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Research Article

The Role of YouTube in Preparing for Competitive Exams (Upsc)

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Abstract: In today's digital age, YouTube and other similar platforms have revolutionized education with accessible and affordable learning resources, especially for competitive exams like UPSC. The shift towards e-learning, fast-tracked by the pandemic, has enabled students, even in rural areas, to benefit from low-cost internet and high-quality video lectures. Preparing for UPSC, characterized by a vast syllabus and reliance on current affairs, has become more convenient with the diverse content on YouTube. This paper explores the contribution that YouTube makes to UPSC preparation by evaluating its effectiveness as a supplementary learning tool. The study adopted a quantitative survey method where the sampling strategy was purposive in nature, targeting UPSC aspirants of age 18-32, a Likert scale was used to measure their perceptions and experiences with YouTube as a preparatory tool. Through research, we come to know that YouTube offers several opportunities for UPSC preparation, including accessibility, interactive features & personalized learning. The majority of participants relied on video lectures and explanations as their primary means of preparation on YouTube along with traditional learning methods. To study the role of YouTube as a supplementary tool for UPSC preparation, including its effectiveness, challenges, opportunities, and the types of content and subjects most beneficial for aspirants.

Keywords: YouTube, UPSC, Competitive exams, E-Learning, Video Lectures.

INTRODUCTION

In today's times, it has become easier to learn about any topic thanks to online resources like Google, YouTube and more recently AI tools like ChatGPT. The pandemic has changed the educational landscape tremendously, with more and more students turning to e-learning without the need for a physical tutor. Additionally, people who were previously unable to access high-quality education due to financial constraints can now do so with the help of the internet. This is due to an increased accessibility to the now low-cost internet in rural and semi-rural areas.

The internet is full of helpful resources like tutorial videos, be it on free platforms like YouTube or paid-for certified Massive Open Online Courses on platforms like Coursera Students are thus able to learn about topics that interest them in the comfort of their homes. It is also useful for the aspirants aiming to clear various competitive exams like JEE, NEET, GRE, UPSC and more. The 2023 blockbuster movie 12th Fail by Vidhu Vinod Chopra familiarized us with the struggles millions of UPSC aspirants go through while preparing for the UPSC exam which is considered to be one of the toughest exams to crack. Studying for this exam consists of acquainting oneself with current affairs which more often than not requires retaining huge amounts of information. There exists a variety of preparatory tools for the exam like the traditional books to the now popular video lectures.

The researchers are inspired to explore the contribution of the video platform YouTube in UPSC exam preparation to understand the efficacy of this platform.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Learning Styles

Within the constructivist views on learning, it is generally believed that the best learning takes place if students play an active role in their own learning. (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996).

Reed identified four particular forms of learning: (a) visual, (b) auditory, (c) kinesthetic, and (d) tactile (hands-on learning). Accordingly, it has been asserted that visual and auditory learning styles are supported by audiovisual materials. Nevertheless, it is believed that the use of audiovisual materials can cater to a lot of learning styles. Thus, it is favorable for the learning process without specifying the learning style. (Reed, 2003).

LEARNING THROUGH VIDEOS

Nowadays, new technologies like the internet, social media and new media in general are significantly contributing to the education field by improving learning. (Nicolau, 2011). The young learners of Generation Z and Y who actively use social media are less interested in one-way teaching as they highly prefer and learn better by watching videos. (Martin, 2012) (Podara, 2019). Videos present equal opportunities of learning to special individuals like the deaf, the elderly or people with disabilities. (Ko, 2012) (Ocak, 2019)

According to Asensio and Young, videos hold value because it is possible to deliver images through them. (Asensio & Young, 2002; Young & Strom).

Videos are educationally beneficial because they are able

to show places, situations, places, and more that would be difficult or impossible for students to visit and come across. (Cogill, 1999). Furthermore, with the help of videos of historical sites and dramatizations, students are provided with insight into historical events.

A large number of researchers and educators believe that videos have the power to generate a high level of interest and enjoyment in students owing to their multimodal nature i.e. their ability to stimulate several sensory stimuli simultaneously. (Jonassen, 2000). However, the way videos are integrated learning resources and tasks largely determine the learning outcomes. (Karppinen, 2005)

FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH VIDEOS

According to a study conducted by Lee et al. (2015), while audio-visual aids help students to understand foreign language comprehension, they do not facilitate information retention and thus language acquisition.

LEARNING FROM ANIMATED VIDEOS

Researchers agree that when videos are used for teaching in addition to other pedagogical methods, they can improve learning outcomes. (Lubrick et al., 2019). According to the results of a study conducted by Puspaningtyas and Ulfa (2020), using animated videos contributes to improving student learning outcomes. Animated videos provide a visualization of concepts and thus help students understand better. Additionally, the learning interest and motivation of students is increased with the help of video animation.

VIDEO LECTURES

When a course instructor creates educational videos as an add-on to classroom lectures, such videos are known as "video lectures". They have the same content but their lecture style is slower and more gradual than the classroom lectures. They are portable and can be accessed by students according to their individual learning pace. Thus, students have greater control over the lecture. They can choose the topic which corresponds with their interests. They can pause, replay and skip certain topic segments for better understanding. It is also possible for them to watch the lecture at the time and place where they study most effectively. (Brecht, 2012)

Sweller and Cooper (1985) and Sweller (1988) believe that the learning approach should be more procedural for beginners who require concepts and problem methods to be entirely explained.

Habley and McClanahan (2004) state that tutoring is an important factor in increasing academic achievement and course retention of students.

MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSE - MOOC

A large audience is able to access a huge amount of useful information because of global communication technologies. Through e-learning, everyone has equal opportunity to an education which is fully online and free. One of the most used tools for doing that presently is a massive open online course (MOOC). MOOC is a course which has a common public curriculum and is freely accessible to all. With the help of MOOCs, anyone can access courses from global universities without time or geographical constraints. The effects can be observed in many areas like lifelong education, students' self-development and organizational training. The participants are actively involved in the self-organization of their course activity having a flexible schedule, suited to the learning objectives, prior knowledge, skills and interests. Most courses consist of videos of a specific duration and tests, essays or self-assessment as homework. Furthermore, there are interactive user forums through which a student-teacher community can be built. However, the various media used in MOOCs might cause information overload. Thus, it is believed that for the success of open education on a large scale, it is necessary to address the complexities of teaching, including teacher identity and experience. (Glusac et al., 2015)

OBJECTIVES:

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of YouTube as a supplementary learning resource for UPSC preparation
2. To identify the types of YouTube content most beneficial for UPSC aspirants
3. To explore the challenges and opportunities associated with using YouTube for UPSC preparation
4. To identify the subjects UPSC aspirants rely on YouTube for assistance.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How do UPSC aspirants utilize YouTube as a primary study resource compared to traditional coaching methods?
2. Which types of content do UPSC aspirants find useful on YouTube?
3. What are the perceived advantages and disadvantages of using YouTube in UPSC exam preparation?
4. Which subjects do UPSC aspirants use YouTube to study for?

HYPOTHESES

Ha (1)- UPSC aspirants in India who prepare for UPSC prefer YouTube to study current affairs over traditional methods of learning

Ho (1)-UPSC aspirants in India who prepare for UPSC do not prefer YouTube to study current affairs over traditional methods of learning

Ha (2) UPSC aspirants in India find live sessions helpful compared to recorded lectures.

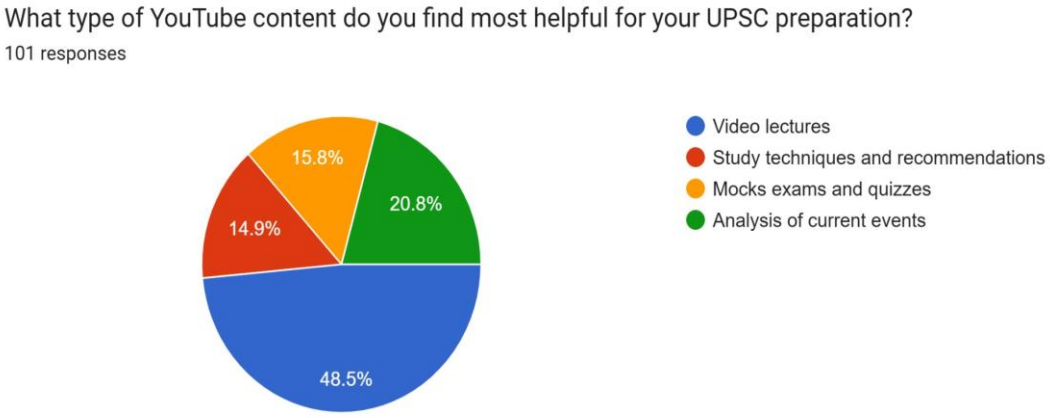
Ho (2) UPSC aspirants in India do not find live sessions helpful when compared to recorded lectures.

METHODOLOGY:

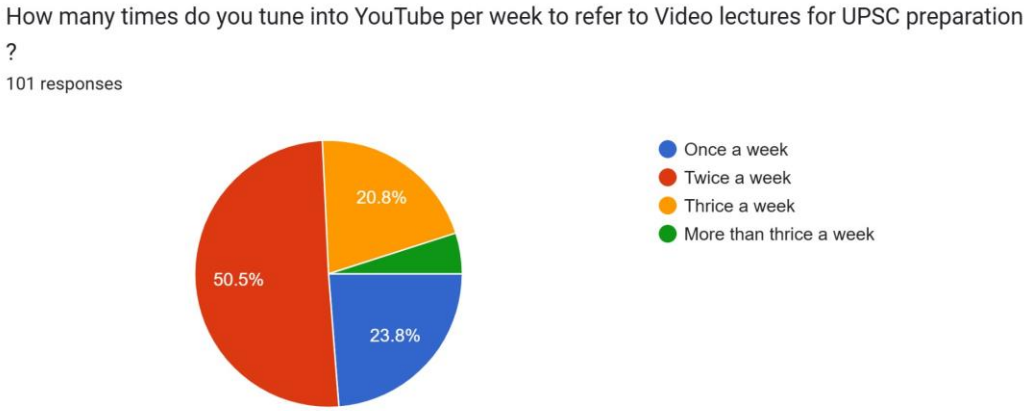
The quantitative method of data collection was employed, particularly the survey instrument. The sampling technique employed

was Non- Probability Purposive Sampling with a sample size of 101. A Descriptive Research Design was employed. The Scaling Technique employed was Likert Scale.

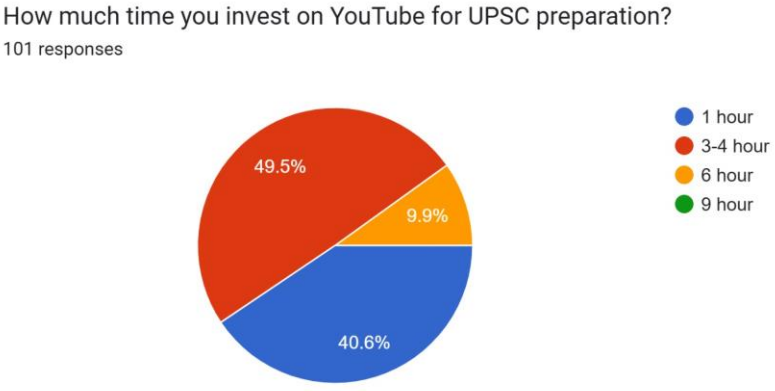
DATA COLLECTION:



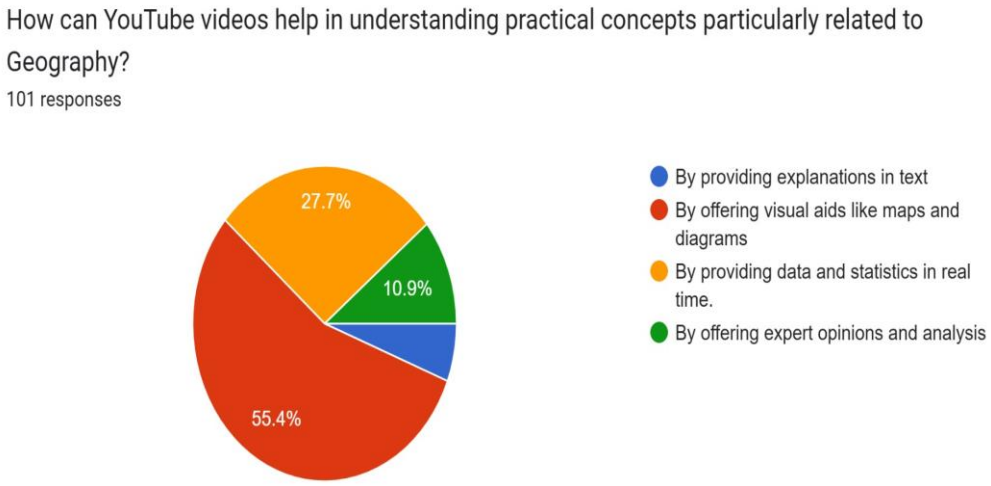
48.5% of students find video lectures more helpful for UPSC preparation



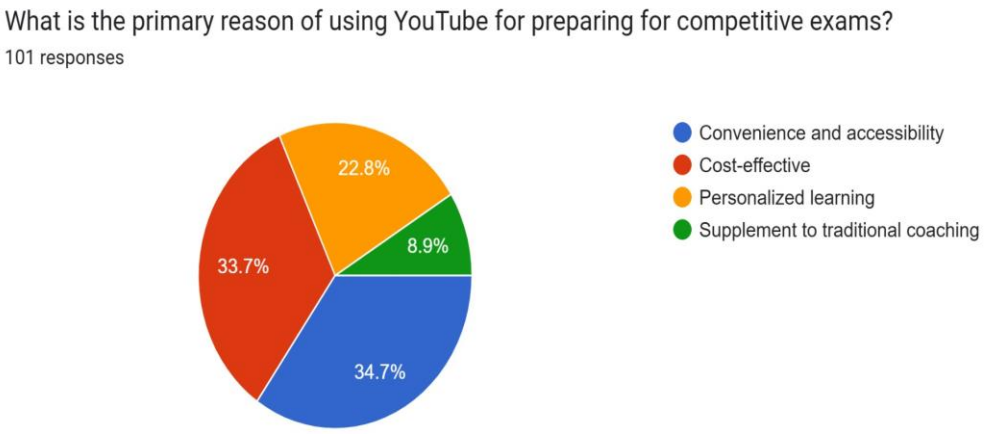
Approximately 50.5(49.5%) of students tune into YouTube (Twice a week)



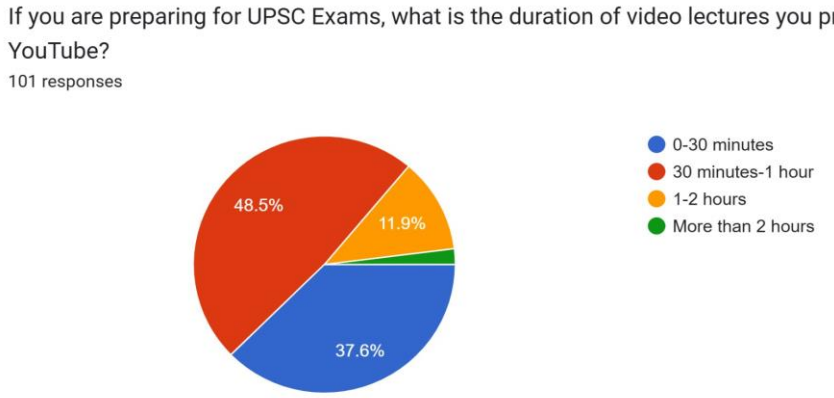
Approximately 50(49.5%) of students invest 3-4 hours on YouTube for preparation of UPSC exam



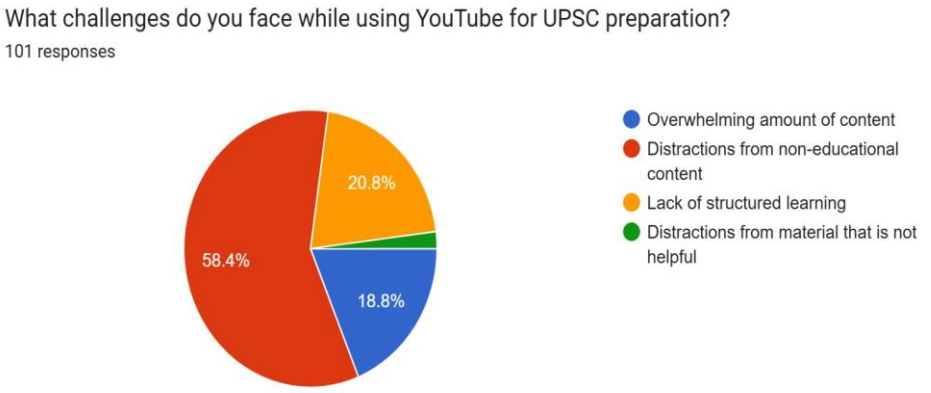
56 (55.4%) of the students find maps & diagrams to be useful when learning Geography through YouTube.



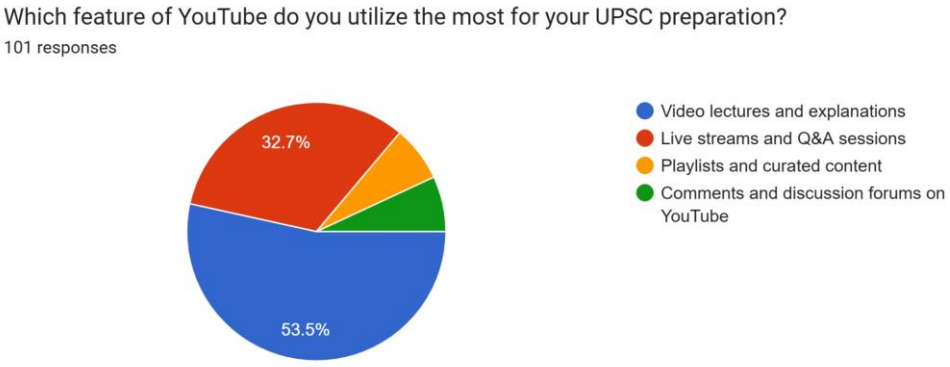
Convenience and Accessibility tops the list, with 35(34.7%) students citing it as the main reason for using YouTube.



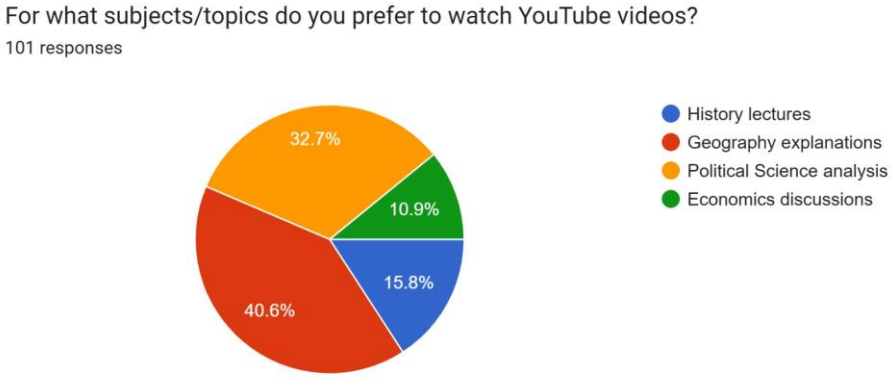
Approximately 49(48.5%) students prefer to watch content of 30 min-1-hour sessions.



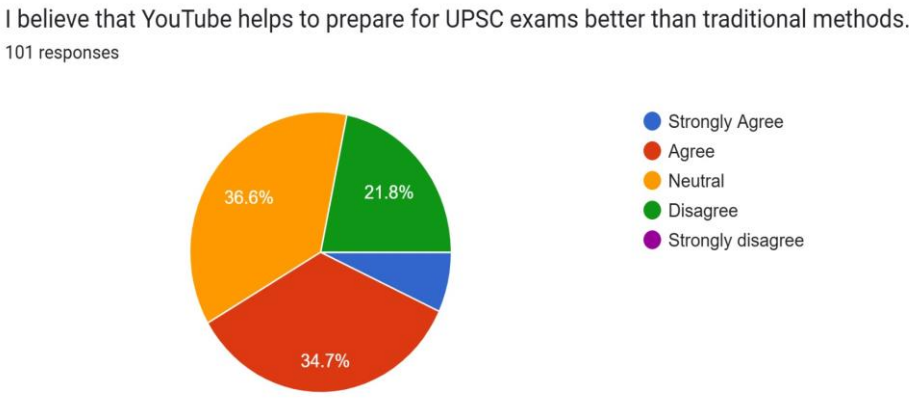
Majority {59 (58.4%)} of students stated that distractions from non-educational content were the biggest challenge while using YouTube for UPSC preparation



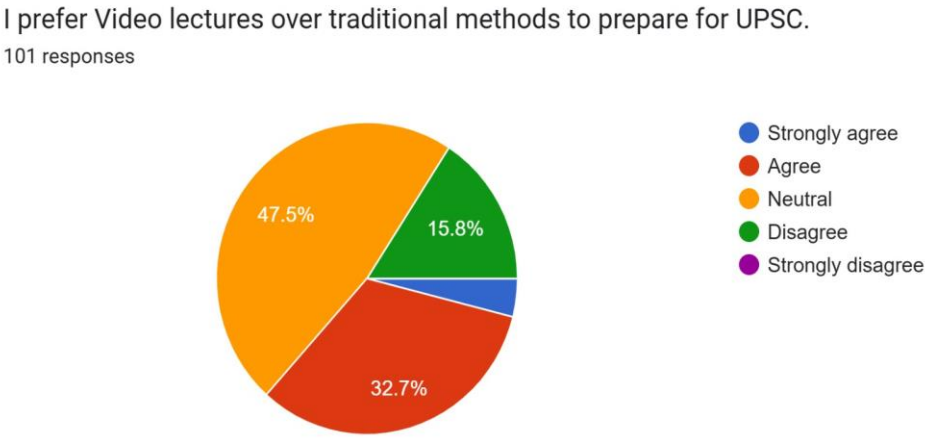
54 (53.5%), utilize YouTube for "Video lectures and explanations" for their UPSC preparation.



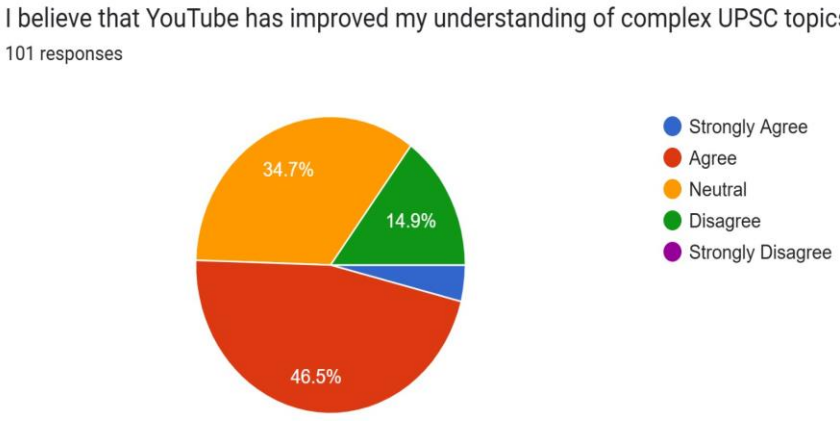
(45.4%) of the students find Geography to be the most challenging subject in UPSC preparation.



- (strongly Agree - 1… strongly disagree - 5)
- Mean: 2.73 = 3....Neutral
- Median: 3 Neutral
- Mode: 37 (Neutral)

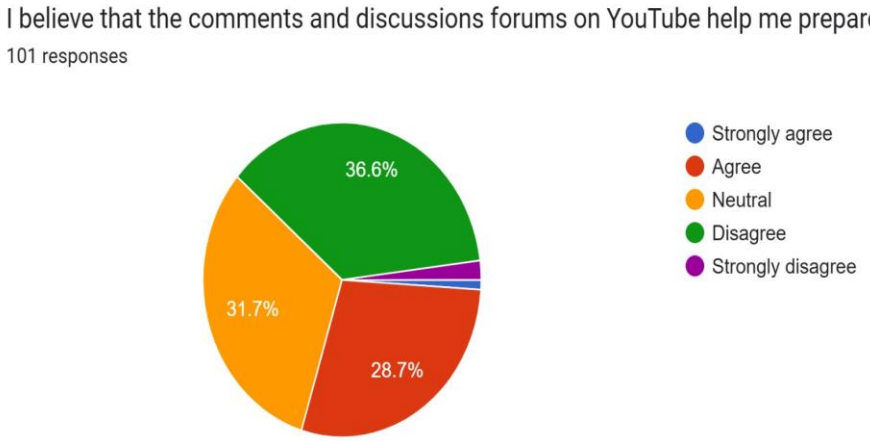


- (strongly Agree - 1… strongly disagree - 5)
- Mean: 2.75 = 3....Neutral
- Median: 3 Neutral
- Mode: 48 (Neutral)

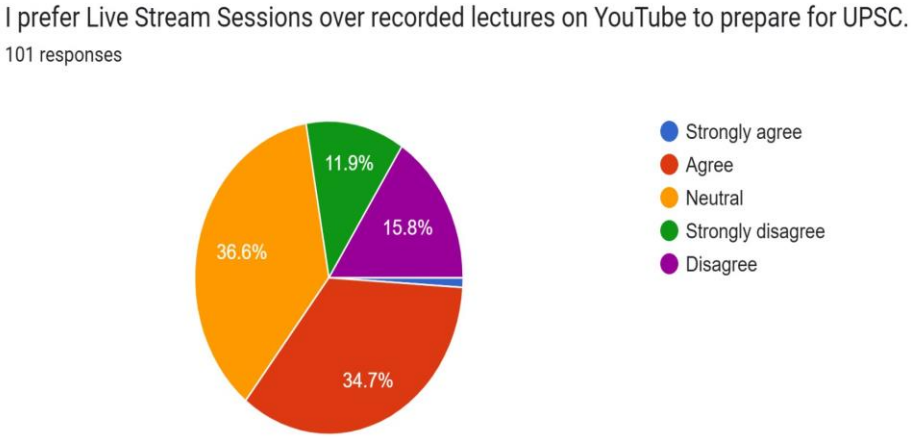


- (strongly Agree - 1… strongly disagree - 5)

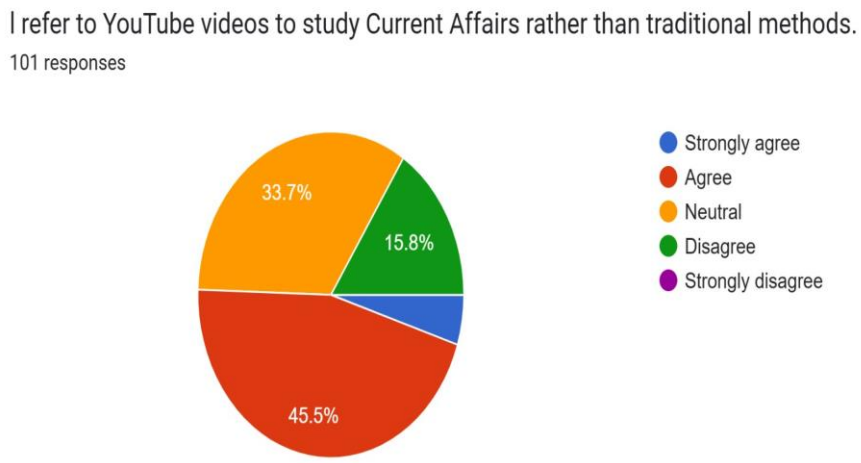
- Mean: 2.6 = 3....Neutral
- Median: 2 (Agree)
- Mode: 47 (Agree)



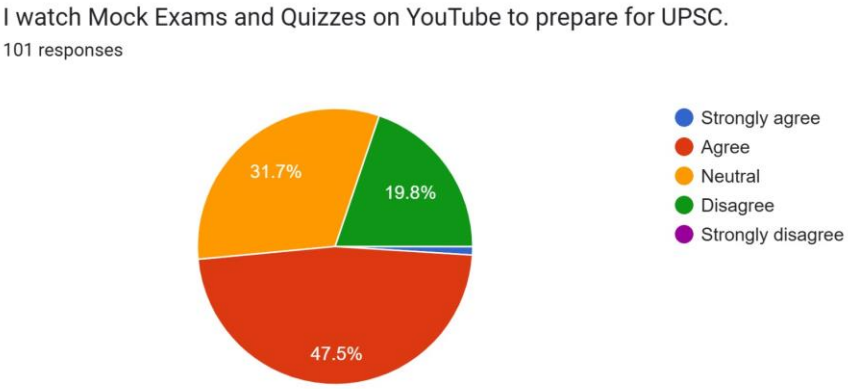
- (strongly Agree - 1… strongly disagree - 5)
- Mean: 3.09 = 3....Neutral
- Median: 3 Neutral
- Mode= 37 (Disagree)



- (strongly Agree - 1… strongly disagree - 5)
- Mean: 3.02 = 3.....Neutral
- Median= 3 Neutral
- Mode= 37 (Neutral)



- (strongly Agree - 1… strongly disagree - 5)
- Mean= 2.6 = 3.....Neutral
- Median= 2 Agree
- Mode= 46 (Agree)



- (strongly Agree - 1… strongly disagree - 5)
- Mean: 2.7 = 3....Neutral
- Median= 3 Neutral
- Mode= 48 (Agree)

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS REGARDING THE UTILIZATION OF YOUTUBE FOR UPSC PREPARATION

Learning Preferences:

Video lectures:

When it comes to UPSC preparation, nearly 48.5% of students believe that video lectures are more useful. This indicates that video material forms a significant aspect of the study plan of the students, as almost half of them prefer visual and auditory learning techniques.

Geography Maps and Diagrams: About 55.4% of students find that watching maps and diagrams on YouTube assists them in comprehending geography. This shows the importance of visual aids in learning complex geographical concepts.

Patterns of Usage:

YouTube Use Frequency: Nearly 49.5% of students use YouTube two or more times a week. This reflects how YouTube has become a part of their learning routine. Time Devoted to YouTube: Just about 49.5% of students dedicate three to four hours per session to preparation using YouTube. This huge block of time testifies to how YouTube is a primary resource for students. Approximately 48.5% of the students reported that they opt for videos that range from thirty minutes to an hour. This suggests that for maintaining audience interest, producers need to focus on making medium-duration videos.

Convenience and accessibility are the key reasons for choosing YouTube.

Considering that 34.7% of respondents name it as their most critical reason for being on YouTube, it is understandable that ease of access and breadth of material represent significant usage motivators for YouTube.

Challenges and Issues:

Distractions from Non-Educational Videos: In the opinion of most students (58.4%), the greatest challenge they encountered during preparation was being distracted by non-relevant videos. This implies that strategies of minimizing distractions and maintaining concentration are necessary.

Easiest Subject: In the view of 45.4% of students, geography is the toughest subject, and this highlights the necessity for better-structured and clear teaching materials. Content Utilization: "Video lectures and explanations" are the most common reasons for respondents' use of YouTube (53.5%). This proves that instead of using YouTube for review or casual learning, students use it mostly to enhance their conceptual understanding.

Likert Scale Analysis of Attitudes:

Dominant Neutral Responses:

The mean score of replies is 2.7-3, implying that a neutral stand on the propositions in the majority is registered.

Students also remain neutral or indifferent to surveyed features, according to the median that is at 3 (Neutral) for all times.

Furthermore, mode most often drops at 3 (Neutral) meaning that opinions from students concur.

General agreement on certain aspects:

In some instances, the mode is 2 (Agree), which denotes a fairly affirmative response, most notably concerning the worth of the video content.

On various subjects, a noticeable disagreement is also present (mode 4), which infers that pupils hold varying perceptions.

Key Lessons Derived:

Optimization of Video Content

To accommodate student preferences, concentrate on 30- to 1-hour videos. Incorporating maps and diagrams, particularly in geography classes, can greatly improve student engagement.

Distraction Mitigation: Making playlists or planned courses can help keep things focused and on track while reducing distractions.

Content Strategy: Because video lectures are the most sought-after preparation tool, emphasize heavily on conceptual explanations. For quick changes, consider adding shorter, focused material.

Overcoming Geography Challenges: Produce specialized video series that are dedicated to visual learning in an attempt to tackle the complexities of geography.

CONCLUSION

- Through data analysis, we come to know that 'Geography' is the most preferred subject that UPSC aspirants use YouTube for.
- Through research, we come to know that YouTube offers several opportunities for UPSC preparation, including accessibility, interactive features & personalized learning.
- Participants identified distractions from non-educational content as the most significant obstacle to effective UPSC preparation using YouTube.
- The majority of participants relied on video lectures and explanations as their primary means of preparation on YouTube and it also caters to different learning styles.
- The majority of UPSC aspirants find YouTube helpful in preparing for UPSC exams, with a mean rating of 2.73, which falls between 'Neutral' and 'Agree.'

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