The Impact Of Mobile Devices On Academic Pursuits: A Qualitative Inquiry

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Abstract

Many educational institutions, considered to embrace smartphones as a part of learning aids in their classes as the most students not just own them however additionally they are also connected to them. Smartphones in classroom enhances the learning or perhaps is interference. The aim of this study was to explore the strategies to prevent the students from being distracted by smartphones. Qualitative method is adopted as a mode of inquiry for this study, since it is considered most suitable for conducting in-depth interviews. 50 students from Government College Women University Faisalabad of Punjab Province were selected. In recent years, educators have step-by-step transitioned several classes to the web learning atmosphere, that effectively reducing teachers' management. In an attempt to assist the students and educators to better understand smartphone as a big distraction this study discussed the various methods to prevent students from being distracted by smartphones.

Keywords: Smartphones, learning, distraction, students, strategies, prevention.

Introduction

The study aims to find out the strategies to prevent students from being distracted through smartphones which refers to a hand-held digital tool that offers a connection to the Internet, is easy

to use, have touch-screen, help surf the unlimited resources either learning or enjoyment, and offer downloadable apps (Godwin-Jones, 2011). Smartphones have become a need as well as a requirement for the studies especially in situation prevailed. Smartphones proliferate in our society, influencing the manner humans communicate on a daily with one another, influencing the manner human beings communicate on a daily (Rosenfeld & O'Connor-Petruso, 2010).

The versatility of smartphone permits for seamless integration of work, play, and social interaction and enriches existence in lots of approaches. However, consistent use of the smartphone may additionally intervene with work. An observation study on a small sample of people discovered that task switching happened each three minutes and voluntary interruptions had been as possibly as outside disruptions to reason swapping (González and Mark, 2004). The tremendous growth of smartphone users has resulted in an increase in social media users. In addition, according to a survey from the International Telecommunication Union, over 60% of the world's population has access to mobile phones (Sarfoah, 2017). Within the same research, it's interesting to note that developing countries have more smartphone users than advanced countries (Henry & Quansah, 2013), implying that emerging countries use smartphones the most. In early 2019, 96 percent of U.S. citizens have a mobile phone of some kind in their hands, with 81 people owning a Smartphone (Mobile fact Sheet, 2019). There are 5 billion mobile devices in use worldwide, with half billion of them have smartphones (Silver, 2019). With such widespread device ownership, it's natural to assume that kids are no exception. In latest years, smartphone has turn out to be one of the fastest-developing communication technologies ever, with different monthly, weekly and daily subscriptions achieving went from nearly none to a 1/2 of a billion from 1990s (Lim, 2003). Rosen (2017) reported that students unlock their phones 50-60 times per day and utilize them for 3.5-4.5 hours per day.

According to research, increased usage of mobile phones in the classroom generates significant distraction, despite the fact that all students have their own phones and bring them to class on a daily basis. Distraction may be anything that can prevent someone from giving their proper attention to something. Distraction is also defined as either internal or external stimuli that have the potential to Interrupt someone (Gazzaley & Rosen, 2016). Despite the fact that silent phone text messaging allows for long conversational interactions during lectures that are less obviously disruptive (Young, 2006), the majority of those polled feel that texting causes problems (Tindell & Bohlender, 2010). Furthermore, despite all or any of this negative, some students have found ways to utilize their phones during exams by accessing material online, taking and disturbing images of exams, and text-messaging exam answers (Katz, 2005). On the other hand, it's crucial to recognize that not all smart phone use in educational settings is bad. Researches have emphasized the potential of technology to facilitate anytime, anywhere learning (Mifsud, 2003), as well as new types of remote education collaboration (Milrad, 2003).

Campbell (2006) claims that distractions are a grave issue with ring tones on silent during physical lectures in an extensive research of smart phone perceptions in the school classroom between teachers and students. The study's findings suggest that students support a "formal" approach to handle the problem, and that younger faculty members, in particular, tolerate mobile phones in the classroom. This indicates that newer faculty members and students are more moderate in their view points. A more recent study by Levine, Waite, and Bowman (2012) found that mobile phones are a distraction and consequently have a negative impact on learning. Due to "impulsivity" and "distractibility," these two studies advocate for some form of intervention. Positive intervention, in which a university member sees the value of incorporating these phones into the curricula, is often good, and seeing a tangible influence on students can help to overcome the issue of distractions raised in the study stated above. Six years after Campbell's study, Levine et al (2012).'s study emphasizes the importance of resolving the overarching problem of classroom distraction. It signifies that greater intervention is needed to save the situation. According to Baker et al. (2012), students' attitudes to mobile phones and classroom views differ from teacher reactions. Students appear to tolerate the usage of portable devices in class, with male students being more forgiving than female students. As a result, an intervention could be difficult because gender disparities must be considered. Regardless, Williams and Pence (2011) discovered that, despite the lack of wired or wireless network access, students could acquire unrestricted access to virtual libraries within the faculty classroom via their smart phones, which supports the major topic of study question three. As a result, additional Internet programs, also known as apps, are being built to meet the classroom environment.

Tesch and Coelho (2012) only looked at graduate and undergraduate students in their study. They discovered that if the professor was difficult to comprehend, students would use their phones to distract themselves during a classroom discussion. In this example, people utilize their smartphones to pass the time while nervously anticipating the next category to complete. Researchers discovered that graduate students were more "sensitive" to distractions than undergraduate students in the same study. This might be understood to suggest that graduate students wish to pay greater attention in class than undergraduate students.

Studies have tested smartphones may be utilized in any settings, inclusive of restaurants, grocery stores, buses, trains, and film theaters for e-mail, text, discover information, take picture, talk, use map etc (Campbell, 2004). Many educational institutes of better learning are seeking out coping mechanisms to maintain tempo with the voracious needs of those younger millennial in addition to by minimizing its various effects. No doubt smartphones help a lot in advancing the education but at the same time it also affects the learners by distracting them. Students are finding ways to text, roaming the web, and spending longer on social media, all while the teacher is solely focused on teaching. They hide their devices in their lap, bags in a sweatshirt pocket, or even in an open pocket of their backpack. Researchers have found that simultaneous use of electronic devices has a significant detrimental impact on learning. Many students ignore warnings about the negative

consequences because they consider themselves such good multitasking. They remain busy on their phones when teachers delivering their lectures so, they cannot pay attention towards their lecture and miss out the important points. There is a strong need to reduce the distractions within the study environment, which enable the learner to pay attention and concentrate such a lot more on their learning which successively made their studying much permanent, less stressful and difficult. This research is inspired through the attempt to adjust smartphone obsession through college students in a lecture room environment. This study can lead us to the strategies to prevent students from being distracted by smartphones.

Methodology

Research design
Exploratory research design was used to identify different strategies to stop students from being distracted by smartphones. Exploratory research helps in investigating a research problem that's not clearly defined or understood. It offers the investigators with a profounder considerate of a research problem. A key feature of the exploratory research design is that it is unstructured and thus is very flexible in nature.

Sample of the study
The sample of fifty students from government college women university Faisalabad, age ranging from 19 to 25 years were selected by employing convenience sampling technique. All the participants were users of smartphones.

Instrument of the study
Interviews were conducted in this qualitative research to find out the strategies that can prevent students from being distracted by smartphones. The interviews were conducetd and transcribed verbatim. These transcripts were then subjected to thematic analysis in line with the recommendations made by Guest et al. (2012), Pope and Mays (2009), and Ritchie and Spencer (1994).

Results
When asking participants about their experiences of using smartphones, following themes emerged from the narrative.

1. **Uses of smartphone**
   In the interviews, all the respondents who answered this question reported that they use smartphones for work and studies. A few respondents said that they use smartphones for communication or enjoyment. A least use of smartphones was taking pictures.
2. **Most used applications**

The application or site used the most was WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram. Fewer respondents use google, snapchat, editing software, zoom, google classroom, Quora and Tiktok.

3. **Permission of using smartphones in classroom**

   Most of the respondents said that they are not permitted to use phones during class. A few respondents said that they are permitted to use smartphones sometimes depending on situation and work.

4. **Usefulness of smartphones in studies**

   Smartphones are reported to be helpful for studies by most of the respondents. Only one respondent said that it is not helpful because it diverts the attention from studies to other apps. Couple of respondents said that it depends on users.

5. **Benefits of smartphones in classroom**

   Most of the respondents said that smartphone is used for opening slides, documents, lectures and notes when needed in classroom. In addition, they do search online articles and the topics that they are unable to understand.

6. **Smartphone as distractor**

   Smartphones are reported to be more distracting than being helpful for studies as reported by most of the respondents. A few said that it depends on users, while one respondent said that it is not distracting at all for those who are determined for their work.

7. **Effects of smartphones on health**

   Most of the respondents said that smartphone affect their health in a very bad way, especially their eyesight get affected the most. In addition, it has its affects on hearing and mental health.

8. **Effects of smartphones on socialization / family ties**

   Smartphones are reported to keep people away from their family and friends as stated by most of the respondents. On the other hand, a few said that it smartphones are bringing people closer, and help us connect with those who are far away from us.

9. **Strategies for reduced distraction of smartphones and better utilization for studies**

   Following strategies emerged from the narratives.

   o **Endorsement of smartphones for online studies**

   Most of the respondents said that smartphones should not be promoted for face to face classes; their use should be endorsed for online studies only.

   o **Teacher's guidance for smartphone usage**

   Most of the respondents said that teachers can play their role in this regard by guiding students about appropriate utilization of smartphone.

   o **Use of hard copies and books to prevention smartphone distraction**

   Most of the respondents said that students can be saved from being distracted if the teachers encourage students to learn from hard copies and books

   o **Increased participation of students in classroom**

Increased discussion and participation of students in classroom is reported to decrease distraction of smartphones

o **Setting goals for students**
Some respondents said that if the students are determined and their goals are well set then there is no way for them to get distracted by smartphones.

o **Restricted internet access during lectures**
Restricted internet access during lectures was reported to be a strategy for reduced smartphone distraction.

o **No permission of smartphones during lecture**
Respondents suggested that if the phones are on silent mode and they are not allowed to use smartphones during lecture then they can avoid being distracted by smartphones.

o **Promoting schedules for activities among students**
Many respondents said that if the students schedule their work and activities in a disciplined way and set a proper time for work and for their phones so it can be helpful to manage their work without distraction.

o **Promoting time management skills among students**
Promoting time management skills among students was reported to be a strategy for reduced smartphone distraction and maximized utilization of this technology for studies and learning.

Discussion

The main aim of this research was to find out the strategies to prevent students from being distracted by smartphone. The researcher in this study also enlightens the situation about use and abuse of smart phones and identify the prevalence of mobile phone use in class rooms the distraction they cause. Female students from the Government College Women University Faisalabad were selected for this study. It is qualitative research so the data was collected through in-person interview form respondents to find out these strategies. In an attempt to assist students and educators better understand smartphone as a distraction this study discusses the various methods to prevent students from being distracted by smartphones which can applicable also. Based on student's responses to the present research, it appears most of the respondents said that teachers can play their role in this regard by guiding them. At the same time students can be saved from being distracted if the teachers encourage students to learn from hard copies and books and increase discussion and participation of students in classroom. Then some respondents said that if the students are determined and their goals are well set then there is no way for them to get distracted by smartphones. Fewer respondents said that if the phones are on silent mode and we are not allowed to use smartphones during class or if we are not given free Wi-Fi then we can avoid being distracted by smartphones. Few respondents said that if the students schedule their work and activities in a disciplined way and set a proper time for work and for their phones so it can be helpful to manage their work without distraction. The results of this study are in line with

other studies that indicated time management, teacher guidance, restricted permissions of smartphone in classroom as strategies to reduce distraction of smartphones in learning (Campbell, 2006; Levine, et al., 2012; Tindell & Bohlender, 2010; Young, 2006).

Recommendations

Parents and teachers should be equipped to guide students about optimal use of smartphone for learning. Besides, time management skills and staying on task should also be instilled into the students to save them from being distracted from this useful device. In addition, a swift balance in students' active participation and engagement in class with a blend of permission to find resources on internet should be maintained by teachers. Further studies with a larger sample may explore trends in smartphone usage in classrooms and unified strategies to minimize its drawbacks.

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