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CASE STUDY ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SMARTPHONES

FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

IN ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

Custom Essay

by: (Insert Your Name Here)

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## Introduction

Digital devices, mainly smartphones, are commonly used by professors and students alike to make their tasks easier by using the different applications available for academic use. Especially in this era, where remote learning is at its peak, knowing how to properly utilize a smartphone to be used for academic purposes is a must. More often than not, a smartphone's use is not maximized because users are unwilling to explore or want to stick to the applications they already know. Smartphones are portable, easily accessible, and offer many useful features.

In a fast-paced and sometimes mentally taxing environment, a student needs all the help he can get to make sure that he learns more effectively than usual. Smartphones can serve its purpose in a setting where there are a lot of things to be done and with so little time. The Illinois State University has approximately 18,000 enrolled undergraduate students who are rarely seen without their smartphones. Students of the Illinois State University make use of their smartphones day in and day out for personal and educational use.

The author believes that smartphones are one of the most beneficial digital devices that a student can use to be more productive in his academics. When laptops are unavailable for use, students turn to using their smartphones to continue writing their reports, researching more information about a lecture, and creating PowerPoint Presentations. In this case study, the author postulates that smartphones are the digital device that proved to be most beneficial in education – remote learning or not.

## Background

In this digital era, smartphones are considered a staple digital device and almost all students in the United States are known to own one. Since the boom of smartphone use, educators have noticed that more and more students have started to bring their smartphones to school. Studies have shown that at least 95% of American students own a smartphone and that approximately the same number brings their smartphone to class. Some educators see this practice as a distraction and puts students at a great disadvantage but bringing a smartphone to school – especially for college students – is greatly beneficial.

As everyone knows, a smartphone functions like a portable computer that can fit in one's pocket. A smartphone can show the time, take pictures and videos, record audio, be used to jot down notes, open applications conducive for learning, send messages, receive calls, share documents with others, store virtual books or journals, and many more. It can be used for so many things and it can definitely be advantageous to one's academic pursuits if its uses are maximized.

In the United States alone, research has found that 95% of students bring their phones to class every day, 92% use their phones to text during classes, and 10% admit they have texted during an exam at least once (Tindell and Bohlander 2012). Most educators have found this to be a disruptive practice and that it affects the grades a student gets each semester. However, in the students' point of view, 3 out of 4 students actually feel that using gadgets – including smartphones – helps them learn more effectively.

Furthermore, studies conducted in South Africa undergraduate students have shared that they find smartphones to be very useful in fulfilling their academic workload because they are able to keep records of learning materials – complete with dates and timestamps and can be categorized per subject – sharing learning materials, and enabled them to communicate with their classmates consistently.

### **Demographics Profile**

As per the instructions of the professor, the case study's respondents will be limited within the university's population. The respondents will be made up of random currently enrolled undergraduate students of the Illinois State University in an attempt to broadly represent the whole population of currently enrolled undergraduate students of the Illinois State University as a whole. Having a random sample of the university student body will yield more conclusive results regarding the student population's use of a smartphone in relation to their learning habits and practices.

### **Discussion**

While smartphones could not entirely replace laptops due to the screen and keyboard key sizes (Darko-Adjei 2019, p. 22), smartphones offer an arsenal of tools that a student can use in his studies that a laptop would have difficulty in fulfilling. Even though both devices' portability is one of their strongest suits, a laptop simply cannot provide some of the most beneficial functions a smartphone can provide students.

The results from the survey conducted within the university has yielded the most common benefits that currently enrolled undergraduate students from the Illinois State University students from enjoy from using smartphones for their education that the author has observed: Smartphones help students stay connected with their family because they can be alerted if there is an emergency. In an educational perspective, smartphones keep students connected with their classmates and peers and prevent them from missing out on important messages and notifications. They can also use their smartphones to email their professors and receive calls and updates from them whenever necessary. It eliminates the need for them to go home and get in front of a laptop or computer before seeing crucial messages.

Smartphones have pre-installed applications that are very useful for keeping track of a student's daily schedule. For one, they can use their calendar application to note some important deadlines. They can use their clock application to set up alarms especially if they have trouble waking up in the morning or if they have to take a midday power nap in the dorm. Additional apps with organization tools can also be installed in the device. Additionally, a student can set his weekly class schedule as his phone's wallpaper at the start of the semester so that he would not have to be troubled by opening applications just to check what class he has next and what room it is going to take place.

Smartphones also eliminate the burden of bringing heavy textbooks every day to class because e-books can be downloaded online or distributed for use by their university. Obviously, it also reduced the amount of expenses a student has to reserve for textbook costs significantly. This is very ideal for those who need to own expensive books that

are needed for their specialization. If one is worried that they will not be able to jot down notes and highlight specific text using only a smartphone, there are applications that can help with that too.

In class, when a lecture is going too quickly and a student misses an important point, students can easily use their smartphone to quickly access information online (Darko-Adjei 2019, p. 22). This helps a lot for students especially when a professor likes a fast-paced environment and students find it difficult to keep up. It can also come in handy in instances where a student finds a lecture lacking, or failed to understand a part of it, as he can just type away in his smartphone and have the answer procured for him in a matter of seconds.

Students can also utilize collaborative applications that can be installed in their smartphones to help each other out during class. They can make an online document accessible by everyone in their class to ask questions, answer it, provide clarity, and collaborate with each other. They can also use such applications to decide on a matter by using a poll. Aside from these, they can use the notes they accumulated in the online document to help them review for their exams.

Finally, a smartphone can be used to make classroom activities more fun by using applications that are designed to give off a game show ambiance during recitation as these applications encourage students to participate in class (Oxford Learning 2019). There are countless learning apps waiting to be discovered and downloaded by educators so that they can help make the learning environment more conducive. This is a very effective strategy even for students at the college level because eliminating

stress from the learning environment pushes them to do better as they are enjoying in class.

### **Conclusion**

All that has been mentioned above are only just some of the most common things that students from the Illinois State University may encounter or experience in using smartphones in a classroom setting. The advantages a smartphone contributes for the learning journey of students of all ages simply cannot be denied. Smartphones can really help everybody achieve a great number of things even in the academic field. One just needs to explore its features to maximize its utility and use it to study more effectively and efficiently.

Smartphones can make learning more conducive because students are able to keep up with the lectures at their own pace, research anytime and anywhere, retrieve stored information and study materials, and accomplish their academic workload without needing to go to the library as often as the previous generations. Utilizing a smartphone's full capabilities enables a student to do well in school without sacrificing more of his time and effort in menial tasks such as walking to the library and manually finding a book to use a reference.

**Recommendations**

The author recommends future case study researchers who will conduct a similar study to give more focus on the disadvantages using a smartphone for academic purposes may bring as this paper is focused only on its advantages. Additionally, the scope of the case study may be widened to capture the opinion of students from other universities or countries.

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