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The Impact of Podcasting on Enhancing Student Achievement in Higher Education among Mu'tah Students University.

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Abstract

This study explores how podcasting influences the academic success of graduate students. To delve into this topic, the researchers utilized a quasi-experimental design. Participants were drawn from those enrolled in the Diploma of Education program during the summer semester of the 2022/2023 academic year at Mu'tah University. They were randomly divided into two groups: the experimental group engaged with a unit on active learning strategies through audiovisual broadcasting (Podcast), while the control group learned the same material using conventional teaching methods.

The research employed an achievement test as its primary tool, with careful verification of its psychometric properties. The findings revealed statistically significant differences in the mean scores between the two groups on the post-achievement test. This indicates a notable impact on academic achievement, favoring the group that utilized podcasting as a learning resource. The success of this group can be largely attributed to the convenience of accessing podcast episodes anytime and anywhere—an advantage that traditional learners did not have.

Keywords: Podcasting , learning strategies, teaching methods, audio-visual broadcasting

Introduction: The rapid advancement in information and communication technology has led many individuals to increasingly utilize the internet and digital technologies in their personal and



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professional lives. In the field of education, multimedia technology applications have provided audio-visual presentation tools and animations that have added a distinctive flair to the educational process. Pardede (2020) notes that information and communication technology has become increasingly important for most educational systems, as it enhances the opportunities to improve the inputs, processes, and outputs of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the use of multimedia technology in the twenty-first century has become essential for assisting teachers and students in accessing educational materials anytime and anywhere with ease through various platforms.

These new innovations, particularly audio-visual broadcasting platforms, have ushered in a new era for education and reshaped the teaching and learning processes. In this context, Chu and Quinn (2018) argue that podcasting technology can contribute to the development of the educational process, especially as it aligns with modern learning theories, such as social constructivism, which views teachers as facilitators, guides, and motivators in a student-centered learning environment. This approach supports collaboration between learners and educators in the learning process, providing opportunities for students to have greater autonomy in directing their own learning, fostering peer support, and achieving reciprocal learning.

Although learning is the primary reason for listening to podcasts, a review of the literature concerning podcast listeners reveals a research gap regarding the use of podcasts as informal educational tools. Specifically, there is a gap in the application of technological tools for routine and entertainment purposes in their daily lives compared to what they learn in educational institutions using technology (Chan-Olmsted & Wang, 2022). This has prompted many educators to emphasize the necessity of integrating these technologies into the educational process (Perks, Turner & Tollison, 2019). Podcast listeners are viewed from a qualitative satisfaction perspective, as podcasts provide a rich and engaging supply of portable content that allows listeners to be productive in various ways.

Podcasting

Podcasting has become an established and increasingly popular method for delivering asynchronous educational and entertainment content. It offers high-quality material, facilitates personalized learning, and is more convenient than traditional print media (Berk et al., 2020).

Podcasting emerged as an alternative to conventional broadcasting methods such as radio and television, tracing its origins back to Dave Winer in 2004. The term "podcasting" is a combination of two components: "iPod," the digital audio player, and "cast," meaning to broadcast (Hornby, 2010). This service consists of audio and video files stored online, which can be downloaded or streamed live without time constraints (Siegle, 2007). Podcasts are comprised of audio recordings (MP3) or video (MP4) uploaded to the internet, allowing users to download them directly onto computers, mobile devices, and MP3 players for listening at any time. Thus, it resembles radio broadcasting but occurs over the internet (Güler & Özkan, 2018). Students can listen to podcast



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files anywhere and anytime, as often as they need. Discussions about podcasts can also take place in class, whether in pairs, small groups, or even with the entire class.

Numerous platforms, known as podcast hosting services, allow for the creation of podcast files or episodes by either recording directly on the platform or using other software, such as audio recording programs like Audacity, or video recording and editing software like Movie Maker. Screen recording programs such as Camtasia or Bandicam can also be utilized, with the final product uploaded to a podcast hosting service. Some of the most popular platforms include Casted, Buzzsprout, Captivate, Blubrry, Libsyn, and PodBean. Anchor is one of the most wellknown podcast hosting services, now known as Spotify for Podcasters. This platform is fully free and offers unlimited hosting for podcast creators without any fees (Constantine, 2007).

Once the podcast is stored on hosting platforms, these companies subsequently distribute or market it on streaming services or publishing platforms such as Spotify, Stitcher, iTunes, Google Podcasts, and Apple Podcasts. Students or users can subscribe to the podcast channel created by the instructor after accessing the publishing platforms through various computers or their smartphones and digital multimedia players (Wikipedia, 2023). Upon subscribing to the channel, users automatically receive notifications when new episodes are released (Yeh, 2013), allowing them to watch or listen later or directly from their computer (Fox, 2008).

Thus, audio-visual broadcasting (Podcast) can be defined as a series of digital audio or video files that users can download onto their personal devices to listen to at their convenience. The term "Podcast" primarily refers to audio files, which are similar in nature to radio broadcasting. In contrast, video files that include visual elements in the form of texts, graphics, or films are referred to as **vodcasts** (Chu & Quinn, 2010).

Each file in a podcast is called an episode, which can be viewed and listened to directly or stored on a personal computer for later listening or viewing without the need for an internet connection (Wikipedia, 2019). Once a user subscribes to a channel, they automatically receive notifications when new video episodes are released (Yeh, 2013).

The equipment needed for podcast production includes: a microphone, a soundproof room, and audio editing software such as Audacity, Adobe Audition, or Descript. Podcasts consist of digital media files that take various forms, including audio files, video files known as **vodcasts**, or audio with still images, such as PowerPoint slides referred to as **Enhanced podcasts**. Additionally, there are screen recordings (Screencasts), which are videos produced using screen recording software like Camtasia, capturing mouse movements along with the user's voice and image (Anguelina Popova, Paul A. Kirschner, and Richard Joiner, 2014).

Lecture recordings are the most prevalent form of podcasts (McKinney, Dyck & Luber, 2009). They can also be used as supplementary or additional materials in the form of post-lecture summaries or can include interviews, discussions, and reminders for students (EDWARDS, 2023).



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Kohar, Salam, and Sumarni (2014) described podcasts as online audio or digital audio files of spoken words that can be downloaded and stored for free on mobile phones or MP3 players, produced in the form of regular episodes. These media can record sounds generated using scenarios that can make listeners feel distanced from the actual situation. Podcasts have become a popular application for accessing necessary information in business, industry, and education. People enjoy listening to podcasts because the content is diverse, flexible, and more engaging than visual content.

Absent students can use podcasts to catch up on classroom lectures, daily activities, homework, and announcements. According to Copely (2007), many students choose to use podcasts as a supplement to lecture materials, and they utilize podcasts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the upcoming lecture, which helps them feel more confident and prepared for class discussions.

Furthermore, students who missed lectures due to illness or other reasons can use audio broadcasting to follow up on their notes. Students learn better when they have an instructor presenting the material, rather than reviewing others' notes. Finally, students with disabilities and those who do not speak English as a first language use podcast files because they can listen to the materials repeatedly (Strickland et al., 2021).

Moreover, audio broadcasting platforms offer numerous benefits for content creators and educators. Student-run podcasts represent a new method to support student learning. Studentmanaged podcasts can enhance the sense of community within the classroom and provide new opportunities for peer mentoring. Peer mentoring has been shown to enhance students' personal and professional identity formation (Akinla, Hagan, Atiomo, 2018).

In this context, Chu and Quinn (2018) argue that podcasting technology can contribute to the educational process, especially as it aligns with modern learning theories, such as social constructivism, which views teachers as facilitators, guides, and motivators in a studentcentered learning environment. This approach supports collaboration between learners and teachers in the learning process, providing them with opportunities to have more freedom in directing their own learning and enhancing peer support, thereby achieving reciprocal learning.

Multimedia and podcasts can be used at the higher education level to deepen and enhance student learning, increasing retention of educational material (Fernandez, Simo, & Sallan, 2009). They can be used repeatedly and accessed outside the classroom (Blum, 2018). Podcast files have proven to be a richer method for conveying students' life experiences, along with their powerful impact compared to traditional paper models (Nicola, 2022).

There are several reasons for the widespread popularity of podcasts in education, including their low cost and portability, as well as their flexibility in time and location. The increasing and widespread use of mobile devices and the adoption of audio broadcasting by mainstream media broadcasters as a means of providing advanced media services (Rosell-Aguilar, 2013) are also



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contributing factors. This is expected to lead to greater flexibility in learning and easy access to educational content (Lee & Chan, 2007).

Using podcasts, students can be provided with information sources about history, culture, and politics (Thomas & Toland, 2015). Additionally, learners who lack time for face-to-face learning can greatly benefit from podcasts through interviews and conversations with internal and external specialists to complement their education (Roy & Roy, 2007).

Multimedia and podcasts can be used at the higher education level to deepen and enhance student learning, increasing retention of educational material (Fernandez, V., Simo, P., & Sallan, J. M. (2009)). They can be used repeatedly and accessed outside the classroom (Blum, C. A. (2018)). Podcast files have proven to be a richer method for conveying students' life experiences, along with their powerful impact compared to traditional paper models (Nicola, W. (2022)). This will lead to greater flexibility in learning and easy access to educational content (Lee & Chan, 2007).

In this context, a study conducted by Gonulal (2020) revealed that listening skills through podcasts were highly effective in improving pronunciation abilities and vocabulary knowledge. Podcasting technology contributed to student development in the biology course at the levels of recall, understanding, and application, as well as overall academic achievement. Morrissey (2012) conducted a study at the University of Ireland involving 100 geography students, which concluded that the relative ease of using podcasts met the minimum requirements of the educational material. Students with work and family commitments were able to review their learning by listening during their free time outside the classroom, finding the learning practical and enjoyable.

In the field of the Quran, a study conducted by Akram (2019) revealed the effectiveness of a training program based on media broadcasting (podcasting) in developing the skills of understanding Quranic text among Quran teachers. Regarding the use of podcasts in language learning, Abdous, Camarena, and Facer (2009) conducted a study comparing the academic benefits of integrating podcasts into the curriculum and using them as a supplementary educational tool, as well as for review. The study found that using podcast technology provides greater benefits if used beyond merely a review tool.

Hawke (2010) found that using podcasts as supplementary materials helps learners understand educational content. In the biology course, Al-Harthi (2018) revealed that the group that studied using podcasts outperformed the group that studied through traditional methods.

Thus, this study aims to investigate the impact of audio-visual broadcasting (podcasting) on enhancing the academic achievement of diploma students in education at Mu'tah University.



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Problem of the Study and Its Question

The researchers observed, through teaching certain courses to students in the Higher Diploma Program at Mu'tah University, a noticeable weakness in student participation in class discussions and a decline in the level of engagement in lectures delivered remotely among some students. Furthermore, some students were late to attend lectures or did not attend certain sessions at all. In general, their motivation toward learning appears to be weak. This may be attributed to the long duration of the lectures (approximately three hours), the fact that half of the lectures are conducted remotely, and the increasing number of students in the class.

Appleton et al. (2008) noted that a significant number of students experience boredom, lack motivation, and are unable to engage in the learning process, indicating that they are disconnected from the academic and social aspects of the learning environment. In this context, Pekrun et al. suggest that there is a correlational relationship between boredom and learning strategies. The use of modern technologies such as podcasts may contribute to achieving selfdirected learning, allowing students to acquire and construct knowledge independently, which fosters positive attitudes toward learning and generates enjoyment in the educational process, in alignment with constructivist theory.

Thus, there arises a need to employ audio-visual broadcasting technology (podcasting) to enhance the academic achievement of diploma students in education at Mu'tah University, through addressing the following research question:

- Are there statistically significant differences in the effect of audio-visual broadcasting (podcasting) on the academic achievement of diploma students in education at Mu'tah University attributed to the teaching method (podcasting versus traditional methods)?

Hypothesis of the Study

The hypothesis of the study is as follows:

- There are no statistically significant differences in the effect of audio-visual broadcasting (podcasting) on the academic achievement of diploma students in education at Mu'tah University attributed to the teaching method (podcasting versus traditional methods).

Aim of the Study

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of audio-visual broadcasting (podcasting) in enhancing the academic achievement of students in higher education.



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Importance of the Study

This study aligns with educational trends that advocate for the integration of technology in higher education. The significance of the study can be outlined as follows:

1. **Alignment with Distance Learning Philosophy:** This strategy aligns with the philosophy of distance learning, making it effectively applicable in the online courses offered by Mu'tah University.
2. **Benefits for Faculty Members:** Faculty members may benefit from this study by producing educational episodes through podcasts and distributing them to university students.
3. **Utility for the University:** The university could leverage this experience to teach certain courses that have large student enrollments, enhancing these courses with podcast episodes for each lecture.
4. **Enhanced Learning Environment for Students:** This approach may provide students with an engaging, exciting, and flexible learning environment that allows for learning anytime and anywhere, according to their preferences and interests.
5. **Support for Teacher Candidates:** It is anticipated that this study will assist teacher candidates (diploma students) in employing modern teaching strategies (podcasting) in their educational practices while teaching their students.

Terminological and Procedural Definitions

Audio-Visual Broadcasting (Podcast): This term refers to a technology that involves the production, publication, or broadcasting of audio and video files over the Internet after they have been recorded, allowing users to receive and listen to these files either directly or by downloading them (Moore & Smith, 2012).

Procedural Definition: It is defined procedurally as the recording of an audio or video file on the podcast hosting platform known as Anchor (now referred to as Spotify for Podcasters), followed by its publication or distribution (marketing) on the streaming service or publishing platform (Spotify). This process allows students to receive these files by subscribing to a podcast feed, receiving notifications about new episodes. They can then watch or listen to the episode (file) directly or download it to their devices for later listening or viewing.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to diploma students enrolled in the General Teaching Methods course during the summer semester of the 2022/2023 academic year at Mu'tah University.



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Study Methodology

Methodology: The study employed a quasi-experimental design to investigate the effect of audio-visual broadcasting (podcasting) on the academic achievement of diploma students enrolled in the General Teaching Methods course.

Study Population: The study population consisted of diploma students registered in the General Teaching Methods course during the summer semester of the 2022/2023 academic year at Mu'tah University. The students were randomly divided into two groups:

- **Experimental Group:** This group studied a unit on active learning strategies using audiovisual broadcasting (podcasting).
- **Control Group:** This group studied the same unit using traditional teaching methods.

Study Variables

- **Independent Variable:** Teaching method, which has two levels:
 - Teaching via audio-visual broadcasting (podcasting)
 - Traditional teaching method
- **Dependent Variable:** Students' performance on the achievement test.

Study Tool

The study tool consisted of an achievement test, which was developed after analyzing the content of the educational material, extracting behavioral objectives, and constructing a specifications table. Based on this specifications table, the achievement test was constructed.

Validity and Reliability of the Test

Validity: The validity of the test was ensured by presenting its initial version to seven faculty members specializing in curricula, teaching methods, measurement, and evaluation. They were asked to provide feedback on the test items regarding their clarity, linguistic correctness, and appropriateness for the educational objectives. Their comments and modifications were considered.

Reliability: To ensure the reliability of the test, it will be calculated using the KuderRichardson 20 formula.

Statistical Methods

To answer the research question, the following statistical methods were employed:



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- **Descriptive Statistics:** Means and standard deviations.
- **Inferential Statistics:** Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA).

Study Procedures

The study will be conducted according to the following steps:

1. **Pre-Test Administration:** The achievement test will be administered to both study groups before the commencement of the study.
2. **Sample Selection:** A purposive sample will be selected from diploma students at Mu'tah University enrolled in the General Teaching Methods course.
3. **Random Group Distribution:** The selected sample will be randomly divided into two groups:
 - **Experimental Group:** This group will study a unit on active learning strategies using audiovisual broadcasting (podcasting).
 - **Control Group:** This group will study the same unit using traditional teaching methods.
4. **Content Analysis:** The educational material will be analyzed and divided into parts and subskills. The content will be converted into audio and video files in the form of episodes using a podcast hosting service (ANCOVA) and distributed on platforms such as Spotify, Stitcher, iTunes, Google Podcasts, and Apple Podcasts. Students or users can subscribe to the podcast channel created by the instructor.
5. **Podcast Episode Release:** Podcast episodes (audio or video clips) will be released sequentially shortly before the lecture on the streaming service or publishing platform (Spotify), ensuring that students receive notifications for each episode.
6. **Student Engagement:** Each student is expected to listen to or watch the episode upon receiving the notification on their mobile device or download it to listen to or watch at their convenience.
7. **Class Discussions:** Discussions and dialogues about each episode will take place during the lecture.
8. **Control Group Instruction:** The control group will be taught using traditional methods.
9. **Post-Test Administration:** At the end of the experiment, the achievement test will be administered again, and the means, standard deviations, and ANCOVA will be calculated based on the students' responses in both groups. The results will be interpreted, and recommendations will be written.



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Presentation and Discussion of Study Results

To answer the research question: Are there statistically significant differences in the effect of audio-visual broadcasting (Podcast) on the academic achievement of diploma students at Mu'tah University attributed to the teaching method (podcasting vs. traditional method)?

To address this question, the means and standard deviations of the responses of the study sample on the achievement test for both groups were calculated. This is illustrated in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of Achievement Test Scores

Group	Sample Size	Mean Score	Adjusted Score Mean	Standard Deviation
Experimental Group	55	86.9455	86.974	5.24729
Control Group	55	80.2364	80.208	6.44338

Table (1) shows apparent differences between the mean scores of students in the two study groups on the post-achievement test. The mean score for students in the first experimental group was 86.9455, while the mean score for students in the control group was 80.2364. To determine whether these differences in means are statistically significant, a Covariance Analysis (ANCOVA) was conducted, and Eta-squared (η^2) was calculated to assess the effect size. The results are presented in Table (2).

Table (2): Results of ANOVA for Post-Achievement Scores of Students in the Three Groups

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F-value	Significance Level	η^2
Post-Achievement	91.628	1	91.628	2.69	0.10	0.024
Study Groups	1257.705	1	1257.705	37.00	0.00	0.25
Error	3637.135	107	33.992			

The results presented in Table (2) indicate statistically significant differences between the mean scores of students in the two study groups on the post-achievement test. The calculated F-value was 37.00, which is statistically significant at the alpha level ($\alpha \leq 0.01$). This suggests that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of students on the post-achievement test attributed to the use of the podcasting teaching strategy compared to traditional teaching methods.



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Based on this finding, we reject the null hypothesis, which states that "there are no statistically significant differences regarding the effect of podcasting on the academic achievement of diploma students in education at Mu'tah University attributed to the teaching method (podcasting vs. traditional method)."

This indicates that the use of podcasting as a teaching strategy has a positive impact on student achievement.

The results indicate a significant effect on academic achievement between the two groups, favoring the group that learned through the podcasting teaching method. This can be attributed to the ability to listen to or watch podcast episodes at any time and from any location, a flexibility that was not afforded to students who learned through traditional methods.

Moreover, the use of mobile devices by all students for learning enabled them to study according to their individual circumstances and commitments related to work and family. The opportunity to repeatedly listen to or watch podcast episodes as needed provided an additional advantage that facilitated mastery of the educational content.

Learning through podcast episodes, which consist of audio and video segments, made the educational material more accessible, enjoyable, and engaging. This approach stimulated enthusiasm and motivation towards learning, leading to increased student achievement. Additionally, the segmentation of educational content into sequential episodes simplified the learning process, while the enjoyment and entertainment experienced by students during learning contributed positively to their overall educational experience.

Recommendations

Considering the findings, the following recommendations can be presented:

1. **Adopt Podcast Technology:** It is essential to incorporate podcast technology as one of the teaching strategies in higher education, particularly for remote learning lectures.
2. **Training Workshops:** Organize training sessions for university faculty on how to effectively use podcast technology in their teaching practices.
3. **Further Research:** Conduct similar studies utilizing podcasts with undergraduate and graduate students across various educational subjects.

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