Evaluation of AR/VR Platforms for Immersive Skill-Based Training

Sameera Patel[1*], Vikram Sen[2*], Aditya Rao[3*]

[1]School of Computer Science, Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India
[2]Engineering and Technology, Galgotias University, Uttar Pradesh, India
[3]Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence, Jain University, Bengaluru, India
[*]Authors Email: sameera@lpu.edu.in, vikram.s@galgotias.edu.in, aditya@jainuniversity.ac.in

Abstract: Immersive technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) have transformed contemporary training systems by enabling simulated, interactive, and controlled learning environments. Their application in skill-based training has expanded across fields including healthcare, industrial safety, engineering, aviation, military operations, and vocational education. This study evaluates the pedagogical, technological, and usability dimensions of AR/VR platforms to determine their effectiveness in enhancing skill acquisition, learner engagement, and performance accuracy. The research synthesizes recent empirical findings and theoretical frameworks to analyze immersion, presence, cognitive load, haptic integration, motion tracking, and adaptability across leading AR/VR systems. Results from existing studies indicate that VR-based simulations significantly improve complex motor skills, while AR environments enhance contextual understanding and real-time decision-making. Despite these advantages, challenges such as cybersickness, high hardware costs, limited content scalability, and technological constraints persist. The study concludes that AR/VR platforms offer substantial benefits for experiential learning, yet require advancements in ergonomics, accessibility, and multimodal sensory integration to achieve widespread adoption. Comprehensive evaluation criteria are proposed to guide educators, developers, and institutions in selecting suitable immersive training systems aligned with specific skill requirements and learner profiles.

1.   Introduction

The integration of immersive technologies into modern training frameworks has redefined how practical skills are developed, assessed, and refined. AR and VR systems enable learners to interact with synthetic yet realistic environments, an approach that shifts traditional learning paradigms towards experiential, participatory, and feedback-driven models. The demand for technologically enhanced skill development has grown in sectors that rely on precision, spatial awareness, and safety-critical operations. AR supplements the physical environment with digital overlays, while VR situates learners within fully virtual spaces, giving rise to distinct yet complementary pedagogical opportunities. Previous studies have demonstrated a growing preference for immersive training tools due to their ability to recreate hazardous, complex, or resource-intensive scenarios without real-world risks [1]. This paper evaluates the effectiveness of AR/VR systems in delivering immersive skill-based training and identifies dominant trends, limitations, and future research directions.

2.   Literature Review

The effectiveness of immersive learning environments has been explored extensively over the past decade. Mikropoulos and Natsis conducted a ten-year analysis of educational virtual environments, concluding that VR systems substantially increase learner engagement and conceptual understanding by enhancing presence and

immersion [1]. Similarly, Bower et al. examined AR applications in education and found that augmented overlays improve spatial awareness and contextual reinforcement, which are vital in fields requiring real-time decision-making [2]. Comparative studies by Rahman and Kumar indicate that VR is more effective for procedural and motor skill acquisition due to its high-fidelity simulations, whereas AR offers better performance in situational tasks requiring alignment with physical surroundings [3]. Cheng and Varghese demonstrate that VR safety training reduces accident rates in industrial contexts by providing controlled, repeatable simulations of hazardous scenarios [4]. Collectively, these studies underscore the value of immersive training platforms while also noting limitations related to ergonomics, technological maturity, and long-term usability.
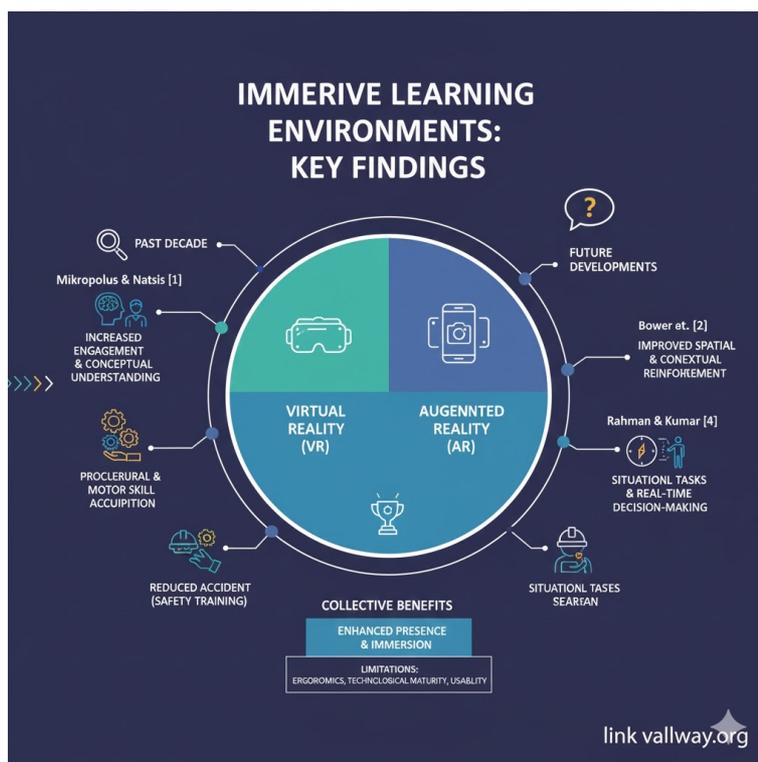

Fig. 1 Immersive Learning

3.   Methodology

This research employs a qualitative meta-analysis of peer-reviewed studies, technical reports, and experimental findings published between 2018 and 2024. Materials were selected based on their relevance to immersive training, empirical validation, and technological evaluation. The analysis synthesizes data related to learning outcomes, usability metrics, system architecture, sensory feedback, and training contexts. The methodological approach also incorporates comparative assessment criteria spanning immersion, interaction fidelity, hardware ergonomics, content adaptability, and performance analytics. This framework enables a holistic evaluation of AR/VR systems across diverse training domains while grounding the analysis in established pedagogical theories and technology-enhanced learning models.

4.   Results

Findings from the reviewed studies reveal that VR consistently enhances performance in skill-based domains involving high motor complexity, such as surgical training, robotics operation, and mechanical assembly. Systems that employ haptic feedback demonstrate a measurable improvement in precision and movement accuracy. AR platforms, on the other hand, perform strongly in contextual tasks such as equipment maintenance, navigation assistance, and emergency response training, where overlays enhance situational awareness. Learners using VR systems report higher engagement but also occasional discomfort related to motion sickness. AR users benefit from lighter equipment and greater mobility, though limitations in environmental tracking reduce accuracy in certain tasks. Both technologies significantly outperform traditional instructional methods in terms of learner motivation, retention, and task completion accuracy.

5.   Discussion

The comparative analysis indicates that AR and VR each offer unique strengths aligned with distinct training needs. VR's controlled environment supports repetition, error-based learning, and cognitive immersion, which together facilitate mastery of complex procedures. However, the technology remains constrained by expensive hardware, limited portability, and variable comfort levels among users. AR excels in real-world integration but faces challenges in rendering precision, lighting conditions, and interface stability. While immersive systems reduce training risks and costs over time, their initial setup remains resource-intensive. Pedagogically, both technologies promote active learning, but maintaining optimal cognitive load remains a challenge. Excessive visual stimuli or poorly designed interfaces can hinder rather than support skill acquisition. Continuous refinement of multimodal feedback systems, adaptive difficulty levels, and standardized content development frameworks is essential to advancing their effectiveness.

6.   Conclusion

The evaluation demonstrates that AR/VR platforms hold transformative potential for immersive skill-based training across a range of disciplines. Their ability to recreate realistic scenarios, provide instant feedback, and support experiential learning makes them indispensable in modern education and industry. However, broader adoption depends on advancements in hardware ergonomics, content scalability, affordability, and cross-platform compatibility. Future research should focus on hybrid AR-VR systems, AI-driven personalization, and longitudinal studies assessing long-term skill retention. With sustained technological growth and pedagogical integration, AR/VR platforms will increasingly shape the landscape of global skill development.

References

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