverse learning styles and preferences. Similarly, Ally (2008) emphasizes the role of digital tools in providing access to educational content anytime, anywhere, overcoming geographical barriers. However, challenges such as technical issues, cognitive overload, and disparities in access remain significant obstacles (Selwyn, 2011; Sweller et al., 2011).

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design targeting 899 learners and 32 lecturers from four public universities in Western Kenya. A sample of 277 learners and 32 lecturers was selected using proportionate sampling and census techniques. Data collection instruments included structured questionnaires and interviews. Reliability was ensured through Cronbach's Alpha, with all variables scoring above the acceptable threshold of 0.7.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Learners' Perspectives
- Comprehension of Literary Concepts: 61.3% of learners agreed that digital tools enhanced their comprehension of literary concepts, with a mean score of 3.40 and a standard deviation of 1.28.
- Analysis and Interpretation: 64.5% of learners reported that digital tools improved their ability to analyze and interpret literary texts for academic

assignments, with a mean score of 3.37 and a standard deviation of 1.30.

- Collaboration: 60.6% of learners found digital tools helpful for collaborating with peers on literature projects, with a mean score of 3.32 and a standard deviation of 1.35.
- Research Skills: 57.4% of learners stated that access to video conferencing tools positively impacted their research skills for literature-related tasks, with a mean score of 3.23 and a standard deviation of 1.34.
- Learning Management Systems: 62.6% of learners believed that incorporating LMS contributed to their success in literature courses, with a mean score of 3.41 and a standard deviation of 1.16.

4.2 Lecturers' Perspectives

- Comprehension of Literary Concepts: 81.4% of lecturers agreed that digital tools enhanced learners' comprehension of literary concepts, with a mean score of 3.17 and a standard deviation of 1.36.
- Analysis and Interpretation: 80.4% of lecturers noted improvement in learners' ability to analyze and interpret literary texts through digital tools, with a mean score of 3.66 and a standard deviation of 1.14.
- Collaboration: 73.2% of lecturers highlighted the effectiveness of digital tools in promoting collaboration among learners on literature projects, with a mean score of 3.62 and a standard deviation of 1.05.
- Research Skills: 83.5% of lecturers emphasized the positive impact of video conferencing tools on learners' research skills, with a mean score of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 1.27.
- Learning Management Systems: 78.4% of lecturers credited LMS with contributing to learners' success in literature courses, with a mean score of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 1.43.

4.3 Challenges Despite the benefits, learners and lecturers identified challenges such as limited access to technology, varying levels digital literacy, and resistance to adopting digital methods. Technical issues, such as unreliable internet connectivity and software glitches, were also noted as barriers to effective utilization.

CONCLUSION

Digital tools significantly enhance learners' comprehension, analytical skills, collaboration, and research capabilities in literature education. Both learners and lecturers recognize the transformative potential of digital tools in fostering enriched learning experiences. However, addressing challenges related to access, digital literacy, and technical issues is crucial for effective integration. This research paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the role of digital tools in enhancing literature education, offering valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Improve Access to Technology: Universities should invest in infrastructure to ensure equitable access to digital tools.
2. Enhance Digital Literacy: Training programs for learners and lecturers should be implemented to improve proficiency in using digital tools.
3. Address Technical Issues: Institutions should provide robust technical support to minimize disruptions.
4. Promote Collaborative Learning: Incorporate collaborative tools into literature courses to foster teamwork and peer engagement.
5. Monitor and Evaluate: Regular assessments of digital tools should be conducted to refine strategies and improve outcomes.

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