DATA-DRIVEN INSIGHTS INTO MEDIA INTEGRATION IN EDUCATION: A DECISION TREE REGRESSION STUDY

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Abstract: As digital media becomes increasingly embedded in education, it is reshaping teaching practices and influencing both instructional methods and student engagement. This study examines teachers' perceptions of the benefits of media in education using a decision tree regression approach, exploring how factors such as media usage, personal agency, and digital literacy shape their views. Based on data from 194 teachers, the analysis identifies the perceived importance of digital media, actual media usage in teaching, and media consumption at work as the strongest predictors of educators' attitudes toward media integration. The findings highlight the need for targeted professional development programs to strengthen teachers' digital competencies and promote more effective media use in the classroom. This study offers insights for policymakers and education leaders, emphasizing the importance of digital literacy, pedagogical support, and contextual factors in maximizing the benefits of media-based instruction.
Keywords: digital media, teaching strategies, decision tree regression, media integration, teacher perceptions, digital literacy, pedagogical innovation

1. INTRODUCTION

The integration of digital media into education has significantly transformed traditional teaching methodologies, fostering innovative instructional strategies and enhancing student engagement [1]. As technology advances, educators are increasingly expected to incorporate digital tools into their pedagogical practices to facilitate meaningful learning experiences [2]. While the potential benefits of digital media in education are well-documented—ranging from increased accessibility of learning resources to the development of critical digital competencies—teachers' perceptions of these benefits remain a crucial factor in the successful implementation of media-based teaching [3], [4].

Existing research highlights various determinants that influence teachers' attitudes toward digital media use in education. Factors such as technological self-efficacy, institutional support, and the perceived relevance of digital tools in subject-specific instruction play a pivotal role in shaping educators' willingness to integrate media into their teaching practices [5],

[6]. Moreover, the extent to which teachers perceive digital media as beneficial often depends on contextual variables such as school infrastructure, administrative policies, and the level of professional development they receive [7]. However, despite the growing body of literature on the advantages of digital media in education, there remains a gap in understanding the predictive factors that determine teachers' perceptions of its benefits.

One of the key challenges in this domain is identifying the variables that most strongly influence educators' views on media integration. Previous studies have examined the impact of digital literacy [8], blended learning experiences [9], and institutional constraints [10], but few have employed predictive modelling techniques such as decision tree regression to establish the relative importance of these factors [11], [12]. Decision tree approaches provide a structured, data-driven method for identifying the strongest predictors of teachers' perceptions, enabling a more precise understanding of the relationships between personal, institutional, and technological variables [13], [14].

This study aims to address this gap by applying a decision tree regression model to explore teachers' perceptions of the benefits of digital media in education. Specifically, it investigates the predictive role of factors such as media importance, actual media usage, media consumption at work and home, and teachers' personal agency in using digital tools. By analyzing data from 194 teachers, this research seeks to provide insights into the key determinants that shape educators' attitudes toward media integration. The findings will contribute to the existing discourse on digital pedagogy, offering practical implications for professional development programs and institutional policies aimed at optimizing media use in teaching.

2. METHODS

2.1 Participants

The study sample consisted of 194 teachers from various educational backgrounds. Of the participants, 146 identified as female (75.3%), 46 as male (23.7%), and 2 (1.0%) chose not to disclose their gender. Participants' ages ranged from 21 to over 61 years, with the majority falling within the 41–50 age group (45.4%). Regarding their place of residence, most teachers (87.6%) lived in urban areas, while 9.3% resided in rural areas, and 3.1% in suburban settings. Similarly, their teaching environments reflected this distribution, with 86.1% working in urban schools and 13.9% in rural institutions.

Participants varied in terms of professional experience, ranging from early-career educators to those with extensive teaching backgrounds. The largest proportion (38.1%) reported between 21 and 30 years of teaching experience, followed by 34.0% with 11–20 years of experience. Fewer participants had either less than five years (14.4%) or more than 30 years (5.2%) of teaching experience. This diverse sample provided a comprehensive perspective on teachers' perceptions of media use in education across different career stages and educational settings. Participants' characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Participants characteristics

Category	Response	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Masculine	46	24	23.7	23.7
	Feminine	146	75	75.3	99
	Not disclosing	2	1	1	100
Age	21-30 years	22	11	11.3	11.3
	31-40 years	50	26	25.8	37.1
	41-50 years	88	45	45.4	82.5
	51-60 years	30	16	15.5	97.9
	Older than 61	4	2.1	2.1	100
Residence	Rural	18	9.3	9.3	9.3
	Urban	170	88	87.6	96.9
	Suburban	6	3.1	3.1	100
Teaching Area	Urban	167	86	86.1	86.1
	Rural	27	14	13.9	100
Experience	1-5 years	28	14	14.4	14.4
	6-10 years	16	8.2	8.2	22.7
	11-20 years	66	34	34	56.7
	21-30 years	74	38	38.1	94.8
	More than 30 years	10	5.2	5.2	100

2.2 Instruments

Data collection was conducted using a structured questionnaire assessing multiple dimensions related to teachers' perceptions and usage of digital media in education. The instrument included several scales, each measured on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 10 (except where otherwise noted).

The Importance of Digital Media scale (α = .792) consisted of three items measuring how teachers perceive the relevance of digital media, such as visual and audio resources, in their instructional practices. The Media Actual Usage in Teaching scale (α = .911) comprised 17 items evaluating the frequency and extent to which educators incorporate various media tools,

including blogging and online ethics, into their teaching.

Two scales measured media consumption: Media Consumption at Work (α = .813), consisting of nine items assessing the extent to which teachers engage with digital media in their professional activities (e.g., use of smart products), and Media Consumption at Home for Leisure (α = .803), consisting of nine items evaluating media engagement during personal time (e.g., listening to music and radio).

To measure teachers' self-efficacy in digital media usage, the Personal Agency in Using Media in Teaching scale (α = .937) included 17 items assessing confidence in employing various digital tools such as data processing and calculation software. Additionally, a single-item measure, Considering Age-Specific and Age-Appropriate Media Approach, assessed the extent to which teachers consider the suitability of digital media for different student age groups.

The Benefits scale (α = .874) comprised seven items examining teachers' perceptions of the advantages of digital media use, such as increased availability of diverse teaching methods. Conversely, the Threats scale (α = .905) included seven items measuring concerns and perceived limitations of media integration, such as skepticism toward digital technologies. Lastly, Readiness for Additional Courses was assessed using a binary (Yes/No) item, indicating whether teachers would be willing to participate in further training on the age-appropriate use of digital media.

2.3 Procedure

Data were analyzed using a decision tree regression approach, with perceived benefits of media use as the dependent variable. The remaining variables—including media importance, actual media usage, media consumption at work and at home, personal agency, perceived threats, and demographic factors—served as independent predictors. The analysis was conducted using JASP, a statistical software that enables transparent and interpretable modeling of predictive relationships. The decision tree regression method was chosen due to its ability to identify hierarchical relationships among predictors and

highlight the most influential factors contributing to teachers' perceptions of media benefits.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed for all key variables to examine the central tendencies and variability in teachers' perceptions and use of digital media in education. As shown in Table 2, participants generally rated the importance of digital media as relatively high (M = 7.656, SD = 2.252), with picture and video media being considered the most significant (M = 8.383, SD = 2.022) among the three assessed media types. Conversely, the importance of voice and audio media (M = 7.337, SD = 2.556) and script-based media (M = 7.821, SD = 2.332) were also perceived as relevant, though slightly lower in comparison.

Table 2

Scales and single items descriptive statistics

	Valid	Missing	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
Importance voice and audio media	190	4	7.34	2.56	1	10
Importance script based media	190	4	7.82	2.33	1	10
Importance picture and video media	188	6	8.38	2.02	2	10
Importance digital media	194	0	7.66	2.25	0.33	10
Considering age specific appropriate media approach	194	0	8.72	2.09	1	10
Readiness for additional courses	194	0	1.1	0.31	1	2
Media consumption at work	194	0	1.84	1.04	0	5.11
Media consumption home leisure time	194	0	2.05	0.93	0.11	4.44

Media actual usage in teaching	194	0	4.77	1.89	0.88	9.06
Personal agency using media in teaching	194	0	5.93	1.95	1	10

Teachers strongly acknowledged the importance of considering age-specific and age-appropriate media approaches in their instructional strategies (M = 8.722, SD = 2.085). However, their readiness for additional training in media integration was limited, as reflected by a low mean score (M = 1.103, SD = 0.305), indicating a lack of strong inclination toward further professional development in this area.

Regarding media usage, teachers reported moderate levels of actual media use in teaching (M = 4.773, SD = 1.886), suggesting that, while digital tools are integrated into instructional practices, they are not yet maximally utilized. Media consumption at work was relatively low (M = 1.843, SD = 1.035), while media consumption for leisure at home showed slightly higher engagement (M = 2.047, SD = 0.928).

Teachers' personal agency in using media for teaching was moderate (M = 5.933, SD = 1.953), suggesting varying levels of confidence in implementing digital tools effectively. The observed variability in scores indicates that some educators feel more capable of utilizing digital media in their teaching than others, potentially influenced by experience, training, or institutional support.

3.2. Decision Tree Regression Analysis

A decision tree regression model was employed to identify the most significant predictors of teachers' perceived benefits of digital media in education. The model included 194 teachers, with data split into a training set (n = 156) and a test set (n = 38).

To assess the predictive performance of the decision tree regression model, several evaluation metrics were computed (Table 3). The Mean Squared Error (MSE) was 0.471, indicating the average squared difference between the predicted and actual values. The Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE) of 0.686 provides a more interpretable measure of model accuracy, representing the standard deviation of prediction errors. Additionally, the Mean Absolute Error (MAE), also referred to as Mean Absolute Deviation (MAD), was 0.558, highlighting the average magnitude of errors in prediction. The Mean Absolute Percentage Error (MAPE) was relatively high (264.43%), suggesting some degree of variability in the data that may not have been fully captured by the model. Finally, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was 0.368, indicating that approximately 36.8% of the variance in teachers' perceived benefits of using digital media in teaching was explained by the model. While this suggests a moderate level of explanatory power, it also implies that additional factors not included in the model may contribute to teachers' perceptions.

Table 3

Evaluation Metrics

	Value
MSE	0.471
RMSE	0.686
MAE / MAD	0.558
MAPE	264.43%
R^2	0.368

Feature importance analysis (Table 4) revealed that the importance assigned to digital media was the strongest predictor of perceived benefits, with a relative importance score of 39.604. This finding underscores that teachers who perceive digital media as essential are more likely to recognize its advantages in instructional settings.

Table 4

Feature Importance

	Relative Importance
Importance digital media	39.604
Media actual usage in teaching	11.845
Media consumption at work	11.106
Personal agency using media in teaching	8.76
Gender	6.726

Considering age specific appropriate media approach	5.361
Media consumption at home leisure time	5.325
Threats	3.251
Readiness for additional courses	2.579
Age	2.418
Experience	2.32
Teaching area (rural/urban/suburban)	0.431
Residence (rural/urban/suburban)	0.273

Beyond media importance, actual media usage in teaching (11.845) and media consumption at work (11.106) were also significant predictors, indicating that teachers who actively engage with digital tools in both their professional and instructional environments tend to view media as beneficial in education. Personal agency in using media for teaching ranked fourth (8.760), suggesting that confidence in digital media integration plays a crucial role in shaping positive perceptions. Demographic variables had a lower predictive influence but still contributed to the model. Gender (6.726) and age-specific media considerations (5.361) were moderate predictors, indicating that individual differences in demographic and pedagogical considerations influence teachers' perspectives. Media consumption for leisure at home (5.325) was also relevant, implying that personal exposure to digital media outside of work may reinforce positive attitudes toward its integration in teaching.

Lower-ranked predictors included perceived threats of digital media use (3.251) and readiness for additional training (2.579), suggesting that concerns about digital tools and willingness to engage in further training had a limited but notable influence. Experience (2.320), age (2.418), and teaching area (rural/urban/suburban) (0.431) had minimal impact on predicting perceived benefits. Finally, residence type (rural/urban/suburban) had the lowest relative importance (0.273), suggesting

that environmental context had little effect on how teachers perceive digital media benefits.

The predictive performance of the decision tree regression model is visually represented in Figure 1, which illustrates the relationship between observed and predicted values. The plot provides insight into the accuracy of the model, highlighting its ability to capture patterns in the data while also indicating areas where predictions deviate from actual values. The moderate R^2 value of 0.368 suggests that while the model explains a substantial portion of variance in perceived media benefits, additional factors may contribute to teachers' perceptions that were not included in the current analysis.
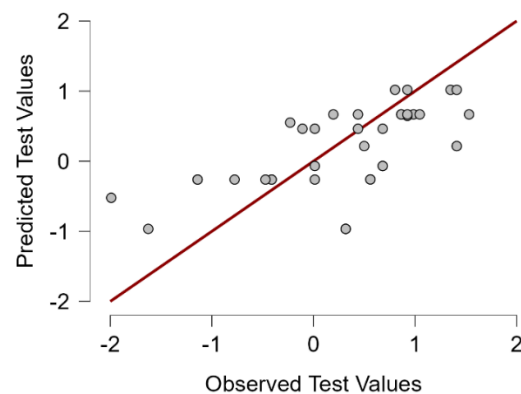

Fig. 1. Predictive Performance Plot

The hierarchical structure of the decision tree model is depicted in Figure 2, which presents the key splits and decision nodes that contribute to the prediction of perceived benefits. The tree structure highlights the importance of digital media perception as the primary determinant, with subsequent splits based on media usage in teaching, media consumption at work, and personal agency in using digital tools. The visualization provides a clear, interpretable framework for understanding how different predictors interact in shaping teachers' views on digital media benefits in education.

The hierarchical structure of the model illustrates the sequential importance of different factors, showing how they interact to influence perceptions. Each node in the tree represents a decision point where a split occurs based on a specific predictor, allowing for a deeper understanding of the conditions under which teachers are more likely to perceive digital media as beneficial.
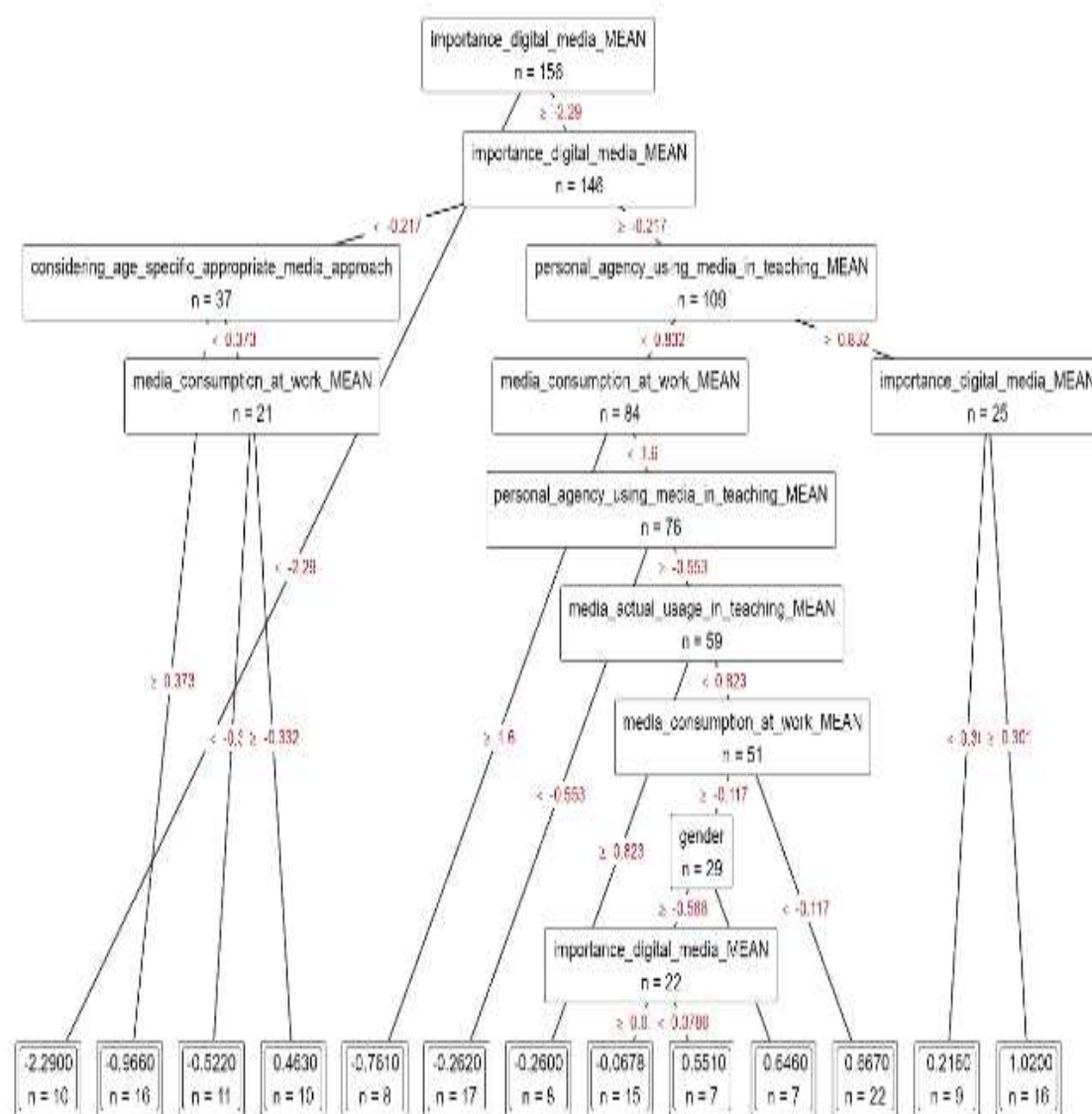
Fig. 2. Decision Tree Plot

At the root node, the most influential predictor is importance of digital media, which separates teachers into two primary groups: those who highly value digital media in education and those who assign it less importance.

As the tree progresses, subsequent splits are based on factors such as personal agency in using media, media consumption at work, and actual media usage in teaching, revealing how these aspects contribute to shaping educators' perceptions.

Key Predictors and Their Influence

The most critical factor identified by the model is importance of digital media, which serves as the primary decision point. Teachers who perceive digital media as highly important tend to report more benefits associated with its use in teaching. This finding reinforces the idea that attitudinal factors play a fundamental role in shaping technology adoption in education.

Conversely, those who consider digital media less important exhibit greater variability in their perceptions, with additional factors influencing their assessment of its benefits.

Among teachers who place high value on digital media, personal agency in using media in teaching emerges as the next major determinant. This suggests that confidence in using digital tools is a crucial element in whether educators view them as beneficial. Even when teachers acknowledge the significance of digital media, those with lower confidence in their ability to implement it effectively are less likely to recognize its full potential in instructional settings.

Another significant predictor is media consumption at work, which indicates that teachers who frequently engage with digital media in their professional activities tend to perceive more benefits in its application to teaching. This suggests that exposure to digital tools in professional environments fosters a positive outlook on their educational value. In contrast, teachers with minimal work-related media consumption are more likely to exhibit neutral or negative perceptions, highlighting the importance of hands-on engagement.

The model also identifies actual media usage in teaching as a key predictor. Teachers who actively integrate digital tools into their instruction are far more likely to perceive benefits than those who use media infrequently or not at all. This finding underscores the experiential nature of digital media adoption, where direct use reinforces positive attitudes and perceived advantages.

Demographic and Contextual Influences

Beyond media-related behaviors and attitudes, demographic factors such as gender also influence perceptions. The decision tree indicates that male and female teachers may differ in their assessment of digital media benefits, potentially due to variations in digital training, confidence levels, or exposure to technology.

While the effect of gender is not as pronounced as other predictors, its presence suggests that future research should explore potential gender-based differences in technology adoption among educators.

Other contextual variables, including consideration of age-specific media approaches, also contribute to predicting perceptions, though to a lesser extent.

Teachers who consciously tailor digital media usage to their students' age group tend to see greater benefits, emphasizing the importance of pedagogical alignment in media integration. Additionally, readiness for additional courses and perceived threats associated with digital media appear as minor predictors, suggesting that while teachers acknowledge professional development opportunities, their willingness to participate in further training does not strongly dictate their perceptions of media benefits.

3.3. Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of literature examining teachers' perceptions of digital media in education. Consistent with prior research, this study highlights the importance of attitudinal and behavioral factors in shaping educators' views on digital media benefits.

Teachers who perceive digital media as valuable and who engage with it actively in both instructional and professional contexts tend to recognize its advantages in teaching.

These results align with the work of [15], who emphasized that the perceived effectiveness of instructional technology is strongly influenced by educators' digital literacy, familiarity with technological tools, and personal confidence in their use.

A key finding of this study is that importance assigned to digital media is the strongest predictor of perceived benefits, a result that supports prior research on technology adoption in education. [16] found that teachers' willingness to integrate digital tools depends largely on their perceptions of relevance and pedagogical utility.

In the present study, teachers who highly valued digital media were significantly more likely to perceive its benefits, reinforcing the idea that positive attitudes toward technology serve as a primary driver of its adoption in educational settings.

Another important aspect of the findings is the role of personal agency in using media in teaching. Educators who reported higher confidence in their ability to integrate media into instruction were also more likely to perceive its benefits. This result is in line with [17], who found that self-perceived digital competence among university professors plays a crucial role in determining their level of engagement with digital tools. When teachers feel capable and adequately trained, they are more likely to embrace media-based instruction and recognize its advantages for student learning.

Additionally, this study found that media consumption at work and actual media usage in teaching significantly influenced teachers' perceptions. Teachers who frequently engage with digital media in their professional environment tend to see it as beneficial, reinforcing findings by [18].

Their study suggested that teachers' willingness to use ICT in pedagogical practices is shaped not only by their attitudes but also by institutional exposure and habitual engagement with technology. The present study further supports this perspective by demonstrating that both professional and instructional media use contribute to shaping positive perceptions.

Despite these findings, certain factors had only minor influence on perceived benefits, such as readiness for additional training and perceived threats associated with digital media. This suggests that while teachers acknowledge professional development opportunities, their perceptions of digital media benefits are primarily shaped by direct engagement rather than external training programs.

Furthermore, demographic factors such as age, experience, and teaching area (rural vs. urban) had minimal impact, indicating that attitudes and behaviours toward digital media are more significant determinants of perceived benefits than personal characteristics.

The findings of this study highlight the need for targeted professional development programs that focus on increasing both digital literacy and teachers' confidence in media integration. Rather than emphasizing theoretical training, institutions should prioritize hands-on experiences that allow educators to actively engage with digital tools in teaching contexts.

As suggested by [15], professional development initiatives that incorporate practical application, peer collaboration, and continuous technological support are more likely to enhance teachers' willingness to adopt digital media.

Additionally, institutional policies should aim to foster an environment that encourages consistent use of digital media in both instructional and professional settings. Findings from this study indicate that media consumption at work and actual classroom usage play a key role in reinforcing positive perceptions. Therefore, educational institutions should ensure that teachers have access to digital resources, technical support, and structured opportunities for experimentation with digital tools.

While this study provides valuable insights, it has certain limitations. The moderate R^2 value (0.368) suggests that additional factors not included in the model may influence teachers' perceptions of digital media benefits. Future research should explore psychological, institutional, and policy-related variables that may further explain variance in educators' attitudes. Additionally, a longitudinal approach would provide a more comprehensive understanding of how teachers' perceptions evolve over time, particularly as new technologies and pedagogical frameworks emerge.

Furthermore, the role of gender differences in technology adoption warrants further investigation. While gender was a moderate predictor in this study, the underlying reasons for differences in perception remain unclear. Future studies could examine whether disparities in digital training, workplace expectations, or personal experiences with technology contribute to these differences.

4. CONCLUSION

This study reinforces the central role of teachers' attitudes, confidence, and direct engagement with media in shaping their perceptions of digital media benefits.

The findings underscore the importance of professional development, institutional support, and hands-on exposure to digital tools in

promoting effective media integration in education.

By addressing these factors, policymakers and educational leaders can better support teachers in leveraging digital media to enhance student learning and instructional innovation.

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Integrative Model of Behaviour Prediction to explain teachers' willingness to use ICT: a perspective for research on teachers' ICT usage in pedagogical practices. Technology, Pedagogy and Education, 22(1), pp. 55-71, 2013

Perspective bazate pe date privind integrarea media în educație: un studiu de regresie a arborelui decizional

Pe măsură ce media digitală este tot mai des utlizată în educație, aceasta remodelează practicile de predare și influențează atât metodele de instruire, cât și implicarea elevilor. Acest studiu examinează percepțiile profesorilor cu privire la beneficiile mass-media în educație, folosind o abordare de regresie a arborelui decizional, explorând modul în care factori precum utilizarea mass-media, alegerea personală și alfabetizarea digitală modelează opiniile lor. Pe baza datelor de la 194 de profesori, analiza identifică importanța, utilizarea și valorificarea media în educație ca fiind cei mai puternici predictori ai atitudinilor profesorilor față de integrarea media. Constatările evidențiază necesitatea unor programe de dezvoltare profesională specifice pentru a consolida competențele digitale ale profesorilor și pentru a promova o utilizare mai eficientă a mass-media în clasă. Acest studiu oferă perspective pentru factorii de decizie la nivelul politicilor educaționale subliniind importanța competențelor digitale, a abordării psihopedagogice și a factorilor contextuali în vederea maximizării beneficiilor instruirii bazate pe media.

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