

Offline Mobile Learning: A Proposal to Promote Literacy in Pakistani Rural Areas

ABSTRACT

Mobile learning is generally associated with expensive smart phones and tablet devices, which may be true for a developed world. However, **developing world** needs a different solution, particularly to eradicate illiteracy from the rural and underprivileged populations. This research **seeks to explore mobile learning options for low cost mobile phones without an active mobile Internet connection for rural areas of Pakistan**.



RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the affordable mobile learning options for the poor and underserved populations of rural areas in Pakistan?



RESEARCH METHOD

- Exploratory case study research method
- Qualitative research techniques
- Interviews with stakeholders
- Data analysis using Nvivo



EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Feasibility of the basic technological and literacy skills options for the poor people in the rural areas of Pakistan
- Possible generalization of results for other developing countries similar in infrastructure and literacy needs
- The results of the proposed research will be used to secure funding for future projects
- Possibility of a pilot implementation of mobile learning to test the low-cost and offline mobile learning in rural areas
- Possible support from government

BACKGROUND

Mobile technology has shifted the way people communicate and collaborate in almost every walk of life. It could not be resisted in the past, neither could it can be avoided nor banned in the future. People use mobile phones irrespective of their social status. Therefore, there is a dire need to find out the ways to harness the power of mobile technology for poverty alleviation and provision of education to the poor, underprivileged and underserved in developing world.

The research across the world and in developing countries has shown that people can get formal and informal education through the use of this technology and this medium can also be very useful to all classes of society.

However, in the developing countries, the underserved populations could not afford to buy sophisticated smart phones or tablet devices with expensive mobile internet data packages.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- To investigate mobile learning options on low-cost mobile devices for the underserved populations living in the rural areas of Pakistan.
- To develop an offline mobile learning framework for developing countries.

CONCLUSION

Mobile learning is for everyone; it must not be associated to the notion of expensive smart mobile devices and it is not only for those who can afford to buy those devices. This is the rationale for the proposed study which aims to investigate the mobile learning options for the poor people in developing world who may not afford expensive mobile devices with mobile internet data plans. The proposed project has the potential to be extended to a pilot implementation of mobile learning in rural areas of Pakistan.