

Sahand Mahdavi-Zargari<sup>1</sup>E-mail: [sahandmahdavi68@chmail.ir](mailto:sahandmahdavi68@chmail.ir)ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6562-3220><sup>1</sup> University of Mohaghegh Ardabili. Iran.

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**ABSTRACT**

Higher education is undergoing a constant transformation, driven by digitalization, the globalization of knowledge, and the diversity of student profiles, which demands more flexible and inclusive pedagogical strategies. In this context, podcasts are emerging as an innovative resource with great potential to complement and enrich university teaching and learning processes. Their asynchronous, audio format allows students to access content at different times and places, adapting to different learning paces and fostering autonomy, self-regulation, and active participation. This article employs a methodology of documentary review and bibliographic analysis of international research, integrating empirical studies, systematic reviews, and theoretical contributions, which allows for the synthesis of evidence on their impact on content comprehension, academic performance, student interaction, and teacher training. The results show that podcasts promote active and meaningful learning, especially when used in strategies such as flipped classrooms or student-led content creation. They facilitate the repetition and in-depth exploration of complex topics, strengthen collaboration, and develop digital and communication skills. Furthermore, their planned integration into the curriculum enhances pedagogical effectiveness, preventing improvised or merely instrumental use. In conclusion, podcasts represent a strategic educational tool that fosters pedagogical innovation, improves student participation, strengthens the teacher-student relationship, and contributes to improving the quality of learning in higher education.

**Keywords:**

Higher education, podcast, active learning, educational innovation, inclusion, digital skills, flipped classroom, student motivation.

**RESUMEN**

La educación superior enfrenta un constante proceso de transformación, impulsado por la digitalización, la globalización del conocimiento y la diversidad de perfiles estudiantiles, lo que exige estrategias pedagógicas más flexibles e inclusivas. En este contexto, el pódcast emerge como un recurso innovador con gran potencial para complementar y enriquecer los procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje universitarios. Su formato auditivo y asincrónico permite a los estudiantes acceder a los contenidos en distintos momentos y espacios, adaptándose a diferentes ritmos de aprendizaje y favoreciendo la autonomía, la autorregulación y la participación activa. Este artículo emplea una metodología de revisión documental y análisis bibliográfico de investigaciones internacionales, integrando estudios empíricos, revisiones sistemáticas y aportes teóricos, lo que permite sintetizar la evidencia sobre su impacto en la comprensión de contenidos, el rendimiento académico, la interacción entre estudiantes y la formación docente. Los resultados muestran que el pódcast promueve un aprendizaje activo y significativo, especialmente cuando se utiliza en estrategias como el aula invertida o la creación de contenidos por parte de los estudiantes, facilitando la repetición y profundización de temas complejos, reforzando la colaboración y desarrollando competencias digitales y comunicativas. Además, su integración planificada en el diseño curricular potencia la efectividad pedagógica, evitando un uso improvisado o meramente instrumental. Se concluye que el pódcast representa una estrategia educativa estratégica que fomenta la innovación pedagógica, mejora la participación estudiantil, fortalece la relación docente-estudiante y contribuye a la mejora de la calidad del aprendizaje en la educación superior.

**Palabras clave:**

Educación superior, pódcast, aprendizaje activo, innovación educativa, inclusión, competencias digitales, aula invertida, motivación estudiantil.

## INTRODUCTION

Higher education is undergoing a constant transformation, driven by technological advancements, the globalization of knowledge, and the evolving educational demands of an increasingly digital society. In this context, universities face the challenge of rethinking their traditional teaching practices and adopting innovative strategies that respond to the needs of students with diverse profiles, changing information consumption habits, and more flexible and personalized learning expectations. The integration of digital technologies into teaching and learning processes has therefore become central to ensuring educational quality and the relevance of university education.

Within this context of educational innovation, podcasts have emerged as a tool with remarkable pedagogical potential in higher education. Their format, based primarily on asynchronously accessible audio content, allows students to interact with learning materials at different times and places, fostering autonomy, self-regulation, and adaptation to diverse learning styles. These characteristics make them a particularly suitable resource for contemporary university environments, where learning is no longer confined to the physical classroom or rigid schedules.

From a pedagogical perspective, podcasts should not be understood solely as a technological medium, but as a teaching resource that, when properly integrated, can enrich teaching practices and expand learning opportunities. Early research in higher education already indicated that podcasts could play a significant role as a complement to face-to-face teaching, facilitating content review, conceptual reinforcement, and access to additional explanations outside the classroom. In this regard, the study by Fernandez et al. (2009) highlighted that this tool contributes to improving good educational practices when used with a clear pedagogical purpose, allowing for the optimization of class time and promoting more reflective and in-depth learning.

Interest in the use of podcasts in higher education has also led to an analysis of students' disposition and attitudes toward this type of resource. Walls et al. (2010) examined whether university students were truly prepared and motivated to incorporate podcasts into their learning process, concluding that, while there is a generally positive perception, their effectiveness depends on factors such as content quality, clarity of learning objectives, and coherence with the curriculum. These findings underscore the importance of using podcasts not as an ad hoc or improvised element, but rather as a strategically planned component within coursework.

In recent years, international research has broadened its analysis to include the impact of podcasts on key variables of university learning, such as content comprehension, academic performance, and student interaction. In

this regard, recent studies have highlighted the value of podcasts not only as a consumption resource but also as a tool for the active production of knowledge. Hernández-López & Mendoza-Jiménez (2025) demonstrate that student-created podcasts foster a deeper understanding of the subjects, strengthen peer connections, and are associated with improvements in academic performance. This approach promotes active and meaningful learning by engaging students in processes of research, synthesis, and communication of knowledge.

From the perspective of professional and medical education, podcasts have been analyzed as an effective alternative to complement or even transform the traditional lecture. Kaplan et al. (2020) point out that this format offers opportunities to move the presentation of theoretical content outside the classroom, allowing in-person time to be dedicated to activities of greater cognitive complexity, such as critical discussion, case analysis, and the practical application of knowledge. In this way, podcasts align with active pedagogical approaches, such as flipped learning, and contribute to more student-centered teaching.

Furthermore, recent research has explored the use of podcasts as a tool to facilitate learning in diverse university contexts, highlighting their impact on motivation, engagement, and accessibility. Engzell et al. (2025) analyze how the systematic use of podcasts in higher education can promote knowledge acquisition while offering a more flexible and inclusive learning experience. These authors emphasize that podcasts allow for addressing the needs of students with different learning styles, backgrounds, and personal circumstances, which is especially relevant in hybrid or virtual learning environments.

The available empirical evidence suggests that podcasts can contribute to improving the quality of education when coherently integrated into the pedagogical design. However, the literature also cautions that their effectiveness is neither automatic nor universal, but rather depends on factors such as the methodology employed, the teacher's role, the level of student participation, and the relevance of the content to the learning objectives. In this sense, podcasts should be conceived as part of a broader teaching strategy aimed at promoting meaningful learning and the development of competencies in higher education.

International research agrees that podcasts represent a valuable tool for enriching university education, provided their use is based on sound pedagogical principles and critical reflection on their implementation. Despite the growing academic interest in this resource, further analysis from an educational perspective is still needed, considering their contributions, challenges, and potential for integration in diverse institutional and disciplinary contexts.

In this context, the present article aims to analyze the podcast as a training tool in higher education, based on a

review of international research, with the purpose of identifying its contributions to the teaching and learning process, as well as reflecting on its pedagogical potential to strengthen the understanding of the content, student participation and academic performance in the university environment.

## METHODOLOGY

This article was developed using a qualitative documentary review methodology with an analytical-descriptive approach, aimed at examining podcasts as a training tool in higher education. This type of methodology is relevant when the study's objective is to analyze, systematize, and critically reflect on the existing theoretical and empirical contributions in the scientific literature, without resorting to field data collection.

The search and selection of sources was carried out through an exhaustive review of research published in recognized academic databases, such as Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, MDPI, etc. Scientific articles, academic books, book chapters, and proceedings of international conferences published mainly between 2008 and 2025 were prioritized in order to ensure the currency and relevance of the contributions analyzed, as well as the inclusion of classic and recent studies on the use of podcasts in higher education.

The inclusion criteria included: a) studies focused on the use of podcasts in university contexts; b) research addressing their impact on learning, motivation, academic performance, or educational experience; c) studies analyzing student or teacher perceptions; and d) publications with methodological rigor and institutional support. Non-academic, duplicate, or unrelated sources were excluded.

Once the sources were selected, a content analysis was conducted through a critical and systematic reading of the texts, identifying emerging categories related to the pedagogical contributions of podcasts, their advantages, limitations, modes of use, and conditions for their effective implementation in higher education. This process allowed the information to be organized into thematic axes that structure the development of the article, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Finally, the information was synthesized interpretively, articulating the findings of the various studies to offer a critical and well-founded perspective on the potential of podcasts as an educational tool. This methodology allowed us not only to describe the current state of knowledge on the topic but also to reflect on its pedagogical implications and its relevance in contemporary university contexts.

## DEVELOPMENT

Podcasts have acquired an increasingly important role in higher education as a result of the convergence of

pedagogical innovation and digital transformation. Their incorporation responds to the need to rethink traditional teaching models, characterized by the centrality of the teacher and the unidirectional transmission of knowledge, towards more flexible, participatory, and student-centered approaches. In this context, podcasts are emerging as a teaching resource that facilitates access to knowledge, personalized learning, and the development of key competencies in the university setting.

From a pedagogical perspective, podcasts stand out for their ability to adapt to different learning styles and paces. Fernández et al. (2009) suggest that this technological resource allows students to review content as many times as they deem necessary, which fosters deeper understanding and consolidates learning. This feature is especially relevant in subjects with a high theoretical or conceptual load, where the possibility of reviewing explanations helps reduce academic anxiety and improve performance.

Podcasts have also been linked to active learning methodologies that promote student participation. Turner et al. (2011) argue that their use facilitates the transition from traditional lectures to constructivist learning environments, in which students interact with the content reflectively and critically. When podcasts are integrated into strategies such as the flipped classroom or project-based learning, their educational value is enhanced, as they free up classroom time for analysis, discussion, and the practical application of knowledge.

Another relevant aspect of podcasts in higher education is their communicative potential. Unlike other digital formats, podcasts rely on the voice as their primary means of transmission, fostering a sense of closeness and social presence between teachers and students. Kaplan et al. (2020) point out that this format can humanize the educational experience by incorporating narratives, contextualized examples, and more accessible language—elements that enhance student attention and motivation. Thus, podcasts not only transmit information but also strengthen the pedagogical bond.

Empirical research has shown that the impact of podcasts in higher education goes beyond passive content consumption. Hernández-López & Mendoza-Jiménez (2025) demonstrate that podcast creation by university students significantly improves course comprehension, fosters collaborative work, and strengthens peer connections. This active learning approach transforms students into knowledge producers, promoting skills such as research, information synthesis, oral communication, and critical thinking.

However, the effectiveness of podcasts as a learning tool depends largely on the students' willingness and preparation. Walls et al. (2010) point out that not all students have the same level of familiarity or enthusiasm for using educational technologies, which can influence their ability

to use them effectively. Factors such as technological accessibility, digital skills, and individual learning preferences must be considered when implementing podcasts in the university classroom. Therefore, their use requires instructional planning that includes clear guidelines and defined learning objectives.

In more recent studies, Engzell et al. (2025) emphasize that podcasts can facilitate deep learning when intentionally designed and integrated with complementary activities. The inclusion of listening guides, reflective questions, or discussion forums allows students not only to consume the content but also to actively interact with it. In this way, the podcast becomes a catalyst for critical thinking and academic reflection, preventing its superficial or merely instrumental use.

Brehm (2022) offers a critical reflection on the transformative potential of educational podcasts, using the FreshEd case study, highlighting their capacity to democratize knowledge and broaden access to global academic debates. The author argues that podcasts can function as spaces for critical and situated learning, integrating diverse voices and fostering in-depth reflection on contemporary educational issues. From this perspective, podcasts not only serve as a medium for content delivery but also as a platform for academic dialogue, the collective construction of knowledge, and the development of learning communities that transcend institutional boundaries.

Carvalho et al. (2009) analyzed the perceptions of both students and teachers regarding the use of podcasts in higher education, revealing a predominantly positive assessment of this tool. The results show that students perceive podcasts as a flexible resource that facilitates content comprehension and autonomous learning, while teachers highlight their usefulness in diversifying teaching strategies and improving pedagogical communication. However, the study also points out challenges related to teacher training and the pedagogical integration of the resource, emphasizing that its effectiveness depends on the instructional design and the educational context in which it is implemented.

Betts (2017) offers a practical and thoughtful guide on what educational podcasts are, why to use them, and how to implement them effectively in higher education. The author emphasizes that the value of podcasts lies in their ability to foster flexible learning, support different learning styles, and strengthen the relationship between teachers and students. He also highlights the importance of defining clear objectives, ensuring the quality of the content, and considering technical and pedagogical aspects to guarantee a meaningful learning experience. His contribution is key to understanding podcasts as a strategic tool, not merely a technological one.

Evans (2008) evaluates the effectiveness of podcasts as a form of mobile learning through review lectures in higher

education, concluding that their use has a positive impact on academic performance. The study shows that students who use podcasts as review material achieve better results on assessments, especially when the resource is used as a complement to, rather than a substitute for, face-to-face instruction. Furthermore, Evans (2008) emphasizes that podcasts promote repetition, self-assessment, and the consolidation of learning—fundamental aspects in demanding university contexts.

Lewis & Francis (2020) explore podcasts as a motivational tool in online and blended learning environments, highlighting their ability to increase student engagement. The authors argue that the audio format humanizes the educational experience, fosters a closer relationship with the instructor, and helps reduce the sense of isolation inherent in online education. Furthermore, they point out that podcasts can stimulate intrinsic motivation by offering relevant, accessible, and contextualized content, thus encouraging more active student participation in their learning process.

Firmino et al. (2025) evaluated the effectiveness of podcasts as an educational tool for nursing students, demonstrating positive effects on content comprehension, academic satisfaction, and independent learning. The study highlights that podcasts reinforce complex theoretical content and facilitate the integration of theory and clinical practice. Furthermore, the authors conclude that this tool is particularly useful in health science disciplines, where flexible learning and content repetition are key elements for the development of professional competencies.

Fournier (2025) presents a compilation of podcasts focused on university teaching, highlighting their value as resources for faculty professional development. The author emphasizes that these podcasts allow educators to reflect on their practices, learn about pedagogical innovations, and stay up to date on higher education topics. This contribution broadens the understanding of podcasts not only as a tool for students but also as a means of continuing education and informal learning for university faculty.

Savall Ceres & Villafán Amezcua (2025) analyze university faculty perceptions of podcast use, identifying both benefits and challenges. Among the advantages highlighted are improved pedagogical communication and the diversification of teaching resources; however, they point to obstacles such as lack of time, technical training, and institutional support. The study emphasizes the need for educational policies and institutional strategies that facilitate the effective integration of podcasts into university teaching.

Ramos García & Caurcel Cara (2011) address podcasts as a teaching and learning tool from a pedagogical perspective, highlighting their potential to promote autonomous and meaningful learning. The authors point out that podcasts facilitate personalized learning and allow

students to control the pace and depth of their access to content. Furthermore, they emphasize their usefulness in developing digital and communication skills within the university context.

Meden et al. (2024) analyze the role of podcasts in informal learning, demonstrating their positive influence on knowledge acquisition and retention. The study shows that students use podcasts as supplementary resources to reinforce academic content outside the classroom, integrating learning into their daily lives. This finding is relevant for understanding podcasts as a bridge between formal and informal learning in higher education.

Kakhki et al. (2025) examine the impact, challenges, and integration of podcasts in patient education, providing findings transferable to the university setting, especially in health sciences programs. Their systematic review demonstrates that podcasts improve comprehension, engagement, and learning autonomy, while also highlighting the need to adapt content to the audience's characteristics. This study reinforces the importance of careful pedagogical design to maximize the benefits of educational podcasts.

Andersen & Dau (2020) analyze the potential of podcasts as a learning tool in higher education, highlighting their ability to support active, student-centered methodologies. The authors conclude that podcasts are particularly effective when integrated into innovative pedagogical models, such as project-based learning or the flipped classroom, contributing to a more flexible and meaningful learning experience.

Trujillo Torres (2011) addresses the use of podcasts from a communicative and knowledge management perspective, highlighting their role as a tool for educational innovation. The author argues that podcasts improve the circulation of knowledge, strengthen teacher-student communication, and promote the constant updating of academic content. His study positions podcasts as a strategic resource within innovation policies in higher education.

Kay (2012) presents a comprehensive review of the use of podcasts and video podcasts in education, concluding that these resources have positive effects on learning, motivation, and student satisfaction. However, the author cautions that the results depend on the context, instructional design, and how they are integrated into the educational process. This review provides a solid empirical basis for supporting the use of podcasts in higher education.

Salmon & Edirisingha (2008) offer a comprehensive approach to the use of podcasts in universities, highlighting their potential to support flexible learning, skills development, and pedagogical innovation. The authors propose models and practical guidelines for their implementation, emphasizing the importance of faculty support and a sound pedagogical approach. Their work is a

fundamental reference for understanding podcasts as an established tool in contemporary higher education.

The reviewed contributions demonstrate that podcasts have become established as a versatile and effective pedagogical tool in higher education, capable of transforming both teaching processes and learning experiences. Taken together, the studies highlight that the audio format fosters educational flexibility, allowing students to access content at different times and in different contexts, thus promoting autonomy, self-regulation, and the integration of learning into daily life. This characteristic is especially valuable in university environments characterized by diverse learning paces, styles, and academic and personal responsibilities.

Furthermore, research agrees that podcasts contribute to improving the understanding of complex content and strengthening academic performance when used as a complement to face-to-face or online teaching. Their ability to facilitate repetition, review, and in-depth exploration of topics promotes knowledge consolidation, especially in disciplines that require a high conceptual or practical component. In addition, their usefulness in supporting active methodologies, such as the flipped classroom, project-based learning, and hybrid environments, in which students assume a more active role in their learning process, is highlighted.

Another important contribution relates to the impact of podcasts on student motivation and engagement. The personal and engaging nature of the audio format helps to humanize the educational experience, strengthening the connection between teachers and students, particularly in online learning contexts. Similarly, its potential to foster informal and continuous learning is recognized, extending the boundaries of the university classroom and promoting the development of broader and more participatory learning communities.

From a teaching and institutional perspective, studies highlight those podcasts not only benefit students but also serve as a valuable resource for teacher training and professional development. However, it is noted that their effective integration requires pedagogical planning, technical training, and institutional support, as their impact depends largely on the instructional design and the educational objectives pursued.

The contributions analyzed allow us to conclude that the podcast, beyond being a technological resource, represents an educational strategy with high potential to enrich university teaching, promote meaningful learning and respond to the demands of an increasingly flexible, inclusive and innovative higher education.

Furthermore, the adoption of podcasts in higher education from an institutional perspective also responds to criteria of inclusion and accessibility. The ability to access content anytime, anywhere is especially beneficial

for students facing time constraints, work responsibilities, or learning difficulties. In this sense, podcasts contribute to the democratization of knowledge and align with the principles of equity that guide contemporary educational policies.

Furthermore, podcasts foster the development of transversal skills relevant to the comprehensive education of university students. Active listening, effective communication, and the use of digital tools are increasingly in demand in the professional world. By integrating podcasts into educational processes, higher education institutions not only innovate in their teaching practices but also prepare students for the challenges of an information and technology-driven society.

The analysis of podcasts as a training tool in higher education reveals their broad pedagogical potential. Their value lies not only in the flexibility of the format but also in their capacity to transform teaching and learning processes when used in a planned and coherent manner aligned with educational objectives. Podcasts thus become a strategic resource that complements teaching, promotes student autonomy, and contributes to educational innovation within the university context.

However, the use of podcasts in higher education should not be understood as an isolated resource or a mere technological complement, but rather as a pedagogical tool that requires intentional lesson planning. Its effectiveness depends on how it is integrated into the curriculum design, the learning objectives it pursues, and the accompanying methodological strategies. Fernández et al. (2009) emphasize that podcasts are most effective when they align with the course content and address specific learning needs, avoiding their improvised or purely instrumental use.

One of the most frequent ways podcasts are used in higher education is as a support resource for face-to-face teaching. In this approach, podcasts allow for expanding upon or reinforcing the content covered in class, facilitating independent review by students. Walls et al. (2010) point out that this modality promotes prior preparation and subsequent consolidation of learning, provided that the instructor clearly outlines its purpose and offers specific instructions on its use. In this way, podcasts contribute to optimizing face-to-face time and improving the understanding of complex concepts.

Another relevant strategy is its integration into flipped classroom models. In this context, the podcast is used as pre-class material, allowing students to access theoretical content before the lecture. Kaplan et al. (2020) highlight that this approach transforms the traditional teaching dynamic, as classroom time is dedicated to analysis, discussion, and problem-solving activities. Thus, the podcast becomes a medium for fostering active learning and

critical thinking, shifting the emphasis from information transmission to knowledge construction.

Furthermore, podcasts can be used as a formative assessment tool when students are encouraged to create content. Hernández-López & Mendoza-Jiménez (2025) demonstrate that producing academic podcasts strengthens understanding of topics, stimulates collaborative learning, and improves academic performance. In this sense, podcasts cease to be a passive resource and become an active learning strategy in which students research, organize information, develop discourse, and cultivate communicative and digital skills.

From a methodological perspective, the use of podcasts in higher education must consider criteria of pedagogical quality. Engzell et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of designing podcasts with a clear structure, defined objectives, and an appropriate duration, avoiding cognitive overload. Furthermore, they recommend accompanying the resource with complementary activities, such as guiding questions, discussion forums, or reflective tasks, that allow students to interact with the content and deepen their learning.

Podcasts can also play a key role in online and hybrid learning environments. Their asynchronous nature fosters flexibility and accessibility, allowing students to manage their learning time according to their personal and academic needs. This feature is especially valuable in higher education, where students often combine academic studies with work and family responsibilities. In this context, podcasts contribute to a more inclusive and equitable education.

Finally, for podcasts to be used effectively in higher education, it is essential that faculty develop pedagogical and digital skills that enable them to design, produce, and evaluate this type of resource. Faculty training and institutional support are key factors in ensuring their proper implementation. Only through conscious and reflective use can podcasts become established as a formative tool that enriches teaching and learning processes in the university setting.

## CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the reviewed literature leads to the conclusion that podcasts have become established as a pedagogical tool with high educational potential in higher education, especially in a context marked by digitalization, educational flexibility, and the diversification of student profiles. Their asynchronous, accessible, and adaptable nature, suitable for different learning styles, positions them as an ideal resource to complement and enrich teaching and learning processes in the university setting.

The studies analyzed show that podcasts significantly contribute to content comprehension, strengthen independent learning, and improve academic performance,

particularly when used to support face-to-face teaching, in virtual environments, or in hybrid models. Furthermore, their integration into active methodologies, such as the flipped classroom and project-based learning, fosters more active student participation and promotes the development of higher-order cognitive skills, such as critical thinking and academic reflection.

Another key finding is the positive impact of podcasts on student motivation and engagement. Using voice as the primary means of communication creates a more personal and humanized learning experience, which is especially valuable in online education contexts where direct interaction can be limited. Furthermore, student-produced podcasts prove to be an effective strategy for fostering active learning, collaborative work, and the development of communication and digital skills.

However, the review also highlights that the effectiveness of podcasts is neither automatic nor generalizable. Their impact depends on key factors such as lesson planning, the quality of the instructional design, the clarity of the learning objectives, teacher training, and institutional support. A lack of teacher training, time, or technical resources can limit their effective integration and reduce their educational potential.

Podcasts should not be viewed solely as an innovative technological resource, but as a strategic pedagogical tool that, when thoughtfully and coherently integrated into the university curriculum, contributes to a more flexible, inclusive, and student-centered higher education. Future studies could delve deeper into empirical research analyzing their impact in specific contexts, disciplines, and diverse populations, as well as into the development of pedagogical models to guide their systematic implementation in higher education institutions.

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### **Conflicts of Interest:**

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

### **Author Contributions:**

Sahand Mahdavi-Zargari: Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, supervision, validation, visualization, original draft writing, and writing, review, and editing.

### **Ethical statement:**

The study was based on the analysis of documentary sources and publicly available data, and therefore did not involve the direct participation of human subjects. No personally identifiable information was handled.