

THE INFLUENCE OF SMARTPHONES ON LEARNING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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1 Introduction

Nowadays, Smartphones turn out to be a major part of our life due to their advanced features. It is difficult to avoid such new technologies much as we know the effect they have on our society as well as the environment. Despite the many fields impacted upon by the invention of Smartphones, this study focuses on the education field and it is intended to help me understand all the positive and negative aspects of Smartphones on learning at university. The study will primarily focus on students at higher institutions of learning namely university.

1.1 Background

The first telephone was invented by Alexander Graham Bell and it was not until 1878 when he made the first phone call. Since then, telephones have not only come a long way, but may one day be completely obsolete. This is due to the rapid advancement in technology that has seen the telephone evolve from a mere device meant to receive calls and send messages to Smartphones. The first smartphone was developed by IBM and BellSouth in 1993. Although basic compared to today's standards Simon had a touch screen that was capable of accessing email and sending faxes. Smartphones are major extensions on normal cellphones. Cellphones can make phone calls and even some have video recording capabilities but they do not have GPS capabilities along with a whole array of other applications. Smartphones capability does not end at the Internet access, or at document editing. Smartphones also have the ability to interpret and decipher information like that from a quick response code that may be on a products packaging. Smartphone users can download QR code scanners as well as other applications so they have the ability to read the information embedded in the QR code that may take them to a website, a coupon, or even a social media site.

1.2 Problem Statement

The invention of Smartphones meant that phones could not only be used to make calls and receive but they could also perform a lot more functions including connection to the internet. This is primarily the sole reason for the popularity of Smartphones coupled with the development of mobile applications such as WhatsApp, Facebook, twitter etc. These common mobile applications which come pre-installed on most Smartphones have risen concern among different scholars who question the benefits of Smartphones in the field of education. This is due to the fact that most students especially at university use their phones for mostly social networking instead of research. Therefore this research is intended to bring to a compromise the two extremes i.e. the negatives and the positives of smartphones such that adequate time can be allocated to both research work and leisure. This will be through seeking the views of different students on how best to reduce the time spent on social media.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 Main Objectives

To determine the impact of smartphones on learning of university students.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

To collect all the data necessary to aid my research. To analyze the collected data. To come up with a conclusion from the analyzed data.

1.4 Scope

This research basically focuses on the impact of smartphones in the education field and the data collected is mainly from students in the various universities in Uganda.

2 Literature Review

Different research scholars have interesting opinions as regards the impact brought about by Smartphones in the education sector as listed below. In their research titled Smartphone Addiction in University Students and Its Implication for Learning, Lee found that the higher the addiction level is, the lower the level of self-regulated learning the students have. A Further interview on a smartphone addicted group was conducted; it was found out that the smartphone addicted learners are constantly interrupted by the other applications on the phones when they are studying and do not have enough control over their smartphone.

Grosseck and Rosen in their study found that the majority of students spend significant time on Facebook more for social uses (to stay in touch with friends

and family, to share / tag photos, to engage in social activism, volunteering etc.) and less for academic purposes, even if they take part in discussions about their assignments, lectures, study notes or share information about research resources etc. In their research concerning Online Social networking(OSN) Paul revealed a statistically significant negative relationship between time spent by students on OSN and their academic performance. The time spent on OSN was found to be heavily influenced by the attention span of the students. Specifically, we determined that the higher the attention span, the lower is the time spent on OSN. Further, attention span was found to be highly correlated with characteristics that predict or influence student behavior, such as their perceptions about society's view of social networking, their likes and dislikes of OSN, ease of use of OSN, etc.

3 Methodology

The proposed methodology consists of two phases, data collection and data analysis. Data will be collected using ODK Collect, which will later on be uploaded to the ODK aggregate server to carry out all the required analysis. Students at different universities will be approached and asked about their views on the topic above and these will be captured using ODK collect. Among the data to be captured for each student will be; Name of student, university attended, photo of interviewee, GPS coordinates etc. When data from a reasonable number of students is collected, it will be analyzed and a conclusion will be drawn as well as recommendations on how to mitigate the negatives of smartphones in the education field.

References

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