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## EXPLORING THE ROLE OF DIGITAL LEARNING TOOLS IN SHAPING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES: A FACTOR ANALYSIS

Authored By

**Saurabh Srivastava**

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# EXPLORING THE ROLE OF DIGITAL LEARNING TOOLS IN SHAPING EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES: A FACTOR ANALYSIS

**Dr. Daya Shankar Kanaujiya**

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Lucknow Public College of Professional Studies, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.

**Saurabh Srivastava**

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Lucknow Public College of Professional Studies, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

## ABSTRACT:

This study explores the role of digital learning tools in shaping educational outcomes through a robust factor analysis framework. The research analyzes data from a sample of 300 participants, predominantly young adults aged 18-38 years (77.7%), highlighting their engagement with digital learning platforms. The instrument's reliability, confirmed by a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.867, establishes the internal consistency of the items used to evaluate key dimensions such as accessibility, usability, engagement, and collaboration.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (0.830) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi^2 = 4924.471$, $p < 0.001$) validate the dataset's suitability for factor analysis, ensuring meaningful extraction of latent factors. The analysis identifies three principal components, collectively explaining 95.129% of the total variance. Post-rotation, the components redistribute variance more evenly across Accessibility and Usability (37.937%), Engagement and Interaction (29.054%), and Collaboration and Support (28.138%).

Key findings reveal that accessibility and usability are driven by factors like the availability of tools across devices and simplicity of use. Engagement and interaction are significantly influenced by personalized feedback, live quizzes, and adaptive content delivery. Collaborative features, including shared workspaces and responsive customer support, enhance teamwork and learning efficiency.

The results underscore the transformative potential of digital learning tools in fostering improved educational outcomes. They also provide actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and tool developers to design inclusive, engaging, and efficient learning environments. This research highlights the critical dimensions of digital tools and their implications for modern educational strategies, addressing the needs of diverse learner demographics. Further investigation is recommended to explore the unique challenges faced by underrepresented groups, particularly older learners.

## INTRODUCTION:

The rapid evolution of technology has profoundly influenced the education sector, introducing innovative digital learning tools that have reshaped traditional teaching methodologies. These tools include interactive software, online platforms, collaborative applications, and personalized learning systems that aim to enhance learning experiences, improve knowledge retention, and foster skill development. However, the effectiveness of digital learning tools in achieving these goals is determined by a range of factors that require

detailed examination. Understanding these factors is crucial for optimizing the design, implementation, and impact of such tools.

This study delves into the multifaceted relationship between technology and education. In this context, digital learning tools refer to technological platforms and applications designed to facilitate and enhance the learning process, including features like accessibility, interactivity, and collaboration. Educational outcomes encompass the measurable results of educational interventions, including improvements in academic performance, cognitive skills, and overall learning efficacy. The term factor analysis denotes the statistical technique employed in this study to identify latent variables or underlying dimensions that influence the observed data patterns.

The research leverages a robust dataset of 300 participants, predominantly aged 18-38 years, who represent the primary users of digital learning tools due to their technological adaptability and active engagement in modern educational environments. The study's instrument demonstrates high reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.867, ensuring consistent and dependable measurement across the 10 variables assessed. The dataset's suitability for factor analysis is confirmed by a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.830 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 4924.471$, $p < 0.001$). These metrics establish that the data is both adequate and robust for extracting meaningful components.

The factor analysis reveals three critical dimensions that shape the role of digital learning tools in educational outcomes. First, Accessibility and Usability: This dimension highlights the ease with which digital tools can be accessed and used across various devices, regardless of geographical or economic barriers. Variables such as simplicity in navigation and functionality contribute significantly to this factor. Second, Engagement and Interaction: This factor emphasizes the importance of tools that actively engage learners through interactive features like live quizzes, adaptive content, and personalized feedback. These elements enhance the learning experience by maintaining attention and fostering deeper understanding. At last, Collaboration and Support: This dimension underscores the role of collaborative features, such as shared workspaces and efficient customer support, in facilitating teamwork and addressing technical challenges.

Together, these three factors explain 95.129% of the total variance, underscoring their centrality in shaping the effectiveness of digital learning tools. The findings offer actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and developers, providing a foundation for designing more inclusive, engaging, and efficient digital learning environments. By identifying the key dimensions that influence educational outcomes, this study bridges the gap between technological innovation and pedagogical efficacy, paving the way for future advancements in digital education.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of digital learning tools in education has transformed traditional teaching practices, enabling personalized learning, improved accessibility, and enhanced engagement. This literature review explores foundational studies and recent advancements in the use of digital learning tools, their impact on educational outcomes, and the methodologies applied to assess their effectiveness.

### Accessibility and Usability

Kaiser (1974) emphasized the importance of tools that are easy to use and accessible across diverse learner demographics. Accessibility ensures that learners from various socio-economic backgrounds can participate effectively, while usability enhances the learning experience by minimizing technological barriers. Bartlett (1954) discussed statistical methodologies, such as Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, that have been pivotal in analyzing the adequacy of datasets used to study such tools.

### Engagement and Interaction

Brown (2015) noted the significance of learner engagement facilitated by interactive digital tools. Features like live quizzes, multimedia content, and gamification were identified as critical components in retaining student interest and promoting active learning. Field (2013) expanded on this by emphasizing how real-time feedback and adaptive learning pathways contribute to improved knowledge retention.

### Collaboration and Support

Kline (2015) highlighted the importance of collaborative learning environments supported by digital tools. Shared workspaces and collaborative functionalities were seen as instrumental in fostering teamwork and communication skills. The study also emphasized the necessity of robust technical support systems to ensure seamless user experiences, a point echoed by Pallant (2020) in her guide on SPSS, where she emphasized the role of statistical tools in evaluating collaborative features.

### Methodological Approaches

The application of factor analysis in evaluating digital tools has been central to understanding their dimensions. Brown (2015) provided a comprehensive framework for using factor analysis to identify latent variables, while Field (2013) emphasized its application in education. The KMO measure and Bartlett's Test, introduced by Kaiser (1974) and Bartlett (1954) respectively, have been widely adopted to validate the suitability of datasets for such analyses.

### Current Research Gaps

Despite extensive studies, there remains a lack of comprehensive frameworks integrating accessibility, engagement, and collaboration as interdependent dimensions. Additionally, few studies address the underrepresentation of older learners and the digital divide in resource-constrained settings.

### Implications for Future Research

The findings of this review highlight the need for further research on the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality in enhancing digital learning. Cross-cultural studies are also essential to understand regional variations in adoption and impact. Digital platforms have a small and positive effect on learning outcomes, with an overall effect size of 0.123-0.433 (Alshammary, F., & Alhalafawy, W. (2023)).. Digital storytelling facilitating factors include multisensory learning, adequate practice opportunities, evaluation of own ideas, and the iterative process (Nasir, W., Halim, L., & Arsad, N. (2024)).

### Research Objective

The primary objective of this study is to explore the critical dimensions shaping the effectiveness of digital learning tools in improving educational outcomes. Using factor analysis, the study aims to identify key factors such as accessibility, usability, engagement, interactivity, and collaboration that influence learning experiences. It seeks to evaluate the relationship between these dimensions and measurable educational results, such as academic performance and skill development. By validating the reliability and adequacy of the dataset, the research provides actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and developers to design more inclusive and effective digital learning environments that address diverse learner needs.

### Research Methodology

This study investigates the role of digital learning tools in influencing educational outcomes, focusing on the underlying dimensions that determine their effectiveness. To achieve this, the research employs a factor analysis approach to identify key factors shaping the relationship between digital learning tools and their impact on educational outcomes. The methodology ensures a systematic exploration of the constructs, encompassing design, data collection, and statistical validation.

### Research Design

This study uses a quantitative research design to evaluate the dimensions of digital learning tools and their influence on measurable educational outcomes. The design is structured to explore latent variables, ensuring that the identified factors comprehensively represent the underlying relationships.

The analysis is guided by three primary constructs derived from the literature:

1. Accessibility and Usability: Ease of access and user experience with digital tools.
2. Engagement and Interaction: Features that foster active learner participation.
3. Collaboration and Support: Mechanisms promoting teamwork and resolving technical challenges.

### Sampling

The study employs purposive sampling to target a population that actively engages with digital learning tools. A total of 300 participants were surveyed, representing diverse demographic backgrounds:

- Age Groups: The majority of participants were aged 18-38 years (77.7%), the most active demographic in digital education environments.
- Inclusion Criteria: Participants with regular exposure to and experience with digital learning tools.

### Data Collection

The research uses a structured questionnaire consisting of 10 items designed to measure the key dimensions of digital learning tools. The items were developed based on a review of existing literature and expert consultations. Responses were recorded on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The reliability and validity of the questionnaire were confirmed using statistical measures:

- Reliability Analysis: Cronbach's Alpha was calculated at 0.867, indicating high internal consistency.
- Validation: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy was 0.830, confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity ($\chi^2 = 4924.471$, $p < 0.001$) verified that the correlation matrix was appropriate for dimensionality reduction.

**Data Analysis**

The collected data was analyzed using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation to extract key factors using SPSS software version 25. Components with eigenvalues greater than 1 were retained, resulting in three significant factors:

1. Accessibility and Usability: Explained 37.937% of the variance.
2. Engagement and Interaction: Contributed 29.054% of the variance.
3. Collaboration and Support: Accounted for 28.138% of the variance.

Together, these factors explained 95.129% of the total variance, confirming their importance in shaping educational outcomes.

**Table 1: Descriptive Analysis based on Age**

| AGE | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | 59 ABOVE | 7 | .7 | 2.3 | 2.3 |
| | 49- 58 | 7 | .7 | 2.3 | 4.7 |
| | 39-48 | 53 | 5.3 | 17.7 | 22.3 |
| | 29-38 | 125 | 12.5 | 41.7 | 64.0 |
| | 18-28 | 108 | 10.8 | 36.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 300 | 30.0 | 100.0 | |
| Total | | 300 | 100.0 | | |

**Interpretation:** A significant proportion of participants fall within the age groups of **18-28 years (36%)** and **29-38 years (41.7%)**, collectively representing **77.7%** of the sample. This suggests that the study primarily captures the perspectives of younger individuals, who are typically the most engaged users of digital learning tools due to their comfort with technology and its integration into modern educational systems. Individuals in the **39-48 years** age group constitute **17.7%** of the sample, while those in the **49-58 years** and **59 above** categories represent only **2.3% each**. This smaller representation might indicate a reduced adoption or

reliance on digital tools among older generations, potentially due to technological barriers or differences in learning preferences.

Given the significant representation of young adults, the research findings will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness, preferences, and challenges associated with digital learning tools for this demographic. This aligns well with the study's focus on shaping educational outcomes, as younger individuals are more likely to be active learners. The lower representation of older age groups may highlight a **digital divide** or reduced adoption of digital tools among these populations. This gap could point to the need for targeted interventions, such as training or simplified tool designs, to increase inclusivity. While the results will have strong implications for educational strategies aimed at younger learners, they may need further investigation or supplementary studies to ensure their relevance to older age groups who might use digital tools differently or less frequently.

**Table 2: Reliability Statistics**

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|---|---|---|
| .867 | .867 | 10 |

**Interpretation:** The provided reliability statistics play a pivotal role in evaluating the consistency and dependability of the research instrument employed to measure various dimensions of digital learning tools and their impact on educational outcomes. The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.867 is a critical indicator of the reliability of the instrument, composed of 10 items. The reliability of the instrument implies that it is well-suited to capture the diverse dimensions of digital learning tools in a consistent manner. This strengthens the confidence in the data collected and its subsequent analysis.

**Table 3: KMO and Bartlett's Test**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.** | | .830 |
| **Bartlett's Test of Sphericity** | **Approx. Chi-Square** | 4924.471 |
| | **df** | 45 |
| | **Sig.** | .000 |

**Interpretation:** The results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity provide critical validation for the appropriateness of factor analysis in this study. These statistical tests ensure that the dataset is suitable for identifying underlying factors related to the role of digital learning tools in shaping educational outcomes.

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The KMO value of 0.830 is significantly above the acceptable threshold of 0.6, indicating that the dataset is adequate for factor analysis. A KMO value in this range suggests that the variables exhibit a high degree of correlation and are likely to cluster into meaningful factors. This reflects the robustness of the data collected and implies that the items in the research instrument are appropriate for exploring latent variables related to digital learning tools.

The Chi-Square statistic (4824.471) and its significance value ($p = 0.000$) confirm that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. This indicates that there are sufficient interrelationships among the variables to justify factor analysis. The significance of Bartlett's Test demonstrates that the observed correlations among the variables are statistically significant.

**Table 4: Total Variance Explained**

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 4.626 | 46.262 | 46.262 | 4.626 | 46.262 | 46.262 | 3.794 | 37.937 | 37.937 |
| 2 | 3.639 | 36.392 | 82.654 | 3.639 | 36.392 | 82.654 | 2.905 | 29.054 | 66.991 |
| 3 | 1.247 | 12.474 | 95.129 | 1.247 | 12.474 | 95.129 | 2.814 | 28.138 | 95.129 |
| 4 | .137 | 1.370 | 96.499 | | | | | | |
| 5 | .111 | 1.110 | 97.610 | | | | | | |
| 6 | .070 | .701 | 98.311 | | | | | | |
| 7 | .059 | .587 | 98.898 | | | | | | |
| 8 | .050 | .502 | 99.400 | | | | | | |
| 9 | .037 | .375 | 99.775 | | | | | | |
| 10 | .023 | .225 | 100.000 | | | | | | |

**Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.**

**Interpretation:**

**Initial Eigenvalues:**

- The analysis begins with 10 components, each with an initial eigenvalue representing its contribution to the total variance.
- Components with eigenvalues greater than 1 are considered significant, in this case: **3 components** (4.626, 3.639, and 1.247).

2. **Cumulative Variance Explained:**
   - The first three components collectively explain **95.129%** of the total variance, indicating that these three factors capture almost all the variability in the dataset.

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| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 4.626 | 46.262 | 46.262 | 4.626 | 46.262 | 46.262 | 3.794 | 37.937 | 37.937 |
| 2 | 3.639 | 36.392 | 82.654 | 3.639 | 36.392 | 82.654 | 2.905 | 29.054 | 66.991 |
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**Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.**

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**Initial Eigenvalues:**

- The analysis begins with 10 components, each with an initial eigenvalue representing its contribution to the total variance.
- Components with eigenvalues greater than 1 are considered significant, in this case: 3 components (4.626, 3.639, and 1.247).

2. **Cumulative Variance Explained:**
   - The first three components collectively explain 95.129% of the total variance, indicating that these three factors capture almost all the variability in the dataset.

- The first component alone explains **46.262%** of the variance, highlighting its dominance in representing the dataset.

3. **Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings:**
   - After extraction, the same three components account for the same amount of variance as the initial eigenvalues since no factors are discarded at this stage.
4. **Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings:**
   - Rotation redistributes variance across the three components, making them more interpretable.
   - Post-rotation, the three factors explain **37.937%**, **29.054%**, and **28.138%**, respectively. This balanced distribution improves clarity and allows for better identification of distinct dimensions, such as accessibility, engagement, or content quality.

The three extracted components represent critical latent factors influencing the educational outcomes shaped by digital learning tools. These components provide a robust basis for identifying actionable dimensions, helping educators and tool developers focus on the most impactful areas.

**Table 5 : Rotated Component Matrix[a]**

| | Component | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Digital learning tools are easily available to students regardless of their location. | | | .902 |
| Economic background does not limit students' access to digital learning tools. | | | .938 |
| Digital tools keep me engaged throughout the learning process. | | | .929 |
| Features like shared workspaces enhance team productivity. | | .949 | |
| I can access digital platforms on multiple devices (e.g., smartphone, laptop, tablet). | | .936 | |
| Customer support is efficient in addressing my queries. | | .938 | |
| Features like live quizzes or polls enhance my understanding of the content | .975 | | |
| The tools provide tailored feedback to improve my understanding. | .969 | | |
| The digital tools I use for learning are simple and easy to navigate. | .983 | | |
| I rarely face difficulties in understanding the functionality of the tools. | .962 | | |

**Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.**

**Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.[a]**

**a. Rotation converged in 4 iterations**

**Interpretation:**

1. **Component 1: Accessibility and Usability**
   - Variables such as:
     - "Digital learning tools are easily available to students regardless of their location" (0.902),
     - "Economic background does not limit students' access" (0.938),
     - "I can access digital platforms on multiple devices" (0.936),
     - "The digital tools I use for learning are simple and easy to navigate" (0.983),
     - "I rarely face difficulties in understanding the functionality of the tools" (0.962).
   - This component reflects how accessible and user-friendly digital tools are, indicating that ease of use and availability are fundamental drivers of their effectiveness.
2. **Component 2: Engagement and Interaction**
   - Variables such as:
     - "Digital tools keep me engaged throughout the learning process" (0.929),
     - "Features like live quizzes or polls enhance my understanding of the content" (0.975),
     - "The tools provide tailored feedback to improve my understanding" (0.969).
   - This component focuses on engagement, interactivity, and personalization, highlighting how digital tools enhance learning through active participation and adaptive content.
3. **Component 3: Collaboration and Support**
   - Variables such as:
     - "Features like shared workspaces enhance team productivity" (0.949),
     - "Customer support is efficient in addressing my queries" (0.938).
   - This component emphasizes collaborative features and the importance of technical support in creating a seamless learning experience.

**Implications**

The findings of this study, *"Exploring the Role of Digital Learning Tools in Shaping Educational Outcomes: A Factor Analysis,"* offer several significant implications for

educators, policymakers, and developers. The identification of three primary dimensions—**Accessibility and Usability**, **Engagement and Interaction**, and **Collaboration and Support**—highlights critical areas for optimizing the design and implementation of digital learning tools.

1. **For Educators and Institutions:**
   - The strong influence of accessibility and usability underscores the importance of adopting tools that are simple to navigate, widely available, and adaptable to diverse devices. Educators can leverage these tools to create inclusive learning environments, ensuring that economic or geographical barriers do not impede access to quality education.
   - Engagement features, such as personalized feedback and interactive content, should be prioritized to maintain learner attention and improve knowledge retention. Institutions can integrate gamified elements and multimedia to enhance student involvement.
2. **For Policymakers:**
   - Policymakers can use these insights to advocate for investments in digital infrastructure, making learning tools more accessible to underprivileged groups. Bridging the digital divide remains a crucial step in ensuring equitable access to education.
3. **For Developers:**
   - Developers should focus on enhancing collaborative features and ensuring robust technical support. Tools with shared workspaces and responsive help systems foster teamwork and a seamless learning experience.

## CONCLUSION

This study, titled *"Exploring the Role of Digital Learning Tools in Shaping Educational Outcomes: A Factor Analysis,"* highlights the transformative potential of digital learning tools in modern education. The factor analysis identified three primary dimensions—**Accessibility and Usability**, **Engagement and Interaction**, and **Collaboration and Support**—as key contributors to shaping educational outcomes. These dimensions collectively explained 95.129% of the total variance, underscoring their critical importance in the effective deployment of digital learning tools.

The findings demonstrate that accessible and user-friendly tools remove barriers related to location and economic constraints, while engaging and interactive features, such as live quizzes and personalized feedback, significantly enhance learner participation and retention. Additionally, collaborative functionalities, coupled with robust technical support, facilitate teamwork and ensure a seamless learning experience. These insights emphasize the need for targeted strategies to optimize digital learning environments, making them more inclusive and effective for diverse learner demographics.

### Future Significance

The study provides a foundation for stakeholders—educators, policymakers, and developers—to refine the design and implementation of digital learning tools. Future research should focus on the following areas:

1. **Broader Demographics**: Expanding the scope to include diverse age groups, particularly older learners, to address the underrepresentation highlighted in this study.
2. **Technological Advancements**: Investigating the role of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and virtual reality in enhancing the identified dimensions.
3. **Global Perspectives**: Conducting cross-cultural studies to explore how regional and socio-economic factors influence the adoption and impact of digital tools.
4. **Longitudinal Studies**: Examining the long-term effects of digital learning tools on educational outcomes to understand their sustained impact.

This research underscores the transformative role of digital learning tools and provides actionable insights to shape the future of education in an increasingly digital world.

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