

Technology-Enabled Learning: Use of e-learning Apps

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Abstract

In today's day and age, every individual recognizes the value of receiving education in order to advance in all aspects of their lives—career, personal growth, financial success and social prestige. Parallel to the traditional modes of learning, lies the realm of e-learning applications that have recently been launched and developed. They are largely meant for studying at one's own convenience, gaining additional knowledge in the specific field of study and making the process of learning enjoyable for the students through various means such as games and quizzes. The present research paper aims at analyzing the use of e-learning apps by students in the present day. The primary goal of this research is to examine the opinions of students and their perspectives on e-learning applications; and whether such applications are beneficial for the students' advancement in their educational journeys.

Introduction

In today's world where the internet has taken over, apart from the traditional education system, there has been an introduction of the concept of e-learning which refers to platforms that provide a successful learning experience to students on electronic devices such as laptops, tablets or even mobile phones. For this purpose, numerous e-learning applications have been developed in recent times. The primary goal of such applications is to make learning enjoyable as well as accessible to students across the globe. A few advantages of e-learning apps include flexibility and financial affordability (Gupta, 2021). The apps offer professional skill courses apart from full-fledged degree programs. A few extremely popular e-learning apps include the following—BYJU's (2011), Udemy (2010), Khan Academy (2008), Coursera (2012), Duolingo (2011), ALISON (2007) and Brainly (2007) (Mangi, 2022). Learning with the help of such applications may be synchronous, such as live-streaming of classes and video-conferencing (Bower, 2011); or asynchronous such as referring to e-books, listening to recordings and watching pre-recorded videos of the class. Further, these e-learning apps have come up with the concept of gamification. It refers to introducing elements of games in a non-gaming setup in order to make learning more enjoyable and fun for students. These elements may include points for correct answers, rewards, medals and badges (Saleem et al., 2022). The underlying idea is to increase the motivation of students and make their learning experience more productive.

E-learning apps seem to play a crucial role in today's world especially for students who are in need of doubt clarifications or who find it more beneficial to learn through audio-visual systems. This research paper aims at analyzing the use and impact of e-learning apps on students and the potential drawbacks it brings with itself.

Review of Literature

For the purpose of the present research paper, the literature reviewed largely focused on the concepts of e-learning apps, its benefits as well as drawbacks of e-learning applications.

Gupta (2021) highlighted the impact of e-learning apps for a better learning experience among students. He discussed the advantages of e-learning apps and how they could prove to be a huge support for the education of students.

Mangi (2022) listed out the 13 best e-learning apps in present day, thus, gives an insight into how these apps function and why students rely on them for their studies.

Vazquez-Cano (2014) carried out a study at the Spanish National University of Distance Education to examine the use of subject-specific apps and found that the students appreciated the subject-specific apps and that they enhanced their overall learning processes.

Karim et al. (2021) conducted a study to examine student satisfaction towards distance learning apps in Malaysia during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was found that such technology was effective and students were extremely satisfied with the support provided by these apps, particularly because they found the apps easily accessible, easy to operate and useful.

Saleem et al. (2022) discussed the very important concept of gamification and how it increased the motivation levels of students during the process of studying through e-learning apps. They found that various game elements such as points, badges and medals motivated the students and enhanced their learning process.

Research objectives

The present research paper has the following objectives:

- To analyze the use of e-learning apps
- To analyze the benefits of e-learning apps
- To examine the drawbacks of e-learning apps

Research methodology

For the purpose of the present research, an exploratory study was conducted in order to analyze the use of e-learning applications and its impact on students. Primary data was collected wherein a questionnaire was designed and distributed to 50 students pursuing their post-graduate education in Social Science subjects at a university in Chandigarh. The questionnaire consisted of open-ended questions that largely focused on the students' perspectives on e-learning apps, their benefits and drawbacks.

Results and discussion

The major findings of the research paper have been discussed in the tables given below.

Table 1 Demographic profile of the respondents

Demographic Component	Frequency	Percentage %
Age group		
20-25	35	70
25-30	7	14
30-35	4	8
35-40	4	8
Sex		
Male	15	30
Female	35	70
Caste		
General	32	64
Reserved (SC/ST/OBC)	18	36
Marital status		
Single	40	80
Married	10	20
Economic background		
Upper class	7	14
Middle class	22	44
Lower class	8	16
Not disclosed	13	26

Briefly discussing the demographic findings, 70 per cent of the respondents belonged to the age group of 20-25, while 30 per cent of the respondents were above the age of 25 years. Approximately 70 per cent of the respondents were females and the remaining 30 per cent were males. Although 20 per cent of the respondents were married, 80 per cent of them were single. Further, although 64 per cent of the respondents belonged to general category, 36 per cent of them belonged to reserved category (SC/ST/OBC). The economic background of 44 per cent of the respondents was middle class while 30 per cent of them fell in the other categories of upper and lower class. 26 per cent of the respondents did not disclose their economic background.

Table 2 Usage of e-learning apps

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Use e-learning apps for education	46	92
Do not use e-learning apps for education	4	8
Total	50	100

Analyzing the results of the usage of e-learning applications, 92 per cent of the respondents mentioned that they made use of e-learning apps. The apps most cited by the respondents were Udemy, Coursera, BYJUs, and Khan Academy. On the other hand, 8 per cent of the respondents stated that they did not make use of e-learning apps for their education.

Table 3 Benefits of e-learning apps

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Availability of study material	18	36
Flexibility	16	32
Enhance the learning process	9	18
Financial affordability	7	14
Total	50	100

There were various reasons cited for students finding e-learning apps beneficial. 36 per cent of the respondents cited availability of the study material. They further elaborated on how easy it was to receive the study material from the app at one place instead of having to search for each topic separately either on the internet or scan through books. Similarly, 32 per cent of the respondents stated that the flexible learning schedule made their studies more productive. At times, they were unable to attend the live online class and the app provided recorded lectures which made it easier for the learners. 18 per cent of the respondents felt that e-learning applications enhance the learning process while 14 per cent of the respondents mentioned financial affordability as a benefit of using e-learning apps. Most of the e-learning apps had either a free-of-cost structure or a reasonable subscription fee which would last for at least three months, thus suiting to the needs of the students.

Table 4 Drawbacks of e-learning apps

Responses	Frequency	Percentage %
Lack of physical interaction with peers and the educator	24	48
Question on the authenticity of knowledge being imparted	6	12
Distractions and network issues	8	16
Phone addiction and increased screen-time	10	20
No drawbacks	2	4
Total	50	100

Various disadvantages of e-learning apps were also highlighted by the respondents. 48 per cent of the respondents mentioned that e-learning apps, similar to distance education, lacked physical interaction

with peers and educators. Further, approximately 36 per cent of the responses also revealed that studying through an e-learning app caused phone addiction, increased screen-time and other domestic distractions. Due to such issues, the respondents felt that sometimes learning through the e-learning app was not as effective as compared to attending physical classes. Further, 16 per cent of the respondents cited network issues and technology glitches as other drawbacks of e-learning apps. However, 4 per cent of the respondents did not find any demerits of e-learning apps.

Conclusion

Nowadays in present society, individuals recognize the importance of education and if they are not able to attend classes regularly, they even opt for e-learning apps. The available e-learning applications further enhance the learning process and attempt to fill the gaps of traditional classroom studies, thus making the overall learning experience enjoyable, productive and meaningful. It can thus be concluded that e-learning applications have proven to play a significant role in the academic growth and progress of students pursuing and it is probable that these applications will continue to offer support to such students in the future as well.

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