IMPACT OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IN LEARNING THE FRENCH LANGUAGE: A STUDY IN HYDERABAD

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Abstract : The evolution of digital technology has empowered an individual to upgrade and update one's transactions, more so in case of language learning. A variety of digital tools in terms of applications, websites, audio visual tools have transformed an individual in adapting to the newer process of learning extensively to grow in acquiring, learning, communicating and exchanging information. It is in this relation that digital tools have played a significant role in language learning especially the foreign language French. French is considered to be the sixth most spoken language in the world and third most preferred language in business and trade making its study invaluable. Hence, the study aims to understand the impact of digital technology on learning the French Language. The study employs a quantitative research method limiting the sample size to 60 in the city of Hyderabad, Telangana.

IndexTerms – **Digital tools, French language, Adapting, Transformation, Learning.**

I. INTRODUCTION

The advancement of computerized innovation has engaged a person to redesign and refresh one's exchanges, all the more so if there should be an occurrence of language learning. An assortment of computerized apparatuses as far as applications, sites, various media instruments have changed a person in adjusting to the more up to date procedure of adapting broadly to develop in securing, picking up, imparting and trading data. Technologies can have the potential to promote human gain (Wang & Winstead, 2016). It is in this connection that advanced instruments have assumed a noteworthy job in language adapting particularly the unknown dialect French. French is viewed as the 5th most spoken language on the planet and third most favoured language in business and exchange making its examination significant.

An individual is empowered to enhance one's capabilities and interests at the click of a button. Learning foreign languages has been made possible through digital technology crossing all borders more so in the case of French language. With 300 million speakers, up by nearly 10% since 2014, the French language is the fifth most spoken language in the world after Chinese, English, Spanish and Arabic (Report by *La Francophonie*, The French Language worldwide, 2018).

French stands out in different areas and contexts. It is the official language in 32 States and Governments and most international organisations. It is the Language for instruction of over 80 million people, in 36 countries and territories. It is the Foreign language learnt by over 50 million people. It is the International media language (TV5MONDE, RFI or France 24, as well as Euronews, BBC News, the Chinese CGTN or the Russian RT). It is ranked as the 4th language on the Internet behind English, Chinese and Spanish respectively (*La langue française dans le monde*, 2018). In the Indian context, there are 28,500 learners of French as a Foreign Language (FFL) in India. It is a considerable number in Asia-Oceania region that records for 3 percent worldwide.

II. BACKGROUND STUDY

Nasser Oroujlou (2012). *"The Importance of Media in Foreign Language Learning"* The researcher opines in this article that language proficiency is enhanced by using media as it is an accessible source and provides real and authentic context for learning.

Lustyanti, N., Syaefudin, M. (2017). *"Implementation of teaching French as a Foreign language based on information and communication technology (ICT)".* The study reveals that how teachers handled the geographic and non-native speakers' problem in order to equip them with the language and overcome them by using ICT effectively.

Mc Dermott, Geraldine (2013). *« Le rôle des médias sociaux dans l'enseignement des langues étrangères : une étude de cas pour le FLE »* (The role of social media in forgien language teaching : A case study for French). The scholar in the study finds that students were inclined to use social media tools like Moodle, blog (WordPress) and Facebook for learning of the French language provided they was grading. It is also noted that the students lacked sufficient technical skills required to utilize social media tools.

Omar*,* Youssif Zaghwani (2018). "*Role of Media Literacy in Teaching and Learning English in Libya".* The research discloses that the application of media literacy in education by teachers help students learn and enhance their competency in the Foreign Language-English.

Lustyantie, Ninuk (2016). *"Information Communication Technology (ICT) in Learning French as Foreign Language".* The article unearths that the use of ICT in the learning of French language is necessary. Teachers should be well informed with the use of ICT to enable the students to perform better in learning the language and develop their language competencies.

Objectives of the Study
1. To analyse the impact of digital technology in learning the French language

2. To learn the different applications used by students in learning the French language

3. To assess the users' choice of media platform to learn French Language

4. To understand the amount of time spent on media to learn the French language.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employed the quantitative method using survey technique. The formulated questionnaire was distributed to a sample size of 60 in the city of Hyderabad. The sample size consists of 30 men and 30 women of 16-45 years age group studying at the French institute, Alliance française of Hyderabad who have completed the basic level of French.

IV. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table 1: Digital device used for learning French
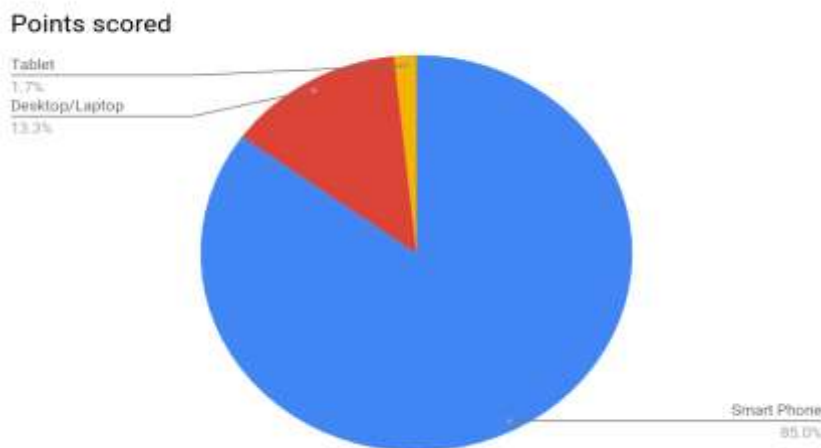
Table 1 shows that 85% respondents use smart phones, 13% use a desktop or a laptop and 1.7% use tablets as the digital device for learning of the French language.

Table 2: Digital tools to study French
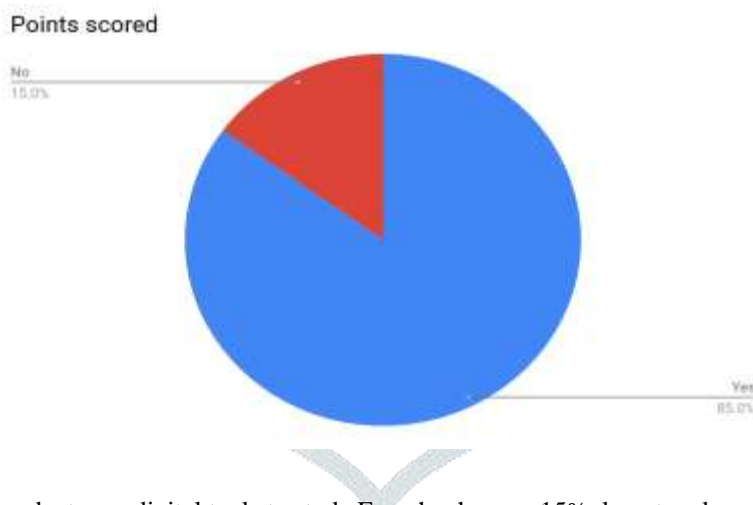
Table 2 shows that 85% respondents use digital tools to study French where as 15% do not make use of them.

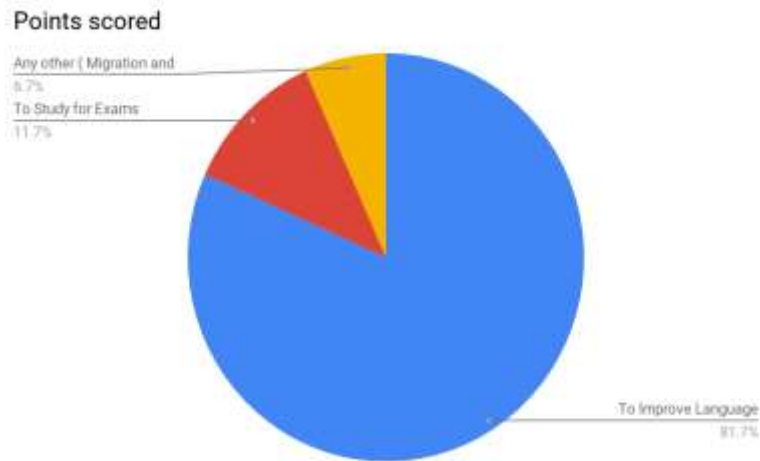### Table 3: Purpose of using Digital tools for learning French

Table 3 shows that 81.7% respondents use digital tools to improve their language skills, 11.7% to study for examinations and 6.7% use them for other purposes like translation and migration.

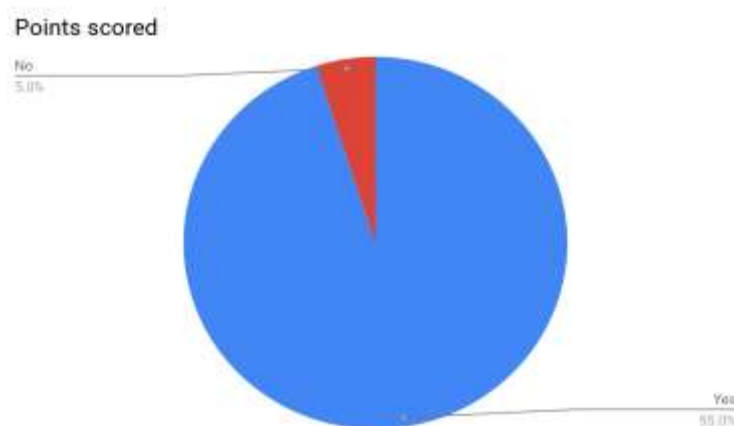**Table 4: Usefulness of digital tools in learning French**

Table 4 shows that 95% respondents believe that digital tools prove useful to them in their learning of the French language where as 5% do not believe that digital tools are useful.
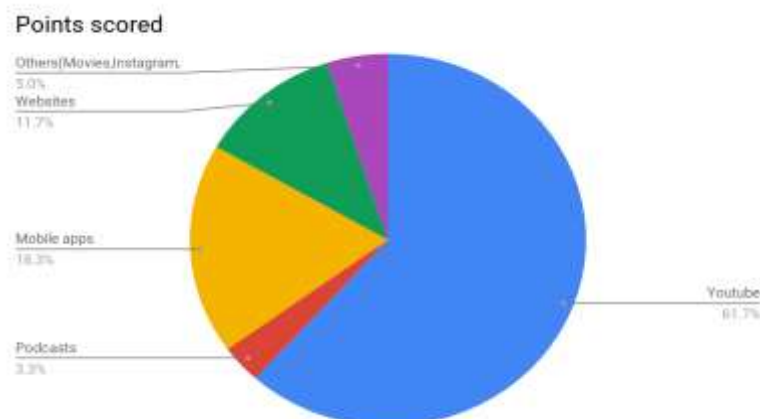
Table 5: Digital tools used to learn French

Table 5 shows 61.7% respondents use YouTube for learning French where as 18.3% use mobile applications, 11.7% use websites and 5% use other tools like social media applications like Instagram, Facebook and movies.

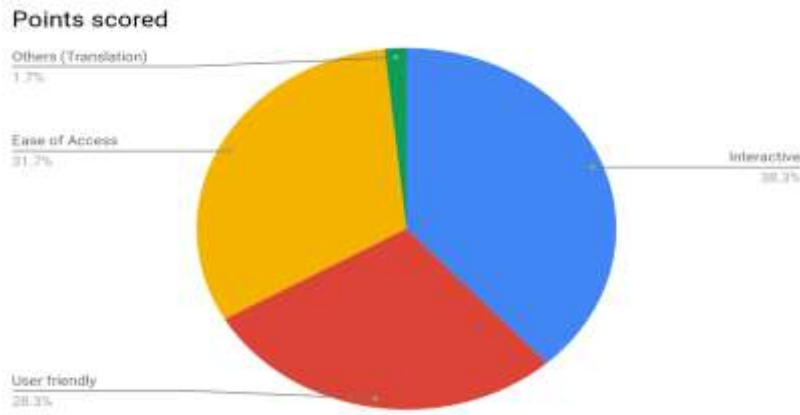**Table 6: Best feature of the digital tool used**

Table 6 show 38.3% respondents rate interactivity, 31.7% rate ease of access , 28.3% attribute the user-friendliness and 1.7% the translation feature of the digital tools used in learning French to be the best feature.

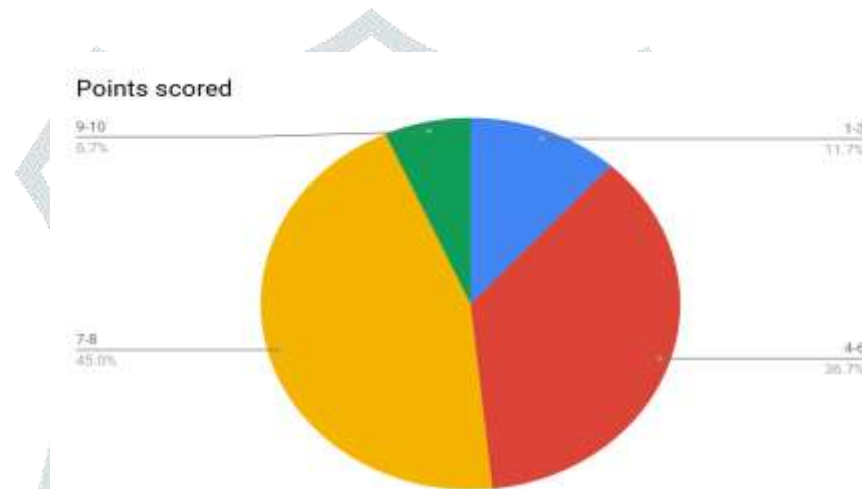**Table 7: Usefulness of the digital tools (Rating scale):**

Table 7 shows that 45% of respondents have rated the usefulness of the digital tools to be 7-8, 36.7% of them rated it 4-6, 11.7% of them rated it 1-3 and 6.7% rated it 9-10.

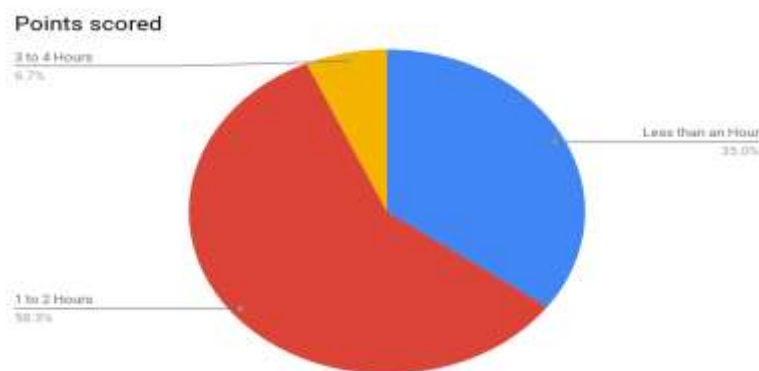**Table 8: Time spent on digital tools to learn French.**

Table 8 shows that on average, 58.3% spend 1-2 hours, 35% spend less than 1 hour and 6.7% spend 3-4 hours on digital tools to learn French.

Table 9: Challenges faced while using digital tools.
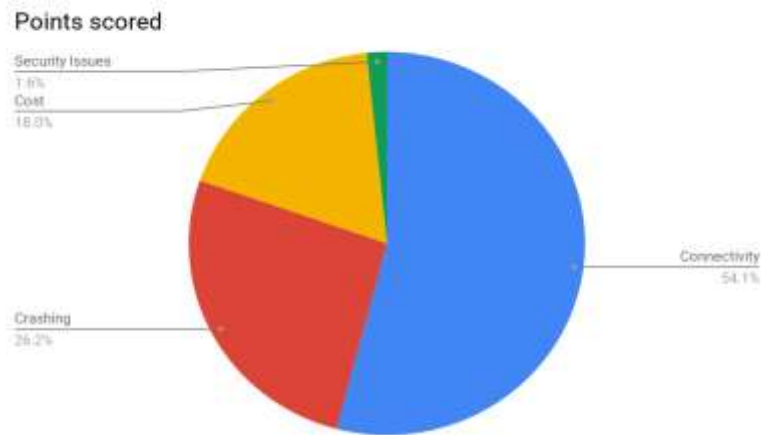
Points scored

Table 9 shows 54% face connectivity issues, 26.2% face the issue of crashing of the tool, 18% feel cost is a challenge and 1.6% feel security issues to be the challenges faced while using digital tools to learn French.

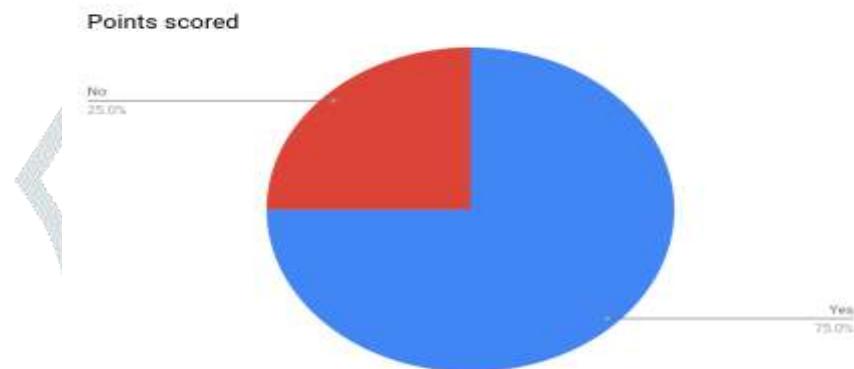**Table 10: Improvement of academic performance through usage of digital tools**

Points scored

Table 10 shows that 75% of respondents feel their academic performance has improved through the usage of digital tools where as 25% witnessed no improvement.

Table 11: Diminishing the impact of traditional learning methods through usage of digital tools
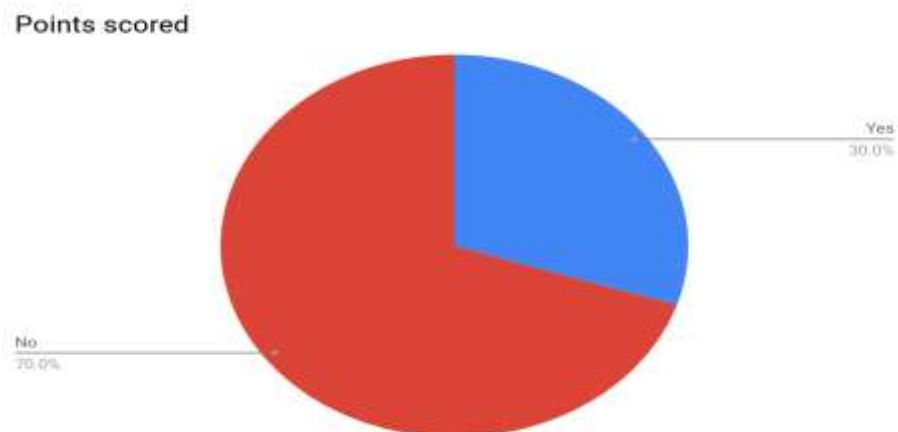
Points scored

Table 11 shows 70% believe that traditional learning methods are not impacted by digital tools where as 30% believe it has a diminishing effect.

Table 12: Digital tools catering to students of different competencies:
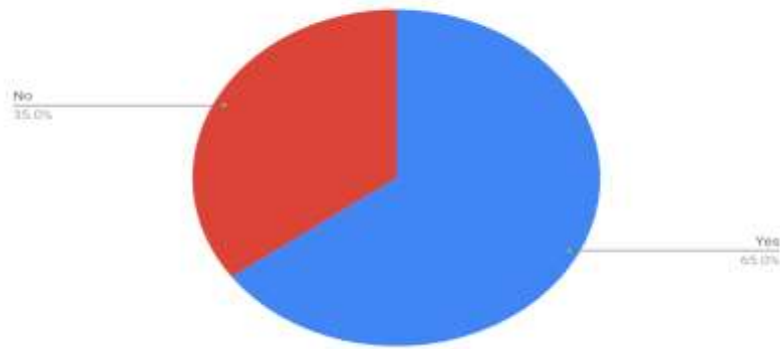
Points scored

Table 12 shows 65% believe digital tools cater to students of all competencies where as 35% do not believe the same.

Table 13: Teachers effectively using digital tools.
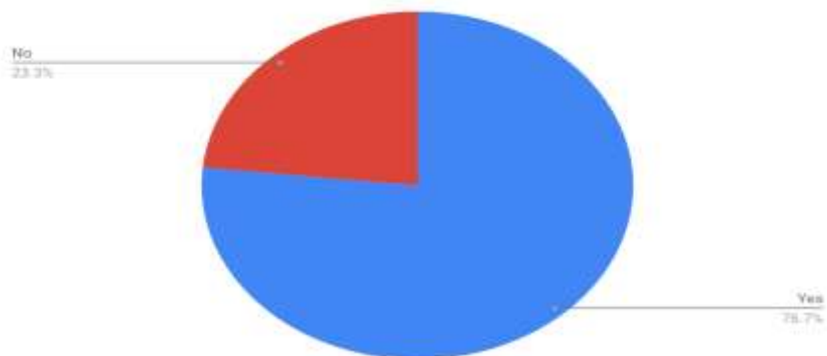
Points scored

Table 13 shows 76.7% respondents think that their teachers use digital tools effectively in teaching the language where as 23.3% are not of the same opinion.

Table 14: Requirement of specific technical skills to operate digital tools.
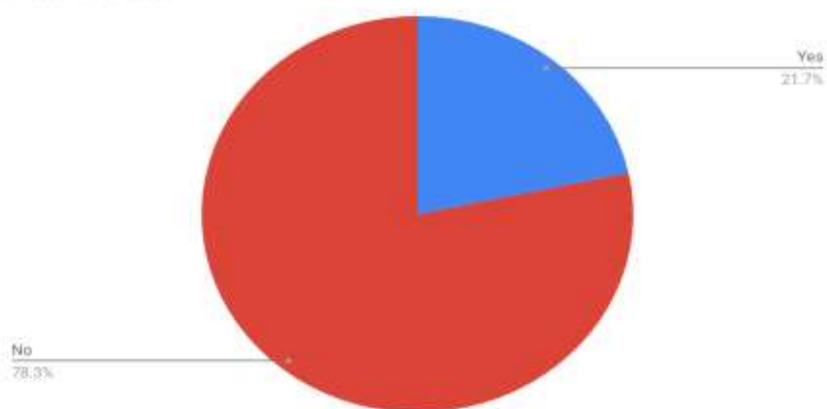
Points scored

Table 14 shows that 78.3% of respondents feel that a specific set of technical skills are required to operate digital tools where as 21.7% feel that no specific technical skills are required to operate digital tools.

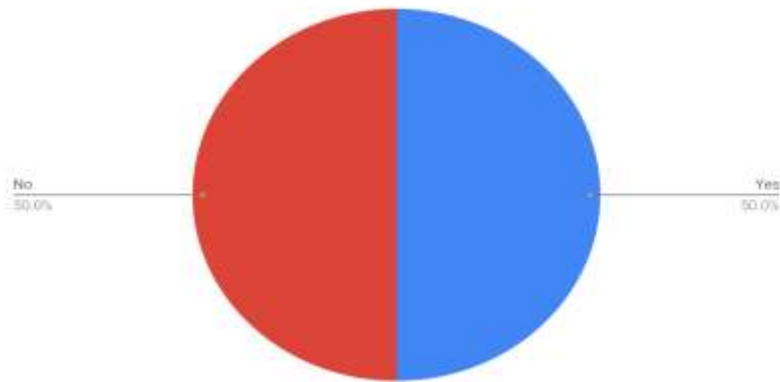**Table 15: Enhancement of collaboration through usage of digital tools**

Points scored

Table 15 shows half the respondents believe their teamwork and collaboration was enhanced due to the usage of digital tools where as the other half believe it has had no effect.

Table 16: Technical issues faced while using digital tools.
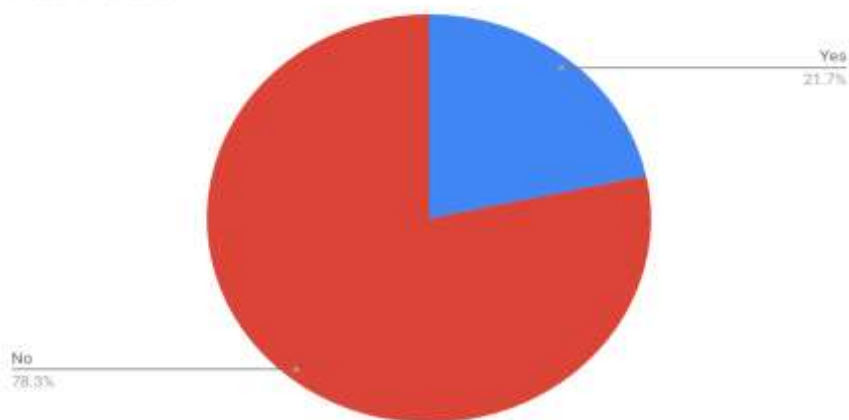
Points scored

Table 16 shows that 78.3% respondents have not faced any technical issues while using digital tools and 21.7% have faced these issues.

Table 17: Digital tools adapt to your personal learning styles.
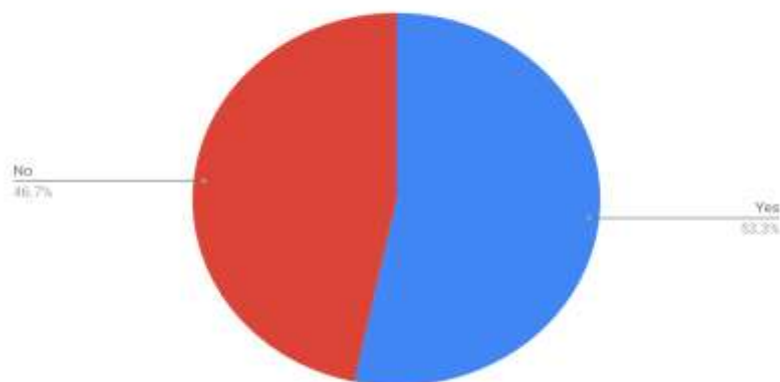
Points scored

Table 17 shows that 53.3% believe that digital tools adapt to their personal learning styles and 46.7% do not opine the same.

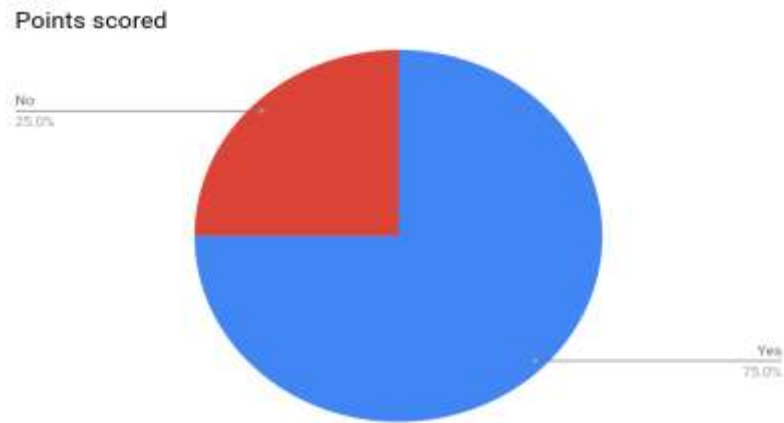**Table 18: Pressure of language learning eased through digital tools.**

Points scored

Table 18 shows that 75% have experienced an ease in pressure and 25% have not experienced an ease in pressure of language learning due to using of digital tools.

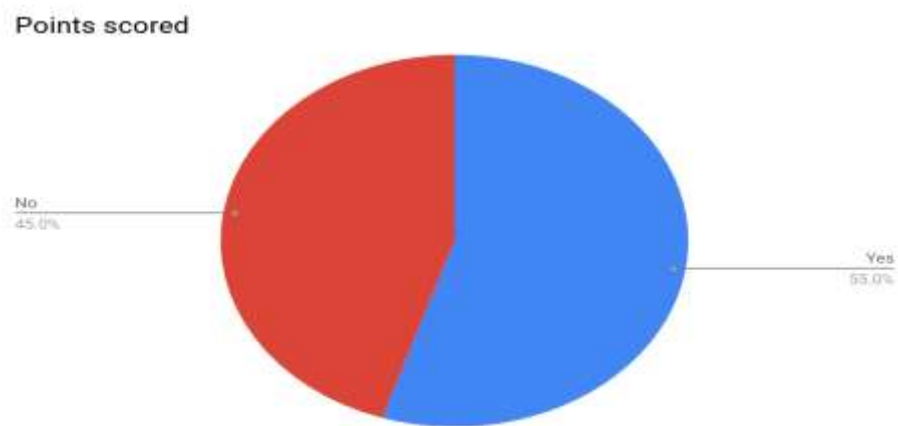**Table 19: Social media in learning of French language**

Points scored

Table 19 shows that 55% respondents find social media useful in learning of the French language and 45% do not find social media useful in learning French.

Table 20: Tools which have best helped in the improvement of language skills.
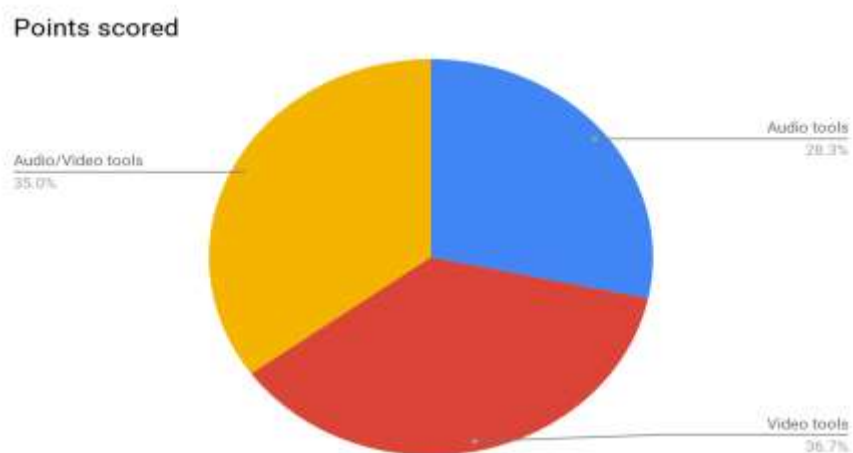
Points scored

Table 20 shows 36.7% opted for video tools, 35% audio/visual tools and 28.3% for audio tools as the tools that have best helped in the improvement of their language skills.

Table 21: Improvement of competency in French language after the usage of digital tools.
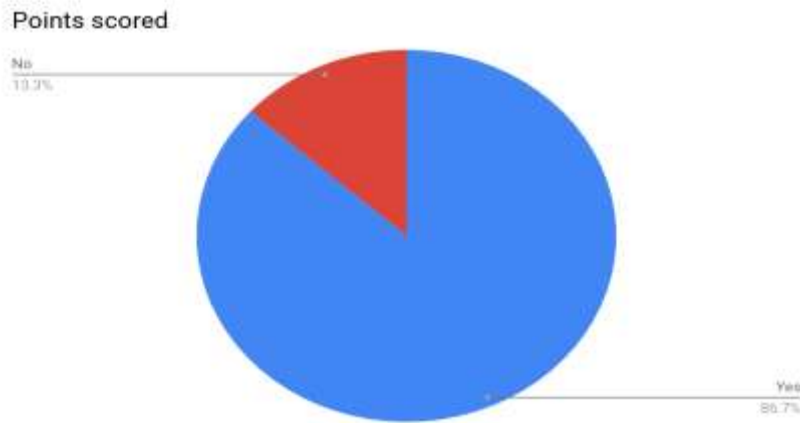
Table 21 shows that 86.7% have noted an improvement and 13.3% have not noted any improvement of their French language competency after the usage of digital tools.

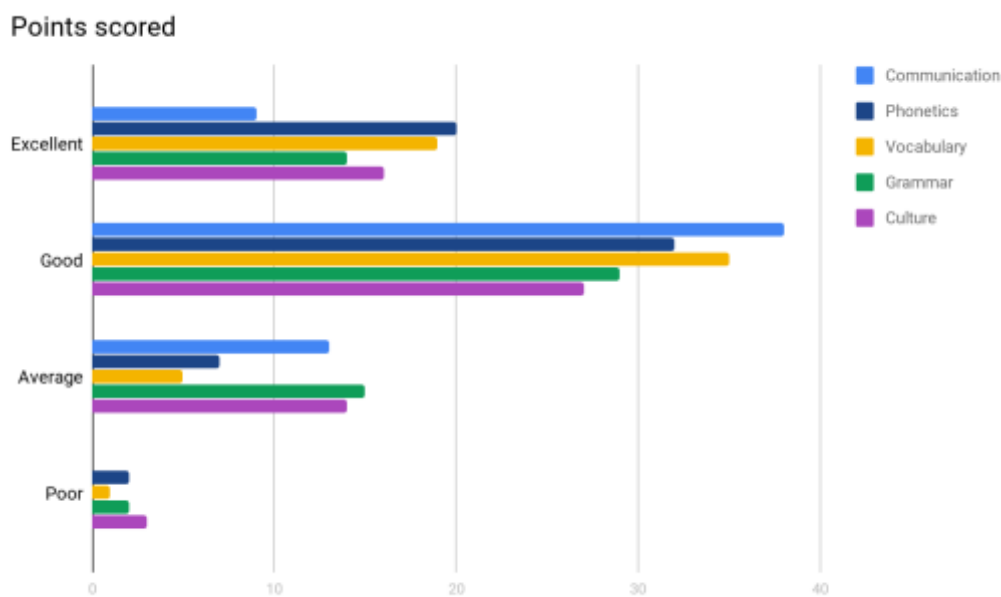**Table 22: Usefulness of the digital tools in development of language competency**

Table 22 shows 63.3% respondents find their communication level is good, 21.6% is average and 15% is excellent due to the use of digital tools.

Table 22 shows 53.3% respondents find their phonetics level is good, 33.3% is excellent, 11.6% is average and 1.6% is poor due to the usage of digital tools.

Table 22 depicts 58.3% respondents find their vocabulary level is good, 31.6% is excellent, 8.3% is average and 1.6% is poor due to use of digital tools.

Table 22 shows 48.3% respondents find their grammar level is good, 25% is average, 23% is excellent and 3.3% is poor due to the usage of digital tools.

Table 22 shows 45% respondents find their understanding of French culture to be good, 26.6% is excellent, 23.3% is average and 5% is poor due to the usage of digital tools.

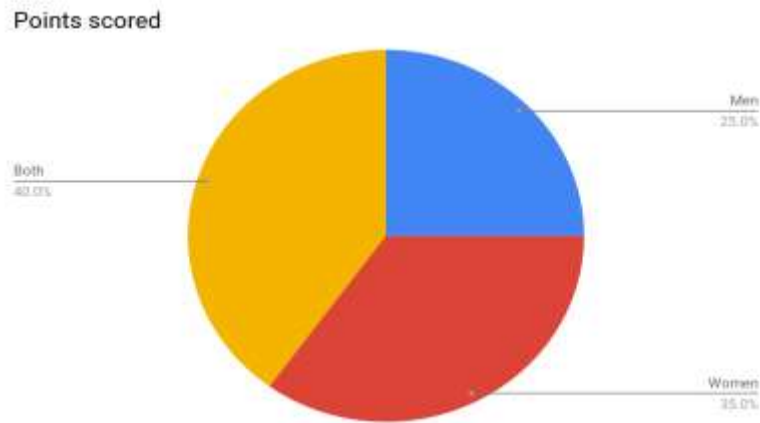**Table 23: Usage of digital tools among men and women.**

Points scored

Table 23 shows 40% respondents believe both men and women equally use digital tools, 35% think women use digital tools more and 25% believe men use digital tools more.

Table 24: Evolution and Expansion of digital tools in the future.
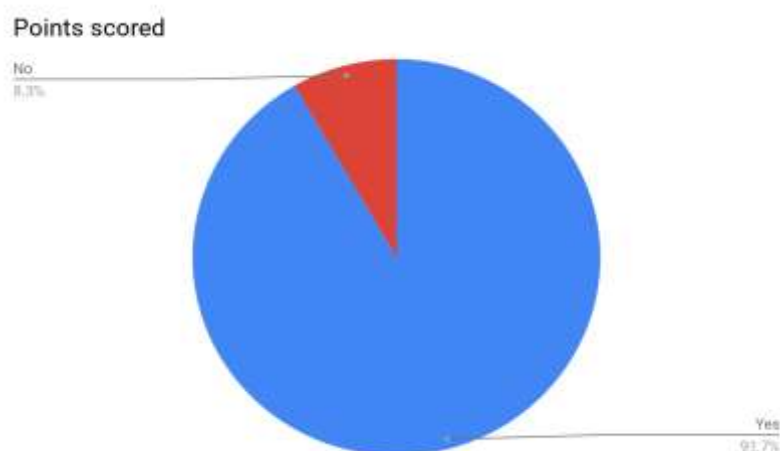
Points scored

Table 24 shows 91.7% respondents believe the usage of digital tools with evolve and expand in the future where as 8.3% respondents do not believe that the digital tools will evolve.

V. CONCLUSION

Smartphone is the most used digital device for learning the French language due its ease of access. 85% of the respondents use digital tools for improving their language skills to be in tune with the changing times. 95% of the respondents believe that the digital tools are useful to them. YouTube is the most utilised tool for learning French language. An average YouTube user spends about 2 - 6 hours everyday and prefers to use the tool for learning purposes also (Kumar K.R. & Yammanur B, 2019).

Interactivity, ease of access and user-friendliness are the preferred features of the digital tools. The amount of time spent by the majority of the respondents on digital tools to learn French is 1-2 hours. Connectivity issues are the main hindrance to using digital tools followed by crashing of the tool and cost. Security is not a concern for the users. Academic performance has improved for most of the respondents. 70% respondents see the value in the traditional learning methods, therefore, do not believe digital tools have a diminishing effect. Majority of the users (65%) believe that students of all competencies may benefit from the usage of digital tools although 46.7% do not believe the tools adapt to their personal learning styles.

Respondents (76.7%) believe that the teachers have been able to reap the benefit of using digital tools in teaching them. Most of the respondents (78.3%) have not faced technical issues while using the digital tools. More than half of the respondents find social media tools like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc useful in learning of the French language. Video tools are mostly preferred by the respondents. A high number of respondents have noted an improvement of their language skills after the use of digital tools. Their communication skills, phonetics, vocabulary, grammar and cultural immersion have been good after the usage of digital tools. Most of the respondents believe both men and women use digital tools closely followed by women, in particular. Most of them believe that there will be an evolution of the digital tools with the changing times. 75% of the respondents have experienced an ease in pressure of language learning due to the usage of digital tools.

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