
AWARENESS AND ACCESS TO ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AMONG STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: EVIDENCE FROM A SPECIAL SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT: This study examines the awareness and access to assistive technology among students with disabilities in a special school setting. Assistive technology plays a crucial role in enhancing the functional abilities and educational outcomes of students with disabilities. The study aims to assess the level of awareness among students, parents, and teachers regarding assistive technology, as well as the extent of access to these technologies within the special school. Data were collected through surveys and interviews with students, parents, and teachers. The findings reveal variations in awareness levels among different stakeholder groups, with students having the highest level of awareness. However, despite the awareness, access to assistive technology remains limited, mainly due to financial constraints and inadequate availability of resources. The study highlights the need for increased awareness and improved access to assistive technology for students with disabilities, and provides insights for developing inclusive education practices.

KEYWORDS: Assistive technology, Students with disabilities, Special school, Awareness, Access, Educational outcomes, Inclusive education.

INTRODUCTION

Assistive technology has proven to be instrumental in supporting students with disabilities by enhancing their functional abilities and facilitating their participation in educational settings. However, the awareness and access to assistive technology among students with disabilities in special schools are crucial factors that determine the effectiveness of its implementation. This study focuses on examining the level of awareness and access to assistive technology among students with disabilities in a special school setting. By understanding these aspects, the study aims to shed light on the current situation and provide insights for developing inclusive education practices that optimize the use of assistive technology.

The special school setting provides a unique context for this study, as it caters specifically to students with disabilities who require specialized support and accommodations. By focusing on a special school, this research aims to capture a comprehensive understanding of the awareness and access to assistive technology within an environment dedicated to meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

METHOD

This study employs a mixed-methods research approach to examine the awareness and access to assistive technology among students with disabilities in a special school. The following methods were used:

Selection of Special School: A special school with a diverse student population and a range of disabilities was selected for the study. The selection aimed to capture a representative sample and provide insights into the awareness and access to assistive technology within the special school context.

Data Collection: Data were collected through surveys and interviews with students, parents, and teachers. The survey questionnaire was designed to assess the level of awareness of assistive technology among students, parents, and teachers. The interviews aimed to gain in-depth insights into the experiences, perspectives, and challenges related to the access and utilization of assistive technology. The data collection process ensured the inclusion of multiple perspectives and allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the awareness and access landscape within the special school.

Data Analysis: The collected data were analyzed using appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods. The survey responses were subjected to descriptive statistical analysis to assess the level of awareness among different stakeholder groups. The interview data were transcribed, coded, and thematically analyzed to identify patterns, themes, and variations in the experiences and perspectives related to access to assistive technology.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical guidelines were followed throughout the research process to ensure informed consent, confidentiality, and respect for the rights of the participants. The necessary approvals and permissions were obtained from relevant authorities.

By employing these research methods, this study aims to provide evidence-based insights into the awareness and access to assistive technology among students with disabilities in a special school setting. The findings of this research have the potential to inform educational policies, practices, and interventions aimed at improving the utilization and availability of assistive technology, thereby fostering inclusive education for students with disabilities.

RESULTS

The results of the study reveal important findings regarding the awareness and access to assistive technology among students with disabilities in a special school setting. The level of awareness among students, parents, and teachers varies, with students demonstrating the highest level of awareness regarding assistive technology. This indicates a positive trend in terms of students' understanding and recognition of the potential benefits of these technologies. However, despite the awareness, access to assistive technology remains limited within the special school.

DISCUSSION

The discussion centers around the implications and significance of the study findings. The limited access to assistive technology can be attributed to various factors, including financial constraints and inadequate availability of resources. The high cost of assistive technology devices and limited financial resources can pose significant barriers to their adoption and implementation within the special school. Additionally, the lack of comprehensive policies and guidelines at the institutional level may contribute to the limited access to these technologies.

Furthermore, the discussion highlights the importance of improving access to assistive technology to promote inclusive education practices. Assistive technology has the potential to enhance the educational experiences and outcomes of students with disabilities by providing them with the necessary tools and supports. By addressing the financial barriers and ensuring adequate availability of resources, special schools can create an environment where students with disabilities have equal opportunities to benefit from assistive technology.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides evidence of the varying levels of awareness and limited access to assistive technology among students with disabilities in a special school setting. The findings underscore the importance of increasing awareness and improving access to these technologies to promote inclusive education practices. To address the limitations, it is essential to develop comprehensive policies and guidelines that prioritize the provision of assistive technology in special schools. Additionally, efforts should be made to secure adequate funding and resources to ensure the availability and affordability of assistive technology devices. By doing so, special schools can enhance the educational experiences and outcomes of students with disabilities, fostering a more inclusive learning environment.

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