ANALYZING STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON TECHNOLOGY USAGE IN ENGLISH CLASSROOMS: A CASE STUDY FROM VINH LONG CAMPUS – UEH UNIVERSITY

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Abstract:

This study explores the views of students of Vinh Long Campus – UEH University on the application of technology devices within English classes. Through surveying 126 19-year-old students, the research also looks into the students' opinions, habits, and attitudes towards the use of technology in classes. The results show a diverse view among the students of technology: a significant proportion point to technology's capacity to improve students' learning, but to even more students, the opportunities and dangers of technology are obvious. The research emphasizes the usefulness of devices in helping students take notes, searching for the required information, and carrying out other engaging tasks. On the other hand, it stresses the need for technology to be well integrated with other complementary pedagogical approaches. The research ends by providing a few suggestions for policy development that encourage the safe utilization of technology in education for improved outcomes.

Keywords: technology integration, English classroom, student perspectives

1. Introduction

Nowadays, one can notice the spread of technological devices and their introduction into the majority of life aspects. Among all groups, university students are considered the active users of mobile devices, which assist these gadgets in communication, information, and entertainment. However, cell phone usage in educational institutions and more importantly, inside the classroom has led to debates and questionnaires by educators and researchers on whether their usage actually has a negative impact on students' learning and academic performance. This paper investigates opinions and habits regarding the use of technology devices in the classroom among university students. The purpose of

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this paper is to highlight the causes of this action and the possible repercussions by comparing attitudes and actual students' practice behaviors during school hours.

2. Literature review

The use of mobile phones along with other electronic gadgets inside the university classroom has drawn the opinion of various educationists. In this regard, Junco and Cotten (2012) showed that students who used their cell phones unrelated to academics results in low academic attainment and quickly get distracted from their academic studies. In a similar vein, Thornton (2016) showed that cellphone use significantly hindered the ability of students to focus on the lecture materials. Smith (2018) established that incorporating cell phones into the classroom can positively and negatively impact students' learning. On one hand, the cell phone facilitates effective collaboration, engagement, and the sharing of ideas by students. They can also be used to teach digital responsibility and engage students in various school activities. On the contrary, improper usage of cell phones has been associated with academic fraud, cyberbullying, and sexting, hence negatively impacting students' well-being. Johnson (2019) further added that educators must find a proper balance between individual student rights and safety and well-being in creating or revising cell phone policies in classrooms. While enforcement of such rules may be difficult, there is a need to put regulations in place which ensure responsible and purposeful use of the cell phone. Moreover, as Brown (2020) has pointed out in a university class, cell phones, as well as other types of electronic devices, offer benefits to students. Evidence has proved that their utilization motivates students and establishes pedagogic innovation. It also increases the interactivity of students. Students are also allowed to create content, differentiate instruction, as well as reflect. These gadgets' applications include digital cameras, video recorders, internet access, social networking, and text messaging, which could be used as tools in the classroom.

3. Methodology

In order to analyze the views of the students and the way they use the technological devices while working in English, the classrooms at Vinh Long Campus – UEH were the objects of a survey. The survey included a questionnaire consisting of three items to find out learners' opinions and attitudes towards the topic. In order to ensure both comfort and ease of movement, the questionnaire was offered online and utilized a Google Form. As many as 126 students, all aged 19, took part in this research, and each of the seven proficiency level classes participated equally. All participants were relatively recent graduates of the English four modules course at the UEH. They were briefed completely on the aim of the study and felt no stress or any form of judgment, as the information that was provided was confidential.

4. Findings and discussion
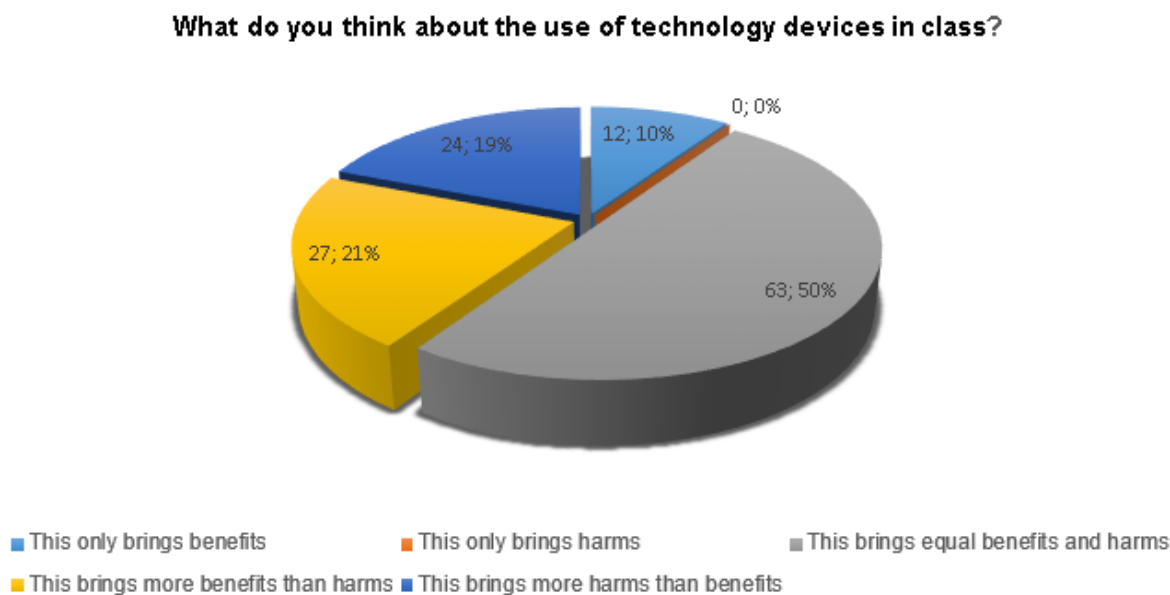
Figure 1: Student opinions on the use of technology devices in the classroom

From the results of 126 students' questionnaires about using technology devices in the class, most of the students have identified both positive and negative sides. Also, 63 students from the total respondents or 50% of the sample, held this view. More importantly, none of the students interviewed has a negative perception of technology in class and hold the opinion that technology in class is harmless, which is a positive perception. This is an indication that most students understand the use of technology and its importance in the process of learning. Further, 27 students, 21% of the sample, said that technology has more advantages than disadvantages. This proves that these students do regard technology as a resource that enhances the learning process of the students. However, 24 students out of the respondents perceived that the use of technology is more negative impact. This minority viewpoint may reflect negative experiences or challenges they have faced with technology in the classroom. It is also important to note that there were 12 participants, or 10 % of the sample, who perceived the use of technology in class as a purely positive experience. Even though this is a minority opinion, the importance of technology cannot be dismissed since it generally has a positive impact on some people's education. In general, the responses presented combine the positive and negative opinions amongst students concerning the utilization of technology devices in class. Therefore, although a vast majority of students believe that they benefit from technology, almost as many are aware of possible negative effects, which underlines the necessity of using technology in class as a tool that has its advantages and disadvantages.
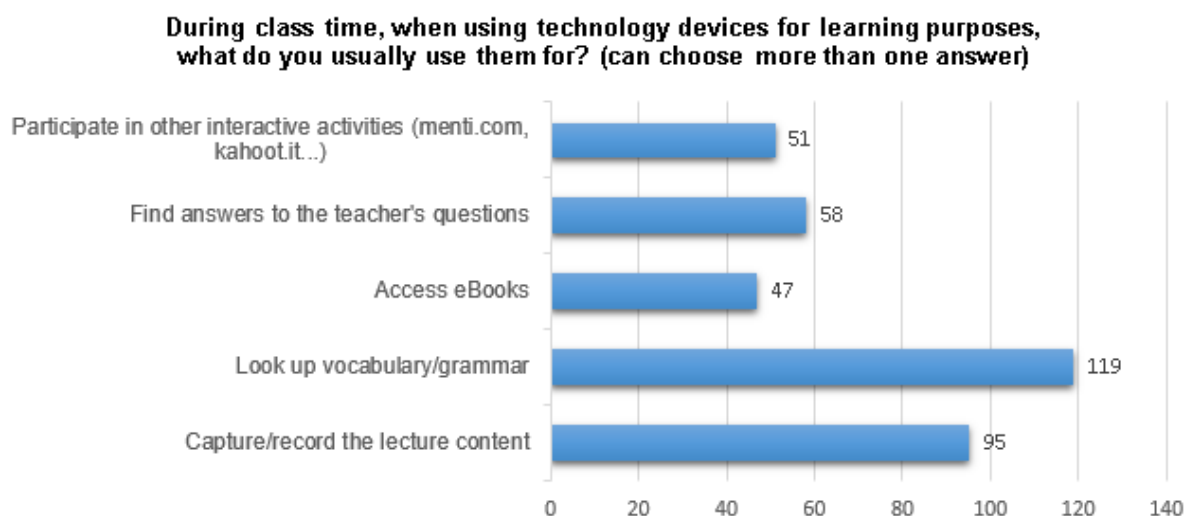
Figure 2: Activities performed by students using technology devices in class

The analysis of responses from 126 students about their use of technology devices in class reveals some intriguing insights into their preferred activities. Three-fourths of them, 75.4% said that they employed these devices to capture or record the contents of lectures, and this showed how useful gadgets are for note-taking in class and for revision. Additionally, out of the respondents, 94.4% students said that they seek technology for vocabulary and grammar, which clearly shows that technological aids are crucial in the learning process of English. It can also be seen that eBook has a significant preference, with 37.3% of students using technology for this purpose due to the growing demand for multiple books stored in one device. Also, 46 percent of the students said that they use technology to look up an answer to the question that was posed by the teacher. This supports the notion of how fast and effective information retrieval is via the internet. Peculiarly, respondents demonstrated the use of other technological and interactive tasks, such as menti.com and kahoot.it, at 40.5%, which evidences that technology encompasses interaction in activities and quizzes in and outside classroom settings. These environments increase participation, cooperation and the aspect of fun in the learning process, thereby improving the quality of students' education. In summing up, the findings show that technology devices are part and parcel of learning in the classroom to record content presented during lectures, as tools for learning foreign languages, as sources of reading materials, as information-seeking tools, and sources of interaction among others. There is, therefore, a quality indication of the need to apply information technology in a planned manner to enhance the potential of students' achievement. But proper discretion and effort should be exercised to make sure that instructional technology will complement and not dominate the conventional modes of instruction.
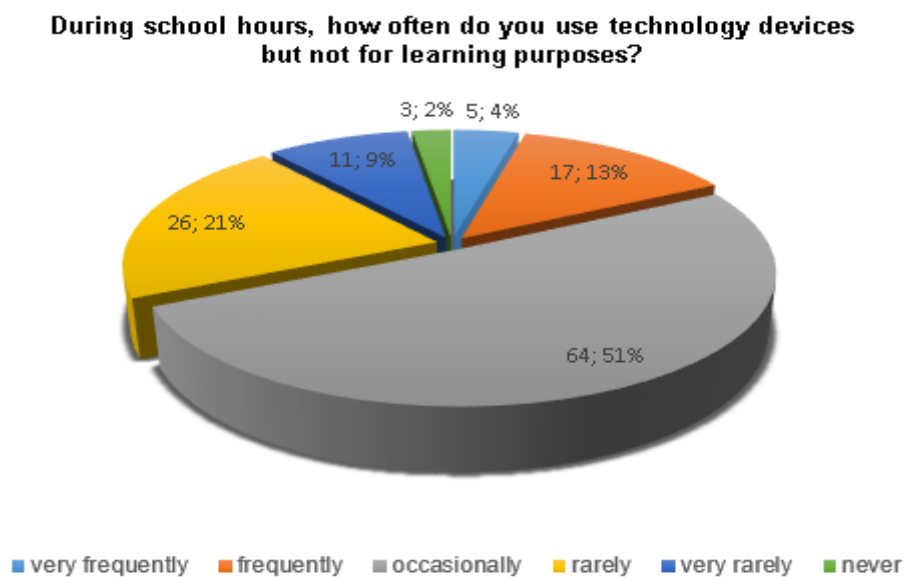
Figure 3: Frequency of technology device usage for non-learning purposes during school hours

When 126 students were asked, "During school hours, how often do you use technology devices but not for learning purposes?", the responses showed a variety of habits. Even more shocking to the researchers mark, 50.8% of the students confessed to using technology devices for something other than learning every once in a while. This means that even though these students use their devices for happy time-related activities, sometimes they do not use the device during the learning period. Further, 20.6 percent of students said they used the devices infrequently for non-learning related concerns, suggesting that they had moderate use self-control and were very much focused on learning. Perhaps more concerning, 13.5% of the respondents noted they engage their devices for purposes NOT related to learning often , which can be considered indicative of distractions and subsequent productivity loss. At the two extremes, 4 percent of the students admitted that they used their devices very often for purposes that were not learning based and this implies that there is a high possibility of distraction and a consequent negative influence on the learning process and achievement. On the other hand, 8.7% of students responded that they used the device for non-learning activities very rarely, meaning that students are very disciplined and are more serious with their studies. Only 2.4% fully agreed to the statement of not employing their devices for anything other than learning in school, and it was evident that they were very disciplined users of the gadgets and had all the focus on their studies. More generally, the statistics show that the large majority of students with some frequency leverage technology devices for reasons not related to learning, although a sizeable proportion does this quite often. It also brings into focus that instructors and policymakers should develop policies that would seek to eliminate the use of such devices during learning activities and promote relevant learning activities. Therefore, when schools understand the various levels at which devices are used in their clients' activities, they will comprehensively enhance the creation of a productive environment conducive to learning.

5. Recommendations

The results indicated that technology devices in the classroom are a source of benefits and challenges. There is a great need to set some guidelines on usage that will encourage responsible and purposeful use to gain the full benefits of technology in the classroom with minimal drawbacks. Digital literacy can be improved through training for the students and educators on risks like cyberbullying and academic dishonesty. Encourage the inclusion of teaching tools in the curriculum that would make it more interactive and collaborative, such as eBooks, menti.com, and kahoot.it. Continuously assess and modify policies with regular feedback on policy effectiveness and relevance. Additionally, properly weighing the use of technology with traditional teaching will allow for a well-rounded educational experience, meet diverse learning needs, and maintain the level of focus on the goals of education. This would help strike a balance for the improvement of learning results and supportively foster a positive and productive classroom environment. If educators can follow these recommendations, then it would become very easy to have a balanced and efficient learning environment where the strengths of technology are utilized to their fullest while keeping its possible drawbacks to a minimum.

6. Conclusion

The present research paper provides a comprehensive literature review and conducts questionnaire surveys and statistical analysis to identify the perceived attitudes and behaviors of University students towards technology devices for learning in classrooms. This research brings a contribution to the debate regarding the use of technology in education and helps write policies and procedures that are backed by evidence for educators and educational institutions. This information is useful when identifying ways of improving the strategies that address the issues related to cellphone use and the environment, which can enhance learning is important. In this respect, it is the intention of this paper to add to the body of knowledge to help educators and policymakers design strategies that allow for the incorporation of technology while maintaining a singular goal of promoting a learning environment. Despite the fact that technology devices have a lot of disadvantages in the university classrooms, the proficient ban is not probable or feasible. On the other hand, effective use of technology seems to be an important consideration for educators to deem it relevant for use in their learning environment, offer support for the personal side of the students and encourage interaction among learners for the improvement of their experience.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the author

Nguyen Luong Hoang Thanh is an educator and researcher specializing in the integration of technology in language teaching. With a focus on enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes, Thanh has conducted various studies on the use of digital tools in education. Thanh is currently affiliated with the School of Foreign Languages, University of Economics, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

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