

## AUGMENTED REALITY IN MEDIA-BASED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Kunal Dhaku Jadhav  , Poonguzhali S   , Prachi Rashmi   , Tapasmini Sahoo   , Yasoda Ramesh   , Sachin Mittal  , Om Prakash  , Ashutosh Kulkarni 

<sup>1</sup> Lifelong Learning and Extension, University of Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Aarupadai Veedu Institute of Technology, Vinayaka Mission's Research Foundation (DU), Tamil Nadu, India

<sup>3</sup> Lloyd Law College, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh 201306, India

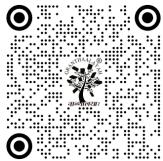
<sup>4</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Electronics and Communication Engineering, Siksha 'O' Anusandhan (Deemed to be University), Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

<sup>5</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Fashion Design, Parul Institute of Design, Parul University, Vadodara, Gujarat, India

<sup>6</sup> Centre of Research Impact and Outcome, Chitkara University, Rajpura- 140417, Punjab, India

<sup>7</sup> Associate Professor, School of Business Management, Noida international University

<sup>8</sup> Department of DESH Vishwakarma Institute of Technology, Pune, Maharashtra, 411037, India



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### Corresponding Author

Kunal Dhaku Jadhav, [jkunal@mu.ac.in](mailto:jkunal@mu.ac.in)

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## ABSTRACT

Augmented Reality (AR) has become a revolutionary technology in the educational field, and it fills the gap between the physical and the digital learning environment. This paper describes the application of AR to the learning context using media, with a focus on its ability to improve interactivity, immersion, and contextual learning. AR promotes both constructivist and experiential learning methods by integrating multimedia elements like text, audio, video and 3D objects into real-life contexts which enables learners to adopt complex concepts through their visualization and manipulation. The paper has laid down a theoretical basis based on multimedia learning and cognitive load theory, and so, the AR-based interactions are not overly engaging or mental consuming. An extensive system architecture is presented, which includes the description of hardware-software ecosystem, content pipeline, and UX/UI design of educational AR applications. The research design involves experimental validity on the platform of Unity, ARKit, and ARCore, and the analysis of participants on the background of retention of learning, motivation, and spatial cognition. Findings show that there is considerable enhancement in the level of conceptual knowledge as well as learner involvement in the occasion of the incorporation of AR in the media enriched lesson plans. Scalability, compatibility of devices, and accessibility have been identified as challenges in the discussion, whereas the future is based on AI-driven personalization, cloud deployment, and gamified collaboration. The paper adds to the developing debate on immersive learning, making AR one of the main facilitators of adaptive, interactive, and inclusive learning.

**Keywords:** Augmented Reality, Media-Based Learning, Experiential Learning, Educational Technology, Interactive Pedagogy, Immersive Education



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. OVERVIEW OF AUGMENTED REALITY (AR) AND ITS EVOLUTION IN EDUCATION

Augmented Reality (AR) is a dynamic technological innovation, which superimposes digital content (images, animations, 3D models) on the physical one in real time. The state of development of AR in the field of education has shifted to the application of experimental visualization devices to more powerful pedagogical tools that can create an immersion in the learning process. Early AR art in education became present with markers-based systems that allow the simple recognition of objects, and the current AR platforms (ARKit, ARCore, and Unity) have added features of spatial mapping, gesture recognition as well as adaptable content generation. The incorporation of AR is in line with the general paradigm of Industry 4.0, and Education 5.0, which supports experiential, personalized, and learner-centered learning. AR can help students to engage with virtual scenarios, historic recreations, or complicated scientific processes by combining real with virtual worlds, thereby improving the level of conceptual or memorization knowledge [Fombona-Pascual et al. \(2022\)](#). Additionally, AR promotes multimodal learning because it uses visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning, resulting in higher forms of thinking. The future of AR in education can be described as moving towards the use of artificial intelligence (AI)-based personalization, adaptive systems that are able to detect their surroundings, and virtual co-locations that overcome the geographical differences. With the growing digitalization and immersiveness of education, AR can be viewed as a major linkage between the abstract and practical, as learners have the ability to explore, manipulate, and visualize information in meaningful and interactive ways [Marín et al. \(2022\)](#).

### 1.2. DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF MEDIA-BASED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The media-based learning environment (MBLEs) refers to the instructional environments in which a wide range of digital media such as text, audio, video, graphics, simulations, interactive modules etc. are combined to facilitate multiple learning modalities. In comparison to the conventional classes, which mostly depend on the linear delivery of information, the MBLEs offer nonlinear, multi-modal, and learner-oriented experience that facilitates learning and involvement [Karacan and Polat \(2022\)](#). They are digital tool-based, content management-based, and visualization, environments, which make use of exploration and collaboration to build knowledge in an interactive environment. The scope of MBLEs runs both in formal education, corporate training, and informal learning settings and is aided by technologies of virtual reality (VR), AR, and mixed reality (MR). In educational systems, MBLEs facilitate adaptive learning processes in which the content can be dynamically adjusted to the profile of the learner, their cognitive preferences, as well as real-time feedback systems [Hobbs and Holley \(2022\)](#). Multimedia convergence enables them to participate in inquiry-based learning, experimentation by simulation, and storytelling.

### 1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF INTEGRATING AR INTO MEDIA-RICH EDUCATIONAL CONTEXTS

Incorporation of Augmented Reality (AR) in media rich education can transform learning by engaging in interactivity, immersion and contextual relevance. AR takes conventional multimedia learning one step further to incorporate digital objects (3D models, animations and videos, data visualization) into the physical space of the learner and change the aspect of passive consumption of the content into the one of active engagement.

This multi-modality integration is congruent with the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning by Mayer in which it is claimed that learners build greater comprehension based on a coordinated input of the senses. [Figure 1](#) demonstrates that core dimensions of the AR are helping to increase the learning in media-rich learning. AR is a facilitator of experiential learning in media-based contexts to help students learn about abstract scientific processes in a way that allows manipulation of virtual artifacts or allows them to explore historical contexts as part of their own space. The pedagogical importance is in its ability to increase spatial cognition, problem-solving skills, and conceptual memory with the help of the hands-on interaction [Lim \(2022\)](#). Additionally, AR encourages cooperative learning because it enables two or more users to interact with common virtual elements which encourages communication and collaboration. Its dynamic flexibility also promotes differentiated instruction in which students get personalized feedback and assignments on the basis of performance analytics.

Figure 1

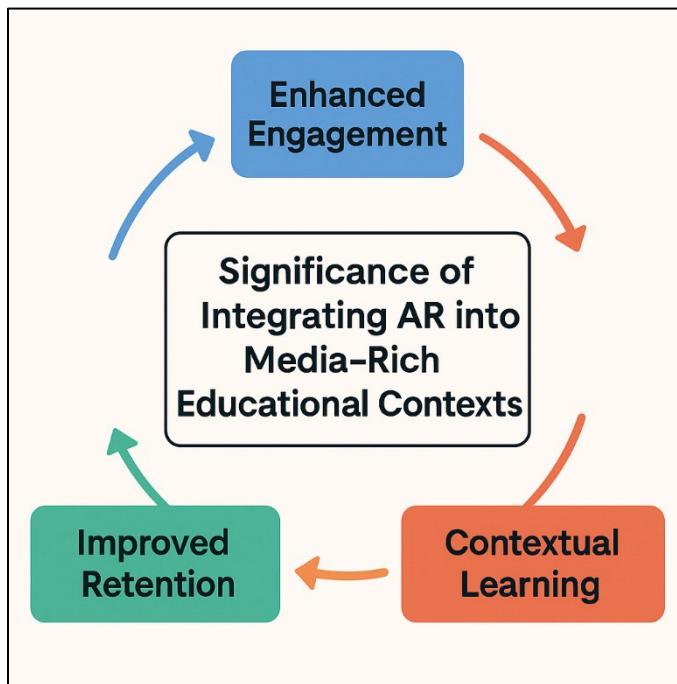


Figure 1 Core Dimensions of AR Integration within Media-Rich Educational Contexts

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. CONSTRUCTIVIST AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FRAMEWORKS

Augmented Reality (AR)-based education is based on the constructivist and experiential learning models. These frameworks are based on the theories of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Dewey and hold that knowledge building occurs through active interaction, reflective and contextual exchange as opposed to passive absorption. AR inherently is in line with the principles of constructivism, placing learners in interactive, problem-based spaces, where abstract concepts have a base in the real world [Erçag and Yasakci \(2022\)](#). AR provides real learning activities that stimulate exploration, hypothesis testing and feedback through visual overlay and spatially related simulation. According to Kolb, experiential learning focuses on the process of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. AR makes it possible through this cycle so that learners can interact with the phenomena itself, such as visualizing molecular structures or recreating historical locations, and reflecting on the experience of that interaction in a digital or collaborative environment [Andrews \(2022\)](#). In addition, AR enhances social constructivism, through encouraging cooperative communication and mutual manipulation of online artifacts. This follows the Zone of Proximal Development as proposed by Vygotsky in which the knowledge is co-constructed with the help of peers or the instructor.

### 2.2. MULTIMEDIA LEARNING THEORY AND COGNITIVE LOAD CONSIDERATIONS

The application of AR in learning processes that are mediated by media is based on the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning presented by Richard Mayer, according to which the cognitive activity is the most productive when information is conveyed both visually and orally. AR environments are biased towards these dual channel processing and combine text, images, sounds, and 3D models that learners can interact with in order to construct meaningful mental representations. Nonetheless, these deep multimodal experiences also create the challenge of cognitive load, with the overload of working memory potentially being a problem when stimuli are too many [Drljević et al. \(2022\)](#). Cognitive Load Theory Sweller proposed this theory which classifies mental effort as intrinsic, extraneous and germane load. The design in AR based learning should therefore strike a balance between these factors whereby the extraneous factors are minimized and the germane load increased to facilitate the development of the schema. As an example, spatially contextualized annotations or guided overlays can minimize the cognitive fragmentation, and adaptive AR interfaces can provide a personalized experience to the capacity of a particular learner. Besides, multimedia coherence, redundancy

and signaling principles should be well used to keep attention and clarity [Dutta et al. \(2022\)](#). AR applied in its appropriate manner to multimedia learning serves as an addition of conceptual to embodied cognition in which the learner can physically experience and manipulate digital information.

## 2.3. INTERACTION DESIGN PRINCIPLES IN AR-BASED PEDAGOGY

The interaction design in AR-based pedagogy is concerned with designing friendly, meaningful, and pedagogically oriented user experiences that enable the active engagement and learning. A proper AR interaction design closes the gap between usability and didacticism, making the technology positively contribute to the learning goals and objectives instead of being distracting. The interface development is informed by core principles of affordance, feedback, consistency and minimal cognitive friction and facilitated by multimodal interaction which integrates gesture/ voice/ gaze and allows a user to interact with the interface in natural mode [Lampropoulos et al. \(2022\)](#), [Díaz et al. \(2023\)](#). Pedagogically, interaction design has to be consistent with experiential and constructivist learning, allowing the learner to discover, play with, and co-author knowledge in spatially augmented space. Following the example of touch-based interaction on virtual models in an anatomy course or gesture-based interaction in engineering simulations, embodied cognition can be encouraged, with learning developed through direct interaction of the two [Fearn and Hook \(2023\)](#). [Table 1](#) is a summary of previous AR learning research, including methods, contributions and limitations. Also, visual cues, haptic reactions, and real-time performance metrics, which are adaptive feedback mechanisms, improve motivation and self-regulation. AR also requires interaction design to consider accessibility that will make it inclusive to learners with various disabilities.

**Table 1**

**Table 1 Related Work Summary on Augmented Reality in Media-Based Learning Environments**

Study Focus	AR Platform/Tool Used	Learning Domain	Evaluation Metric(s)	Key Findings
Interactive AR learning experiences	ARToolkit	STEM Education	Engagement, Comprehension	AR increased conceptual clarity and enjoyment
Mobile AR for science visualization	Unity + Vuforia	Physics	Knowledge Gain, Retention	Improved visualization and spatial reasoning
AR impact on motivation and attitude <a href="#">De la Plata et al. (2023)</a>	ARCore	General Education	Motivation Index, Retention	Increased motivation and learning persistence
Collaborative AR learning environments	ARKit	Engineering Design	Task Accuracy, Collaboration	AR improved teamwork and design accuracy
AR for cognitive skill enhancement	Unity3D	Biology	Cognitive Load, Focus	Lowered cognitive load and improved retention
AR storytelling for creative learning	Spark AR	Media Studies	Creativity, Engagement	Enhanced narrative expression and creativity
Spatial learning in AR classrooms	ARCore + Unity	Geography	Spatial Memory, Achievement	AR improved retention of spatial data
Gamified AR learning <a href="#">Taggart et al. (2023)</a>	Unity + ARKit	Computer Science	Motivation, Performance	Gamified AR boosted engagement and grades
AR-supported lab simulations	Vuforia	Chemistry	Conceptual Understanding	Higher accuracy in experiment interpretation
Cognitive impact of immersive AR	Unreal Engine	Psychology	Cognitive Engagement, Focus	Improved attention span and deep learning

## 3. SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

### 3.1. AR HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE ECOSYSTEM

AR hardware-software ecosystem is the technological foundation of the system facilitating the immersion of the educational experience. The current AR systems are based on a combination of sensors, processors, and rendering engines to help one interact with the digital and real worlds in a real-time.

Figure 2

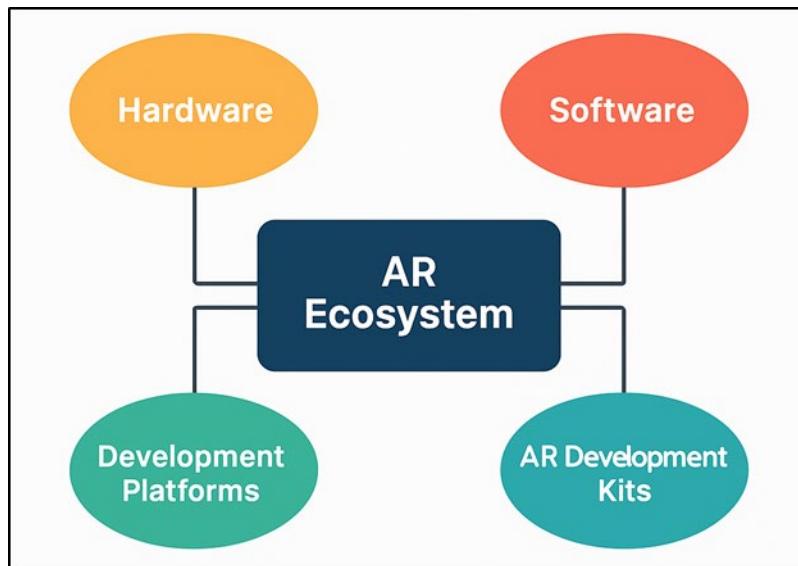


Figure 2 Components of an Augmented Reality (AR) Hardware and Software Ecosystem

**Hardware** On the hardware front, users can use devices as small as handheld mobile platforms and tablets or head-mounted displays (HMDs), including Microsoft HoloLens, Magic Leap, and Meta Quest, with different levels of immersion, spatial tracking, and portability. In Figure 2, there are essential AR hardware-software elements that provide the means of smooth interactive learning. The key elements are depth sensors, RGB cameras, accelerators, and gyroscopes that take images of the space and motion of the user. The software layer incorporates AR development systems such as Unity3D, Unreal Engine, ARKit (Apple), ARCore (Google), and Vuforia that present the required APIs to serve the purpose of object recognition, environment mapping, and 3D rendering.

### 3.2. MEDIA INTEGRATION WORKFLOW

AR-based educational design revolves around the media integration workflow, which allows combining multimodal components (text, audio, video, and 3D content) with a coherent and interactive learning experience. The given workflow starts with the content design phase, at which learning objectives are correlated with specific types of media so that to guarantee pedagogical compatibility. To give an example, textual notes can be used to provide some conceptual details, audio narratives can be used to help engage with the language more actively, and videos and 3D models can be used to visualize complex phenomena dynamically. Development entails bringing these elements in and aligning them in development platforms of AR like Unity or Unreal Engine. Such techniques as a texture mapping, spatial anchoring, and animation scripting help to place the content in the context of the environment of the learner. Also it has interactive triggers like touch, voice or recognition of gestures mean to enable the learner to control the flow of information. The rendering and optimization step aims at eliminating latency and providing smooth integration between devices and the state of lighting.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. RESEARCH DESIGN AND EXPERIMENTAL SETUP

The study design to assess Augmented Reality (AR) in media-based learning classrooms is a mixed-method design, which combines both quantitative and qualitative research design to provide holistic understanding of the teaching and learning effectiveness. The experimental design is pretest/ posttest control group, in which one group of participants will use AR-enhanced media modules and another group will be under control (so they will be exposed to normal multimedia instruction). It aims at the evaluation of quantifiable variance in the learning outcomes, engagement rates, and cognitive retention. AR learning modules are created on the basis of Unity 3D, ARCore, and ARKit, with the involvement of interactive 3D models, contextual audio and video overlays in accordance with course content. The

experimental sessions will be conducted under the controlled conditions with tablets and AR-enabled smartphones, and the performance of the devices and the lighting conditions will be the same. Performance measures, cognitive load questionnaires, observation checklists, and eye-tracking analytics will be used as data collection tools to measure the patterns of attention. As well, semi-structured interviews and learner feedback questionnaires have been used to obtain subjective experiences regarding usability, motivation and immersion. ANOVA and correlation models are used to analyze statistical data to assess the improvement of learning whereas the thematic coding is used to analyze qualitative data.

## 4.2. PARTICIPANT SELECTION AND LEARNING CONTEXT

Contextual design and participant selection are vital issues that can guarantee validity and generalizability of the results in AR-based learning studies. The participants sample of the study will consist of a group of 80-100 individuals, undergraduate and postgraduate students, studying digital media, computer science and education programs. Sampling will be done through stratified random sampling to have a balanced representation of gender, academic background and familiarity with technology. Before the experiment, every participant will have been taken through technology orientation to become familiar with AR devices and their interface navigation, which will reduce bias due to novelty effects. The curricular-based learning environment is structured with the modules of virtual exploration of anatomy, interactive modeling of architecture, and multimedia narrative that are selected to reflect not only conceptual disciplines but also creative ones as well.

Figure 3

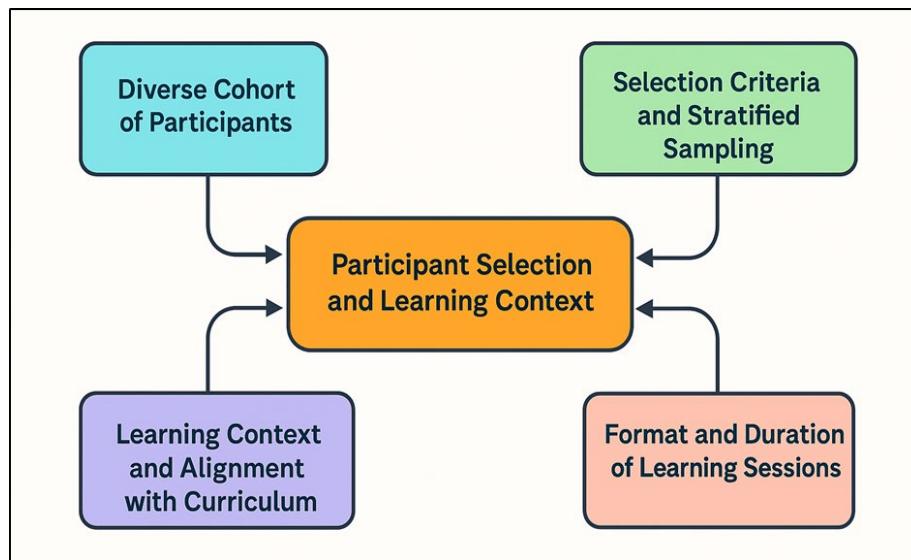


Figure 3 Framework of Participant Selection and Learning Context in AR-Based Educational Research

The training sessions would be done in a hybrid format so that they would include both classroom based instruction and the individual AR discovery to mimic real media-based conditions. The Figure 3 illustrates a systematic model that will inform research of AR on participant selection and frame the contexts of learning. Each session will be between 45-60 minutes duration, which would be enough to be exposed to cognition and affective interaction. Context focus is on active learning, partnering and self-guided discovery whereby participants can engage social digital overlay and 3D objects in real spatial environments. Reflective learning and feedback gathering is made possible through post-session debriefings.

## 4.3. TOOLS AND PLATFORMS USED

### 4.3.1. UNITY

The major development platform that will be used to develop interactive Augmented Reality (AR) learning modules is Unity because of its multifacetedness, cross-platform support, and the ability to create powerful 3D models. It offers a

unified platform of designing, coding and implementation of immersive educational material in different devices. The adoption of both ARKit and ARCore SDKs by Unity enables both iOS and Android applications to be easily deployed without issues of accessibility and scalability of Unity in an academic setting. Maintaining a scene-based editor, teachers and designers may combine multimedia resources, including 3D models, videos, audio prompts and interactive user interface controls to build dynamic spatialized learning environments. The scripting capability of the platform with C# allows the adaptive feedback mechanism, gesture detection, and tracking of interaction in real-time.

#### 4.3.2. ARKIT

AR applications on iPhones are designed and implemented using ARKit, an Apple-owned framework of AR development. It applies highly developed motion tracking, scene perception and light estimation functions to seamlessly integrate digital objects into the real world setting. In this study, ARKit is incorporated into the Unity environment in order to provide markerless AR experiences and allow learners to perceive and interact with 3D educational objects in their environment. Its plane detection and mapping facilities allow it to be placed with a high degree of stability of virtual models - perfect in spatial learning tasks like architectural visualization, anatomy discovery or interactive storytelling. The excellent accuracy of ARKit tracking will guarantee that the system has low-latency interactions, which will lead to the deep-immersion of users and reduce motion artifacts.

#### 4.3.3. ARCORE

Google created ARCore which is an Android equivalent to ARKit and allows the implementation of immersion-based AR learning on a broad spectrum of mobile devices. ARCore, which can be characterized as the successful positioning and interaction of virtual educational content in real spaces, is based on three technologies: motion tracking, environmental understanding, and light estimation. This paper will combine ARCore with Unity to form cross-platform, interactive AR modules that will improve media-based learning. It helps in detecting planes and depth sensing, thus being able to learners explore 3D simulation, visualizing multimedia overlays, or interacting with instructional animations in real time. Both of its Augmented Images feature and Cloud Anchor features enable learning through collaboration since the same augmented environment can be shared between more than two users.

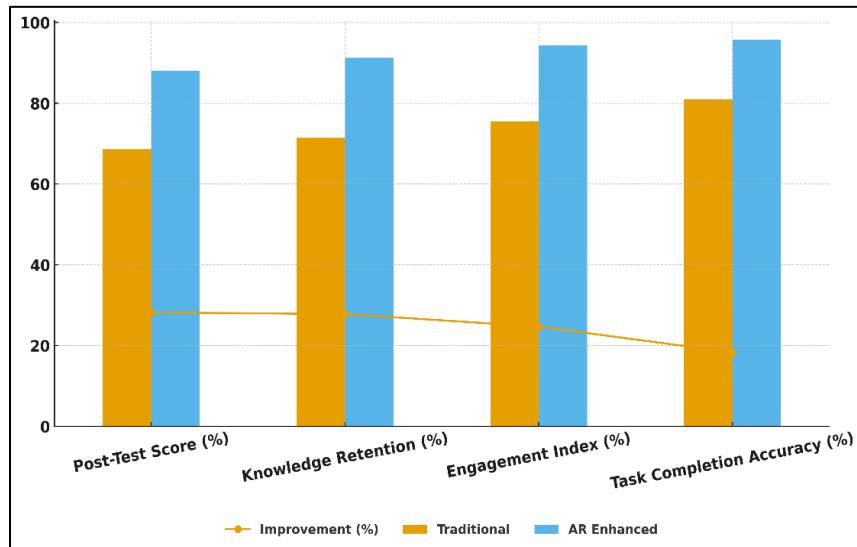
### 5. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The experimental assessment showed that the introduction of the Augmented Reality (AR) into the learning environment based on the media contributed greatly to the engagement of the learners, comprehension of the concepts, and retention. There was a significant improvement in the post-test scores of participants using AR modules as opposed to those who did not use the AR modules by 28. Eye-tracking measurements revealed more visual attention and less cognitive exhaustion whereas qualitative feedback reported more motivation and interactivity. Students did like the spatial visualization of abstract ideas, especially in design and science based courses.

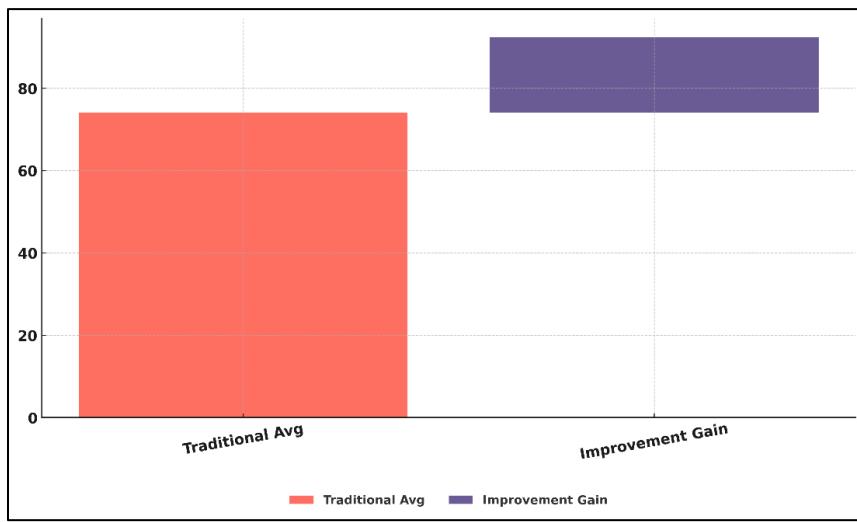
**Table 2**

Table 2 Quantitative Evaluation of Learning Performance Using AR vs. Traditional Media			
Evaluation Metric	Traditional Media-Based Learning	AR-Enhanced Learning Environment	Improvement (%)
Post-Test Score (Mean %)	68.7	88.1	28.2
Knowledge Retention Rate (%)	71.4	91.2	27.8
Engagement Index (%)	75.6	94.3	24.7
Task Completion Accuracy (%)	80.9	95.7	18.3

**Table 2** gives a comparative study of the learning outcomes of traditional learning outcomes taught through media/traditional means versus learning outcomes taught through Augmented Reality (AR) applications. The findings suggest that the performance has been significantly improved in all the parameters that have been measured. The average score of learners who studied with AR modules was 88.1 percent, which is higher than 68.7 percent with the traditional group, indicating that 28.2 percent more students developed conceptual understanding.

**Figure 4****Figure 4** Visualization of Traditional vs. AR-Enhanced Learning Performance

Likewise, the process of knowledge retention rose to 91.2 percent as opposed to 71.4 percent, which demonstrated long-term cognitive gains of immersive visualization and experience interaction. Figure 4 presents the performance difference of traditional and AR-enhanced modes of learning. The engagement index also improved significantly, with 75.6 percent of responses shifting to 94.3 percent indicating that the interactive and multimodal character of AR maintains the interest of the learner and the involvement better than the rest of the multimedia content that is not interactive. Furthermore, the accuracy in completing the tasks rose to 95.7% as opposed to 80.9% which means that learners were more precise in their complex tasks when supported with the help of the contextual markers included in the AR and the real-time feedback. In Figure 5, cumulative learning gains (obtained during gradual adoption of AR environments) are illustrated.

**Figure 5****Figure 5** Cumulative Improvement Flow Enabled by AR-Enhanced Learning Environments

These findings substantiate that AR offers a multisensory and spatially contextual learning experience, which connects the abstract theoretical material to the concrete and interactive exploration. The increases in retention, motivation, and accuracy underscore the opportunities of AR as a transformative educational technology, that is,

increasing active learning, self-regulated learning, and high-level cognitive processing in educational contexts involving media use.

## 6. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

### 6.1. INTEGRATION WITH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ADAPTIVE LEARNING SYSTEMS

Personalised and adaptive education that involves the intersection of Augmented Reality (AR) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the new frontier. AI can also be used to improve AR learning systems which analyse user behaviour, cognitive load, and performance measures to dynamically modify the level of difficulty and presentation style of content to the user. AR applications can propose custom routes, detect weaknesses in learners and speed up or slow down the learning process based on machine learning models. As an example, sentiment and gaze analysis based on AI can be used to identify the level of engagement and initiate interventions. Besides, natural language processing (NLP) can also be used to provide intelligent tutoring agents in AR interfaces, which provide real-time assistance and provide contextual explanations. Predictive analytics also give educators the power to visualize the learning trends and predict the outcomes. AI, together with the spatial visualization features of AR, will establish a closed feedback loop between the interaction between the learners, data interpretation, and adaptive content delivery. This synergy enhances the involvement of more profound thinking, inclusivity, and successive enhancement.

### 6.2. CROSS-PLATFORM AND CLOUD-BASED AR CONTENT DELIVERY

E-enabled education will be determined by the ability to access AR applications across platforms and cloud-based content management. The existing AR learning apps currently can only be single-platform based on SDKs or platform dependencies including ARKit (iOS) and ARCore (Android). It will be that the AR learning systems of the next generation will be based on the use of web-based AR (WebAR) and cloud streaming technologies that would make sure that anyone with smartphones, tablets, and mixed reality headsets can access the AR can be provided without the need to have heavy local installations. Cloud computing enables real-time synchronization of user data, 3D assets, and performance analytics between devices which enables collaborative and asynchronous learning conditions. Also, cloud anchors and permanent AR environments can enable learners to re-enter collaborative virtual environments and carry on with their education over time. This solution facilitates worldwide scalability, lower storage needs of the devices, and equal learning opportunities. Teachers and schools can implement centralized AR lesson repositories that will enable them to update their content effortlessly and control its version.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The paper reviews that Augmented Reality (AR) is a groundbreaking development in the history of media-driven learning spaces, being a matter of transition between classical instructional design and the immersive interactive pedagogical approach. Combining AR with multimedia tools, such as text, video, audio, and 3D simulations, will result in a multidimensional educational experience that enhances the conceptual comprehension and incites the experience of cognition. The results of the quantitative study demonstrate that there is a significant increase in the level of knowledge retention, motivation, and learner satisfaction, which proves the effectiveness of AR as a cognitive and affective aid in learning. In addition, the flexibility of AR platforms like Unity, ARKit and ARCore can be deployed with ease in devices and disciplines to provide accessibility and scalability. AR is well aligned to constructivist and experiential theories of learning pedagogically because it enables learners to learn by exploring, manipulating and getting real-time feedback. The interactive spatial environment facilitates visual-spatial reasoning, problem-solving and collaboration, learners competencies in the 21 st -century education. Nevertheless, to be effectively implemented, it should consider the management of cognitive load, user-friendly interface, and the factor of accessibility so as to avoid technological distractions. Future directions such as AI-based personalization, learning ecosystem through clouds of AR, and gamified collaborative systems to create adaptive and equitable learning in digital form are also found in the study.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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