

SIMPLE LEARNING WEBSITES TO COMBAT SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES AMONG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ATISA DIPAMKARA

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Many junior high school students in Tangerang drop out due to lack of interest and financial difficulties. Hakim and Abdul (2020) identify low motivation, inability to follow lessons, and economic issues as key factors contributing to this alarming trend. According to data from the Ministry of Education and Culture's Dapodik, out of 67,772 junior high school students in Tangerang, there are 1,901 students who have dropped out, which means the dropout rate is approximately 2.8% (Dapodik, 2024). This statistic not only underscores the magnitude of the issue but also emphasizes the urgent need for effective interventions. Moreover, Wolio et al. (2021) note that hidden costs, such as school supplies, burden families despite free education. As these financial strains persist, they further exacerbate students' disinterest in school.

To address these challenges, it is crucial to explore innovative solutions that can rekindle students' interest in their education. One promising approach is the implementation of simple learning websites. These platforms can offer engaging content tailored to the needs of junior high school students, providing accessible resources even in financially constrained environments. By integrating interactive features and multimedia

elements, these websites can stimulate students' curiosity and enhance their learning experience.

Furthermore, the accessibility of these learning websites can play a significant role in alleviating the financial burdens on families. Since many students struggle with the hidden costs associated with traditional education, such as purchasing textbooks and school materials, online resources can serve as a cost-effective alternative. By reducing the need for physical materials, these platforms can help families focus their limited resources on essential expenses, ultimately supporting students' educational journeys.

In conclusion, the dropout issue among junior high school students in Tangerang is a multifaceted problem rooted in financial difficulties and lack of interest. However, the introduction of simple learning websites presents a viable solution that can engage students while mitigating economic constraints. By leveraging technology to provide accessible and engaging educational content, we can work towards reducing dropout rates and fostering a more supportive learning environment for students in Tangerang.

1.2 Research Question

1. What is the impact of simple educational websites on student engagement and dropout rates in Tangerang's junior high schools for grade 7?
2. How do simple learning websites help reduce dropout rates and improve educational outcomes in junior high schools grade 7 in Tangerang?

1.3 Scope & Limitation

The research focused on 30 junior high school students in Tangerang, examining the impact of simple learning websites on dropout rates by comparing website-based and conventional learning methods. Data collection involved qualitative methods and questionnaires, with a specific emphasis on simple learning websites. However, the study was limited by the small sample size from a single school, a short research period, and potential technological issues like internet

access. Additionally, external factors such as financial difficulties and family support were not fully explored.

1.4 Goal & Function

This study aims to identify factors contributing to high dropout rates among junior high school students in Tangerang, focusing on student engagement and financial challenges. It evaluates the effectiveness of simple learning websites in enhancing motivation and access to quality education while exploring how user-friendly educational websites can reduce dropout rates and promote inclusive education for at-risk students. Additionally, it seeks to provide recommendations for educators and policymakers on scalable technology-based solutions to address dropout rates and influence policy.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Previous Research

Research has identified several key factors contributing to high dropout rates among junior high school students in Tangerang. For instance, Hakim and Abdul (2020) found that many students in rural areas lose interest in education due to outdated teaching methods and a lack of stimulating learning materials, which often leads to disengagement, poor academic performance, and eventual school dropout. Financial challenges further exacerbate the issue, particularly for underprivileged families who struggle with unstable incomes and the rising cost of education, as highlighted by Aرسال and Riyadhi (2024) in their study on financial barriers to education in Indonesia. Many students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are forced to leave school early because they cannot afford the expenses.

To address these challenges, recent research emphasizes the potential of technology-based learning solutions to enhance student engagement and reduce dropout rates. For example, Munawir et al. (2024) demonstrated that interactive media can create a more engaging and enjoyable learning environment, motivating students to stay in school and improve their academic performance. Similarly, Kusumawati et al. (2021) showed that

learning platforms incorporating gamification and multimedia elements, such as simple educational websites, can make education more appealing to young learners. These findings suggest that integrating technology into the classroom could offer a cost-effective, scalable solution for reducing dropout rates.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This study on the use of simple learning websites to address dropout rates among junior high school students is grounded in two complementary theoretical frameworks: Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and an integrated model of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) with the Task-Technology Fit (TTF) model. Self-Determination Theory, developed by Ryan and Deci (2020), emphasizes the importance of fulfilling three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This theory posits that individuals are more likely to be intrinsically motivated and engaged in activities when these needs are met.

Autonomy, as defined by Ryan (2017), is the need to self-regulate one's experiences and actions, emphasizing volition, willingness, and congruence in behavior. In the context of online learning, autonomy can be supported by providing students with meaningful choices within the learning environment. Ryan and Deci (2020) state, "To the degree that students experience their learning environment as autonomy supportive, they are more likely to internalize their motivation to learn and to be more autonomously engaged." Competence refers to the need to feel effective in one's interactions with the environment and to experience opportunities for using and expressing one's capacities. In digital learning environments, competence can be fostered through optimal challenges, clear structure, and effective feedback.

Relatedness is the need to feel connected to others, to care for and be cared for by others, and to have a sense of belonging. Even in online environments, fostering a sense of connection is crucial. Ryan and Deci (2020) emphasize, "Students' sense of relatedness to teachers, parents, and peers is associated with more positive school-related affect, increased engagement, and greater internalization of motivation for school-related activities." The

authors discuss the spectrum of motivation, from a motivation through various forms of extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation, arguing that more autonomous forms of motivation are associated with better learning outcomes, persistence, and well-being.

In the context of simple learning websites for junior high schools, SDT provides valuable insights for design and implementation. The websites should offer meaningful choices in learning paths, content exploration, and task completion methods to support autonomy. To enhance competence, clear learning objectives, appropriately challenging tasks, and immediate, constructive feedback should be incorporated into the website design. Promoting relatedness can be achieved by integrating features that facilitate peer interaction, teacher-student communication, and a sense of community. The learning environment should be designed to foster the internalization of extrinsic motivations and promote intrinsic motivation where possible. Ryan and Deci (2020) emphasize the importance of considering all three needs simultaneously: "Satisfaction of each of these three needs plays a necessary part in optimal development, performance, and well-being." This holistic approach is crucial when designing educational technologies.

Building on the Technology Acceptance Model, Wu and Chen (2017) integrated it with the Task-Technology Fit model to examine continuance intention to use Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). This integration addresses TAM's limitation in considering how well the technology matches the tasks users need to perform. The implications of this integrated model for simple learning websites are numerous. The design of learning websites should closely align with the specific educational tasks and objectives of junior high school students. Creating intuitive, user-friendly interfaces is crucial, especially considering varying levels of technological literacy among students. Clearly communicating and demonstrating the benefits of the learning website to students is essential for adoption and continued use.

The integration of Self-Determination Theory with the combined Technology Acceptance Model and Task-Technology Fit model provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and predicting the adoption, continued use, and effectiveness of simple learning websites in junior high schools. This integrated approach considers both the psychological needs of students and the technological aspects of the learning platforms.

Autonomy (SDT) aligns with the concept of user control in TAM-TTF, emphasizing the importance of providing students with meaningful choices within a well-structured learning environment. Competence (SDT) relates to perceived ease of use and task-technology fit (TAM-TTF), highlighting the need for intuitive interfaces and appropriate learning challenges. Relatedness (SDT) can be supported through features that enhance social influence and collaborative learning, factors recognized in the extended TAM-TTF model.

The internalization of motivation (SDT) can be facilitated by enhancing perceived usefulness and user satisfaction (TAM-TTF), demonstrating how the learning website contributes to students' educational goals. Task-technology fit (TTF) complements the SDT framework by ensuring that the technology not only meets psychological needs but also aligns with specific learning tasks and objectives. Ongoing assessment and improvement based on student feedback and experiences are necessary to maintain satisfaction as a key factor in continued use. The learning website must not only be easy to use but also fit well with the students' learning tasks and be perceived as useful for their educational goals. Considering peer and teacher influences on students' perceptions of the learning websites could be crucial for successful adoption. Providing adequate training and support to build students' confidence in using the learning websites could significantly enhance their perceived ease of use and intention to continue using the platforms.

By considering both the motivational aspects (SDT) and the technological adoption factors (TAM-TTF), this integrated framework provides a robust foundation for designing, implementing, and evaluating simple learning websites aimed at improving student engagement and reducing dropout rates in junior high schools. This comprehensive approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how these websites can be designed to meet students' psychological needs while ensuring ease of use, perceived usefulness, and alignment with educational tasks. It offers a theoretical basis for addressing the research questions regarding the impact of simple educational websites on student engagement and dropout rates, as well as how these websites can improve educational outcomes in junior high schools.

The integration of these theories recognizes that successful implementation of educational technology depends not only on the technical aspects of the system but also on how well it addresses the fundamental psychological needs of the students. By focusing on autonomy, competence, and relatedness while simultaneously ensuring technology acceptance and task fit, educators and designers can create learning environments that are more likely to engage students, reduce dropout rates, and improve overall educational outcomes. This holistic approach acknowledges the complexity of student motivation and technology adoption, providing a comprehensive framework for developing effective educational interventions in junior high schools.

3. Method Of Research

The research titled "Exploring How Simple Learning Websites Can Help Reduce Dropout Rates Among Junior High School Students in Tangerang" adopts a qualitative approach to investigate how online learning platforms can contribute to reducing student dropouts. Guided by the framework outlined by Walidin, Saifullah, & Tabrani (2015), this study seeks to understand the effectiveness of these digital tools through the perspectives of both students and teachers. The primary objective is to identify whether simple learning websites foster student engagement and retention, potentially addressing the dropout issue among junior high school students in Tangerang.

3.1 Research Methodology

The study employs a qualitative research design, which is most suitable for exploring complex social phenomena like education. Through this approach, the researcher gains an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences, motivations, and challenges related to the use of simple learning websites. The qualitative method allows for the exploration of themes and patterns that may not emerge through quantitative research. This aligns with the nature of the research question, which seeks to explore rather than measure the impact of these websites.

3.2 Type of Data

The research gathers two primary types of data: qualitative data from interviews and observations, and quantitative data from questionnaires. Qualitative data is vital for exploring the nuanced experiences of students and teachers, while quantitative data, derived from Google Forms questionnaires, adds another dimension by offering measurable feedback on the effectiveness of the websites. The combination of these two types of data ensures a comprehensive understanding of the subject, making the findings both reliable and robust.

3.3 Study Respondents

The study respondents are divided into two main groups: at-risk junior high school students and teachers at a selected school in Tangerang. The students are identified as at risk of dropping out based on academic performance, absenteeism, or socio-economic challenges. They are selected to provide firsthand insights into the obstacles they face in their education and how the use of learning websites influences their motivation and engagement. Teachers, on the other hand, are chosen based on their experience and involvement in implementing digital learning tools in the classroom. Their role in the study is to provide insights into how these platforms are integrated into teaching, as well as their effectiveness in addressing the dropout issue.

3.4 Data Collection Process

Data collection spans from October to November 2024 and involves three methods: interviews, observations, and questionnaires distributed via Google Forms. Semi-structured interviews are conducted with both students and teachers. These interviews allow for a

flexible yet focused exploration of key themes, such as student engagement, challenges with using the websites, and perceived impact on retention. Observations take place in the classroom, focusing on student interactions with the learning websites, their levels of participation, and how these tools are incorporated into lessons. Finally, questionnaires are administered to collect quantifiable feedback on the usability, accessibility, and overall effectiveness of the websites in supporting student learning.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data analysis process involves coding and thematic analysis of the qualitative data. Thematic analysis is employed to identify recurring themes and patterns within the data, such as common challenges faced by students, factors influencing their engagement, and the perceived impact of the websites on their educational experience. Each interview and observation transcript is meticulously coded, and themes are then compared across the student and teacher groups to identify similarities and differences. Quantitative data from the questionnaires is analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize key trends and insights.

The mixed-method approach—combining qualitative and quantitative data—enables the researcher to triangulate findings, ensuring the reliability and validity of the study. By comparing data from multiple sources, the study aims to produce a well-rounded understanding of how simple learning websites can support student retention and reduce dropout rates in Tangerang.

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