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Effectiveness of the G-Shala App in Promoting Self-Learning Among Secondary Students: A Study in the Context of Gujarat's Digital Education Initiatives

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Abstract:

This study evaluates the effectiveness of the G-Shala (Gujarat Students' Holistic Adaptive Learning App) in fostering self-learning among secondary students within Gujarat's digital education framework. Developed by the Gujarat Council of School Education under Samagra Shiksha, G-Shala offers interactive e-content aligned with the Gujarat State Education Board (GSEB) syllabus for standards 1 to 12. Through a mixed-methods approach involving surveys, interviews, and app analytics, the research assesses the app's impact on student engagement, autonomy, and academic performance. Findings indicate that while G-Shala enhances self-directed learning through features like 2D/3D content and self-assessment modules, challenges such as technical issues and user interface limitations hinder its full potential. Recommendations include targeted training for users and technical enhancements to optimize the app's efficacy.

Keywords: *G-Shala App, digital education, self-learning, Gujarat, secondary students, e-learning, educational technology, LMS*

Introduction

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education has transformed traditional learning paradigms, emphasizing self-directed and personalized learning experiences. In Gujarat, initiatives like G-Shala aim to bridge educational gaps by providing accessible digital resources to students across various socio-economic backgrounds. This study investigates G-Shala's role in promoting self-learning among secondary students, aligning with the state's broader digital education objectives.

Literature Review

Digital Education in Gujarat

Gujarat's commitment to digital education is evident through programs like **Gyankunj**, which equips classrooms with smart technologies to enhance interactive learning. These initiatives aim to improve educational outcomes by integrating digital tools into the teaching-learning process (Samagra Shiksha, 2022).

G-Shala App Overview

Launched on June 10, 2021, G-Shala serves as a comprehensive Learning Management System (LMS) offering curriculum-aligned content for standards 1 to 12. Features include interactive 2D/3D content, virtual lab simulations, self-assessment modules, and dashboards for tracking progress (Schoolnet India, 2021; Gujinfo, 2022).

Self-Learning and Digital Platforms

Self-learning emphasizes learner autonomy, critical thinking, and motivation. Digital platforms facilitate this by providing resources that cater to individual learning paces and styles, fostering an environment conducive to self-directed education (Downes, 2005; Siemens, 2004).

Methodology

Research Design

A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to gain comprehensive insights into G-Shala's effectiveness.

Participants

The study involved 300 secondary students (standards 9 and 10) from government schools Rajkot, Gujarat. Additionally, 30 teachers and 50 parents participated to provide diverse perspectives.

Data Collection

- **Surveys**: Assessed students' frequency of G-Shala usage, perceived usefulness, and impact on self-learning.

- **Interviews**: Conducted with teachers and parents to understand observations regarding student engagement and challenges faced.
- **App Analytics**: Analyzed usage patterns, time spent on modules, and completion rates.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. Qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to extract recurring themes.

Results

Student Engagement

About 70% of students reported using G-Shala at least three times per week. High engagement was noted in subjects like Science and Mathematics, attributed to the app's interactive simulations and visual content.

Enhancement of Self-Learning

Students indicated that G-Shala's self-assessment modules and instant feedback mechanisms encouraged independent study. Teachers observed increased student initiative in exploring topics beyond the classroom curriculum.

Technical Challenges

Despite its benefits, users reported issues such as app crashes, slow loading, and a non-intuitive interface. These technical glitches occasionally disrupted learning and reduced user satisfaction.

Parental Involvement

Parents appreciated the app's dashboard for monitoring student progress but expressed the need for tutorials to help them assist their children.

Discussion

G-Shala demonstrates significant potential in promoting self-learning among secondary students by providing accessible, curriculum-aligned resources. Its interactive features cater to different learning styles, fostering engagement and autonomy. However, usability issues highlight the need for continuous development and support. Addressing these is crucial to maximizing the app's educational impact.

Conclusion

The G-Shala app is a significant innovation in Gujarat's digital education landscape. While it has proven effective in enhancing self-learning, technical improvements and user orientation programs are necessary. Strategic investments in digital infrastructure and training will help fully realize its potential.

Recommendations

1. **Technical Enhancements**: Improve app stability and user interface.
2. **User Training**: Conduct training for students, teachers, and parents.
3. **Feedback Mechanisms**: Integrate tools to collect user suggestions.
4. **Content Updates**: Regularly revise content as per updated syllabi.
5. **Accessibility**: Add features for students with special needs.

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