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Students' Preference towards Educational Mobile Apps

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Abstract

The advancement of mobile technology has transformed traditional learning methods by enabling learning anytime and anywhere. Accordingly, it becomes essential to examine the students' level of preference towards educational mobile apps. Data have been collected from 142 students in Pollachi Taluk through issue of structured questionnaire by adopting random sampling method. Simple percentage, Henry Garrett ranking and chi-square test have been used to analyze the data. The study reveals that most of the students are using educational mobile apps daily. It is also observed that easy access is ranked first that students preferred educational mobile apps followed by game-based learning, eco-friendly and paperless learning, interactive and engaging apps, personalized learning, availability of resources, cost effective, institutional and teacher motivation and retention. Peer support and other factors are ranked least by students towards educational mobile apps. This shows the positivity among students for learning through mobile apps. Chi-square test shows that age, streams and family income are significantly associated with the level of preference towards educational mobile apps.

Keywords: Students – Preference – Education-Mobile Apps-Technology – Mobile Learning

Introduction

The rapid usage of smartphones and net connectivity has significantly transformed the education sector by introducing innovative learning methods. Easy access to learning Materials like e-books, video lectures, quizzes and interactive exercises by using educational mobile apps have become an important tool for students. These mobile apps support both formal and informal learning and let students to learn anytime and anywhere, making learning more flexible and convenient. As digital education continues to grow, educational mobile apps are becoming widely accepted as supplementary tools that enhance academic performance and improve students' learning experiences. In recent years, especially after the increasing usage of online learning, students have shown greater interest in using educational mobile apps for academic support. Mobile apps provide personalized learning opportunities, instant feedback, and improved engagement through interactive features. They are also cost-effective compared to traditional learning resources and help students manage their learning

at their own pace. Therefore, understanding students' preferences toward educational mobile apps is important for improving the quality of these apps and ensuring that they meet students' academic needs effectively.

Review of Literature

Park (2011) indicated that students' intention to use mobile learning apps was much influenced by easy to use and self -learning. Wu et al. (2012) discovered that students' are satisfied with mobile and blended learning method with content quality, system quality and interaction. Sung et al. (2016) found that students' engagement and academic performance are positively influenced by mobile learning apps when efficiently associated with goal. Dash and Sahoo (2020) found that educational mobile apps are useful tools for enhancing students' attention and involvement in academic learning. Kumar and Chand (2019) indicated that reasons like easy to use and content quality greatly influence students' preference towards educational mobile learning apps and also help to improve academic achievement. Pitafi and Ali (2023) disclosed that students' usages of educational mobile apps are influenced by content quality, system quality, and learning self‐ efficiency. Naveed et al. (2023) highlighted that mobile apps improves student engagement accessibility and learning flexibility. The study found that especially after the COVID‐19 pandemic mobile learning has become a planned component of digital education. Kao et al. (2023) highlighted that components like feedback, rewards and tracking progress considerably increase student motivation and engagement.

Statement of the Problem

Educational mobile apps are widely available and their increase usage in recent education, students' preferences and usage patterns change considerably. Fathi and Ebadi (2023) observed that learning through mobile apps among students identified usability, features and design as key predictors of learning effectiveness. The study also found that the apps that are interactive and learner‐centered are preferred more by students. Some actively use these apps on a daily basis for learning and exam preparation, while others rarely use them due to reasons such as limited internet access, lack of interest, lack of content quality, poor usability and technical problems. Without knowing the features that motivate students to use mobile apps, it becomes hard for institutions, app developers and educators to develop their effectiveness. Therefore, this research is necessary to find out the students' preference

towards educational mobile apps and their influence for the development and implementation of mobile learning tools.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To know the socio-economic profile of the students
- To identify the level of preference towards educational mobile apps
- To ascertain the variables associated with the level of preference towards educational mobile apps

Research Methodology

The study is based on primary data. The data is collected through a well structured questionnaire. It contains questions relating to socio-economic of students and preference towards educational mobile apps. A sample of 142 students from higher education in Pollachi Taluk has been selected by adopting random sampling method. Simple Percentage, Henry Garrett Ranking and Chi-Square test have been used to analyze the data.

Findings

The findings of the study are divided into four sections namely, socio-economic profile of students, frequency of using educational mobile apps, preference towards educational mobile apps, and variables associated with the level of preference towards educational mobile apps are showed in the following paragraphs.

(i) Socio - Economic Profile of Students

Socio-economic profile of students like age, gender, area of residence, number of members in the family, type of college, streams and family income are revealed.

- Most of the students, 66(46.47%) belong to the age group of up to 25 years.
- Majority 72(50.70%) of the students are female.
- Majority 76(53.52%) of the students are residing in rural area.
- Majority 102(71.83%) of the students are from private institutions.
- Majority of the students, 107(75.35%) have 3-4 members in the family.
- Majority 78(54.92%) of the students are from science stream.
- Most 69(48.59%) of the student's family monthly income is Rs. 50,000-Rs.100000.

(ii) Frequency of using Educational Mobile Apps

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The table below shows the classification of students based on their frequency of using educational mobile apps.

Table: 1

Frequency of using Educational Mobile Apps

Frequency	**Number of Students**	**Percentage (%)**
Daily	59	41.6
Weekly	52	36.6
Occasionally	31	21.8
Total	**142**	**100**

From the above table, it is inferred that 59(41.6%) are using educational mobile apps daily, 52(36.6%) are using weekly, and 31(21.8%) are using occasionally.

Hence it is found that most of the students are using educational mobile apps daily.

(iii) Preference towards Educational Mobile Apps

Students' are influenced by various factors while using mobile apps for education and it is necessary to study the preference of students to reorganize the strategy for education to satisfy the students. The rank has been analyzed using the Henry Garrett Rank. Based on Henry Garrett mean the rank for each factor has been distributed.

Table: 2

Factors Influencing preference towards Educational Mobile Apps – Henry Garrett Ranking

Factors		**R1**	**R2**	**R3**	**R4**	**R5**	**R6**	**R7**	**R8**	**R9**	**R10**	**R11**	**Total Garrett weights**	**Average**	**Rank**
Easy Access	Frequency	59	22	25	7	8	1	2	2	2	3	11	12990	91.48	1
	Garrett Score	5723	2046	2250	616	688	84	166	162	160	237	858			
Game-based Learning	Frequency	25	58	24	9	7	4	2	1	2	6	4	12902	90.86	2
	Garrett Score	2425	5394	2160	792	602	336	166	81	160	474	312			
Eco-Friendly and Paper Less Learning	Frequency	32	26	43	10	7	4	5	1	7	2	5	12814	90.24	3
	Garrett Score	3104	2418	3870	880	602	336	415	81	560	158	390			
Interactive and Engaging Apps	Frequency	25	37	21	23	12	4	3	7	2	4	4	12752	89.80	4
	Garrett Score	2425	3441	1890	2024	1032	336	249	567	160	316	312			
Personalised Learning	Frequency	29	31	25	7	24	5	9	1	3	3	5	12741	89.73	5
	Garrett Score	2813	2883	2250	616	2064	420	747	81	240	237	390			

Cost Effective	Frequency	27	41	19	7	7	23	5	3	3	1	6	12737	89.70	7
	Garrett Score	2619	3813	1710	616	602	1932	415	243	240	79	468			
Availability of Resources	Frequency	33	30	25	7	14	0	14	7	5	2	5	12738	89.70	6
	Garrett Score	3201	2790	2250	616	1204	0	1162	567	400	158	390			
Motivation and Retention	Frequency	30	38	20	10	5	7	6	12	5	3	6	12717	89.56	9
	Garrett Score	2910	3534	1800	880	430	588	498	972	400	237	468			
Institutional and Teacher Support	Frequency	30	36	29	4	9	5	3	1	14	4	7	12726	89.62	8
	Garrett Score	2910	3348	2610	352	774	420	249	81	1120	316	546			
Peer Support	Frequency	24	39	25	9	9	3	3	3	3	14	9	12563	88.47	10
	Garrett Score	2328	3627	2250	792	774	252	249	243	240	1106	702			
Others factors	Frequency	29	24	33	7	7	5	3	3	4	4	21	12419	87.46	11
	Garrett Score	2813	2232	2970	616	602	420	249	243	320	316	1638			

From the above table it is found that easy access is ranked first that students preferred educational mobile apps followed by game-based learning, eco-friendly and paperless learning, interactive and engaging apps, personalized learning, availability of resources, cost effective, institutional and teacher motivation and retention. Peer support and other factors are ranked least by students towards educational mobile apps.

(iv) Variables Associated with the Level of preference towards Educational Mobile Apps

To examine the association between the select variables and students' preference towards educational mobile apps, the Chi-square test has been employed.

Table: 3

Variables Associated with the Level of Preference towards Educational Mobile Apps

Variables	d.f	Calculated (χ^2) Chi-Square Value	Table Value 5% Level
Age	4	10.992	9.488
Gender	2	5.713	5.991
Area of Residence	2	5.886	5.991
Number of members in the family	4	8.119	9.488
Streams	2	7.664	5.991
Family Income	4	9.898	9.488

Six Variables have been taken to analyze the level of preference towards educational mobile apps. Out of six variables the following three variables have significant association with the level of preference towards educational mobile apps (viz.) age, streams, and family income while gender, area of residence and number of members in the family does not have significant association with the level of preference towards educational mobile apps.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study and the following suggestions are put forth.

- Curriculum-aligned and quality content may be provided.
- Advance and interactive features can enhance student engagement, motivation and retention.
- Institutions and teachers may encourage blended learning by integrating educational mobile apps with classroom teaching.
- Students may form peer group study to share resources, mobile apps and help each other through collaborative learning.

Conclusion

The study shows that students have a positive preference towards educational mobile apps. Factors such as easy access, game-based learning, eco-friendly and paperless learning positively influence their adoption. Educational mobile apps work as an additional learning tool, help students in understanding concepts and preparing for examinations. With continuous development in content and design, educational mobile apps can play an important role in the today's education.

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