

THE USAGE OF NEW ICT TOOLS IN THE CLASSROOM FROM THE STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE AT "MIHAI VITEAZUL" THEORETICAL HIGHSCHOOL - CASE STUDY

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Abstract: Modern times translate into modern education, and this, nowadays means the usage of new ICT as a teaching aid during school classes. This article is a case study on the usage of the new means of technology at "Mihai Viteazul" Theoretical Highschool – a school unit in Dambovita County. The main tendency in education, in the contemporary times is to maximize the involvement of technology in teaching in order to have better results. The purpose of the study is not only to establish the degree in which technology is accessible and employed during classes at this school unit, but also, to learn the opinion of highschool students related to this subject matter.

Key words: ICT; students; contemporary education; teaching.

JEL Classification: I21, O30.

1. Introduction

The debut of information and communications technology (ICT) in the field of institutionalized education is relative new in our country. Ever since the 1980s, world-wide teachers, researchers and philosophers have embraced the dare to employ them in the process of teaching. The occurrence of the world wide web has changed the world's expectations in relation to education.

The purpose of technology in education is a means of assistance and also a device to increase the learning process. However, educators not always regard computers with a positive attitude which may lead to lack of success in their endeavour. Another important barrier is the absence of physical resources (hardware) and expertise in this respect.

Another setback is that rural schools are the last to use the new technology because of poor finances.

2. The usage of New ICT tools in the classroom from the students' perspective at "Mihai Viteazul" Theoretical Highschool- case study. Methodology.

The purpose of this study was to discover the perceptions high school students have about modern education with the aid of the new ICT tools, to determine the possible obstacles if any and to present some solutions

The research was performed at "Mihai Viteazul" Theoretical Highschool in Dâmbovița County involving IX-XII grades students.

The research aims to answer the following questions:

1. How wide-spread is the use of the Internet and the tools used to access it taking into account the context (rural)?
2. How much time a day do students allot to educational use of ICT at home?
3. How often are the ICT tools used at school courses?
4. What is the student's opinion about the practicality of modern education?
5. What are the possible issues at "Mihai Viteazul" Theoretical Highschool resulted in connection with employing the new technology?

The hypotheses and the studied points:

H1: To a large extent high school students possess the means both at home and at school to use the Internet for educational purposes and not only.

H2: According to the opinion of the participants in the research, the ICT tools are beneficial to education.

H3: The students involved in the study prefer modern education to the classical one. The above hypotheses are expected to be confirmed or denied by the respondents' statements.

About the method used in the research.

The research involved the highschool students attending "Mihai Viteazul" Theoretical Highschool in Dâmbovița County. This school has 224 students enrolled in IX-XII grades. The sample size is represented by 142 participants in the survey calculated at 95% confidence level and with a 5% confidence interval. The sampling mode was non-equitable sampling and the research was performed using the opinion poll. The result of the study is a quantitative one based on the questionnaire tool.

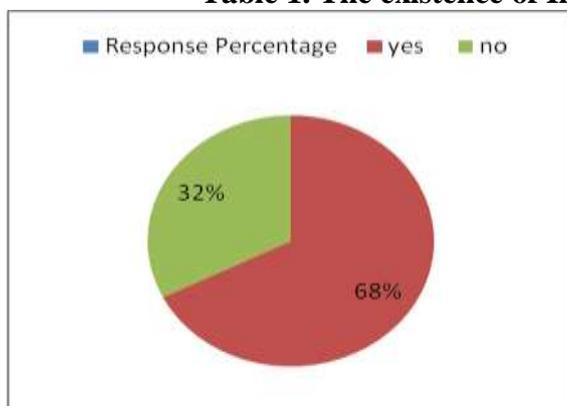
The purpose of this study was to discover the perceptions high school students have about modern education with the aid of the new ICT tools, to determine the possible obstacles if any and to present some solutions.

The study was settled on the questionnaire tool, the questions were explicit about the respondents' opinion and experience. The questionnaire was administered by means of the face to face method. When establishing the level of importance of some criteria the 5-step Semantic Differentiation Scale was employed.

The questionnaire was processed in the database created in Microfoft EXCEL.

Question 1. Do you have at home Internet connection?

Table 1. The existence of Internet connection at home



Response	Percentage
Yes	68
No	32

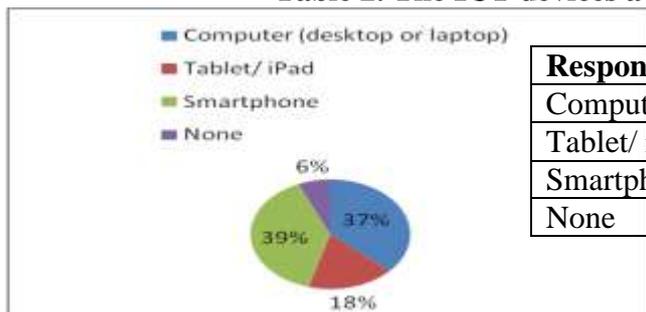
Figure 1. The existence of Internet connection at home

Source: elaborated by the author

A large number of respondents have an Internet connection at home (68%).

Question 2. Do you have available at home one or more of the following?

Table 2. The ICT devices available at home



Response	Percentage
Computer (desktop or laptop)	37
Tablet/ iPad	18
Smartphone	39
None	6

Figure 2. The ICT devices available at home

Source: elaborated by the author

We can observe from the chart that the computer and the smart phone are the most popular and that are still few respondents who do not possess any of the above devices.

Question 3. How often do you use ICT tools at school during classes?

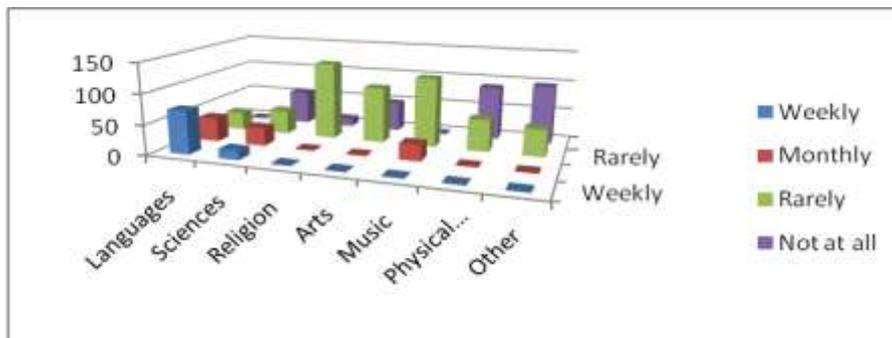


Figure 3. The frequency ICT is employed at school

Source: elaborated by the author).

Table 3. The frequency ICT is employed at school

Subject	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	Not at all
Languages	72	40	30	0
Sciences	15	30	40	57
Religion	0	0	129	13
Arts	0	0	93	49
Music	0	27	115	0
Physical Education	0	0	53	89
Other	0	0	45	97

We can observe from the chart that the new ICT are mostly used for teaching/ learning languages and there are subjects with low frequency in this respect.

Question 4. How often do you use the following tools?

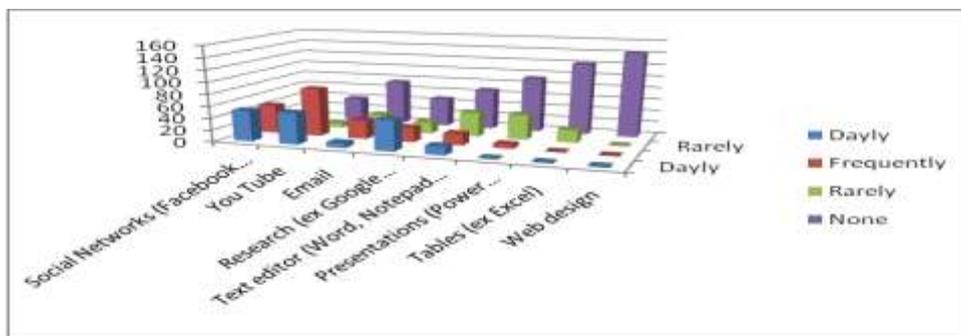


Figure 4. The frequency the respondents use ICT tools

Source: elaborated by the author.

Item	Daily	Frequently	Rarely	None
Social Networks (Facebook etc)	52	48	2	40
You Tube	53	81	8	40
Email	8	31	28	75
Research (ex Google Search etc)	51	24	19	48
Text editor (Word, Notepad etc)	14	19	41	68
Presentations (Power Point, Prezi, etc.)	0	7	42	93
Tables (ex Excel)	0	0	21	121
Web design	0	0	0	142

Table 4. The frequency the respondents use ICT tools

Source: elaborated by the author.

Most respondents use the Internet for relaxation, *Facebook* and *You tube* being the preferred applications while editing, research and others are far behind.

Question 5. What are the ICT tools available in your school?

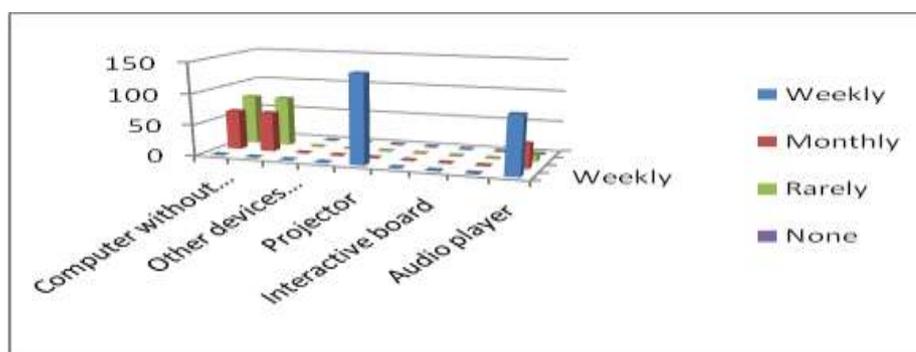


Figure 5. The ICT tools available at school

Source: elaborated by the author.

Table 5. The ICT tools available at school

Item	Weekly	Monthly	Rarely	None
Computer without Internet connection	0	63	79	0
Computer with Internet connection	0	63	79	0
Other devices (tablet, laptop etc) without Internet connection	0	0	0	0
Other devices (tablet, laptop etc) with Internet connection	0	0	0	0
Projector	142	0	0	0
Smartphone	0	0	0	0
Interactive board	0	0	0	0
Video camera	0	0	0	0
Audio player	93	39	10	0
Another	0	0	0	0

Source: elaborated by the author.

Question 6. What is your opinion about modern education through the usage of ICT means?

- a) The lessons are more attractive and I understand better the new notions.
- b) Generally, I like ICT classes and I consider them useful, but, at the same time I think that a lot of time is wasted on turning on or connecting the necessary hardware.
- c) I think they are not that useful since we still have to study/ learn the notions.
- d) They are boring and I prefer the classical manner (without the aid of technology).

Table 6. The opinion of the respondents

Response	Percentage
a	34
b	46
c	15
d	5

Source: elaborated by the author.

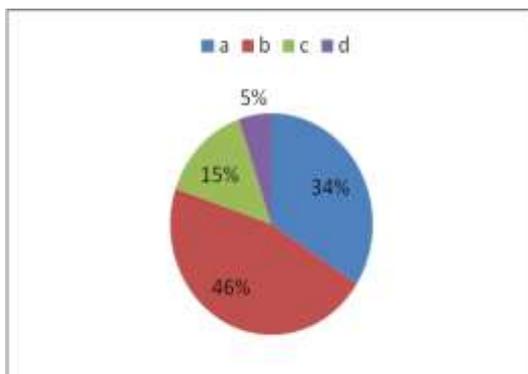


Figure 6. The opinion of the respondents

Source: elaborated by the author.

From the answers of the respondents, most of the respondents agree that ICT classes are useful but consider that turning on or connecting the necessary hardware takes up a lot of time from the 50 minutes allotted to a course.

3. Conclusions

The respondent group composed of high school students from a rural area, IX-XIIth, enrolled at "Mihai Viteazul" Theoretical Highschool, a public school unit in Dâmbovița County declared that they have Internet connection at home and the majority possess either a computer or a smartphone they use to access the Internet.

Students state that ICT tools are mostly used for languages courses and that, in their opinion, these tools are beneficial to their education. However, the respondents do use the web mostly for entertainment rather than research or projects. Few often use the email.

All in all, the respondents confirm that their school still has some issues with the physical support necessary to undertake such activities. Though each classroom has its own projector, there are no laptops/ tablets or computers to connect to them, except for the ones in the science lab. Usually teachers bring their own if they want to use the projectors at classes. That is why there is not a high percentage in the use of ICT for teaching.

The target group also affirmed that generally speaking, they prefer modern teaching but still consider a drawback the duration it takes for the teachers to turn on/ connect the devices.

The above mentioned hypotheses have been confirmed to a large extent and the conclusion is that technology has mostly a good impact on education and we should try to overcome all the barriers and adapt to change.

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