

# Digital Learning: Misuse of Multi-Media among College Students

Mr. Pratheesh P.

Assistant Professor, Department of History, St. Michael's College, Cherthala, Alappuzha, University of Kerala  
Email - pppadath@gmail.com, loginforpsychology@gmail.com

**Abstract:** *With the expansion of the technology, people –especially the students- have a vast array of e-communication tools at their fingertips and feel as appertained to them. At present, 100% of university students have their own mobile phones because COVID-19 disrupted traditional system of education and consequently online education engaged in the scene. Majority of the students use their smart phones to enhance learning, such as to look up pertaining information about the lesson, take additional information about the topics learned; however a part of students use smart phones for personal affairs during class sessions too. The purpose of this study is to explore the challenges associated with online classes through mobile phones in college. A sample of students from different Arts and Science colleges of Alappuzha was surveyed to assess the distraction of studies and about the abuses of mobile phones. According to the results, the pattern of percentages within genders reveals the intention of students. Boys seem more engaged in disturbing their classmates, whereas girls seem calmer. Majority of the students are distracted by their mobile phones and also confess that they can cheat with the help of their phones.*

**Key Words:** *Mobile Phone, Online Class, Chatting, Gadgets, COVID19, Pornography.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

With the expansion of the technology and the current COVID 19 pandemic situation, people –especially the students- have a vast array of e-communication tools at their fingertips. Due to COVID19, online learning in academia has gone from an experimental novelty to a nearly ubiquitous teaching tool today. Entire education scenario in the country faced a deadlock when Corona virus hits and educational institutions remain closed. Globally, over 1.2 billion children are out of the classroom. There is hardly any alternative but online education at present. Research suggests that online learning has been shown to increase retention of information, and take less time, meaning the changes corona virus have caused might be here to stay.

The first academic year through corona virus period managed education mainly through recorded classes telecasted through educational satellite channels which are available through Televisions at home. But student satisfaction, achievement rate and student dropouts forced the authorities to change from stereo-class to interactive class. Consequently there was stated popular drive to ensure personal digital learning devices to each student in the state during 2020-21. It is estimated that 100% of students under the University of Kerala have their own mobile phones or digital device and all of them bring their devices to the courses. With the current experiment, students, professors, and university administrators must keep a record of which classes are benefiting from being taught remotely and which ones are not going so well. The on-screen time of interactive learning varies but on an average, five hours of daily life the students tie up with digital gadgets online now. Further, for classroom assignments and projects, they stay online continuously and surfing hours. How can we ensure that 100% of students are consciously engage in online activities without distortion, definitely there are immense adds and links which attracts the youth at online.

## 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

As COVID-19 disrupted traditional education, even the most experienced teachers felt suddenly thrown back into their first day, or first years, of teaching. Appearing in their virtual classrooms, many teachers found themselves looking at an array of squares on a screen, some with students looking back, some with a bare desktop and chair, some missing entirely. For many, this new environment felt foreign as their go-to strategies in the classroom setting did not seem to translate readily online. While one section of the professors are for online classes, another section resisting this practice mainly out of fear of misuse of mobile phones. Most colleges follow the rules of ban of mobile phones on the campus, but now the reality is contradictory. From student's side, they are happy to have a digital gadget in hand with unlimited internet connection with the permission of teachers and parents. Moreover, a part of students were lucky to have long vacation but to bare only online class login on time. When we are online, whether in class or not, 'WhatsApp' and other social media works and update messages and notifications; thereby advertisements and other notifications appear on the screen. Hence, it is necessary to inquire whether or not the students are using digital gadgets purposefully in online classes.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES :

When cell phones first began to appear in the classroom, an annoying ringing phone would announce its presence and students would look around wondering who it belonged to. Now smart phones have access to the internet allowing students to browse on Google Classroom or any other website, as well as check email and send text messages. Many recent studies have been conducted to clarify the usage of mobile phones in class. But no study to date has surveyed students' mobile phone using habits under the frame of higher education in Kerala.

Tindell and Bohlander (2012) surveyed 269 university students and argued that the use of the cell phone is a distraction and that "if students are spending time texting, they are not paying attention in class". McCoy (2013) asked 777 university students from six U.S. universities to describe their behavior and perceptions regarding classroom use of digital devices for non-class purposes. He stated that the average respondent used a digital device for non-class purposes 10.93 times during a typical school day for activities including texting, social networking, and emailing. Most respondents did so to fight boredom, entertain themselves, and stay connected to the outside world. More than 80% of the respondents indicated such behavior caused them to pay less attention in the classroom and miss instruction.

Campbell (2006) conducted a study to explore some of the challenges associated with mobile phones in university classrooms. Participants including students and teachers reported that ringing is a serious source of irritation and distraction for both students and faculty members and supported for formal policies restricting the technology during class time. Rosen et al. (2011) investigated the effect of texting during instruction. Results indicated that academic performance decreased when students texted during class. Similarly, educators worry about the influence of texts, the abbreviations and slang associated with texting, on written language skills.

Another study found students who experienced a ringing smartphone during a video presentation performed poorly compared to students in a control group who did not experience ringing phones (End, Worthman, Mathews, & Wetterau, 2010). Synnott (2013) surveyed 129 students at a mid-sized public university in New England. The study's focus was on students' use of smart phones during class time and their perceptions with regard to their classmates' use of smart phones concerning: texting, surfing the Web, visiting social sites, and leaving the classroom to take calls. He found all students do engage in these activities during class time to some degree. He also found that students misperceive that their peers use their phones more than they do themselves. These misperceptions may result in students increasing their use of smart phones during class time to be like their peers.

Another, perhaps even greater, concern relates to academic dishonesty. Cheating with the use of a mobile phone is more sophisticated than traditional means of cheating and can often go undetected (Campbell, 2005). Studies (Pickett & Thomas, 2006; St. Gerard, 2006; Tindell & Bohlander, 2012; O'Bannon & Thomas, 2014; O'Bannon & Thomas, 2015) confirm that students use their mobile phones to cheat. For example, at Prairie View A&M University, 11 nursing students admitted to cheating on a comprehensive exam by texting students who had already completed the test (Tolson 2008). The technology available through cell phones allows an individual to send answers to multiple-choice questions to other test takers or send pictures of test questions to friends (outside the test), who send back the response. With web-browsing phones, it is even possible to look up answers to questions directly (Tindell & Bohlander, 2012). There have always been issues with students' passing of notes in class and cheating on exams.

Krithika M. and Dr. S. Vasantha (2013), in their study of the mobile phone usage among teens and young adults- impact of invading technology, found that the cell phone usage is so strongly integrated into young people's behaviour that it was showing the symptoms of behavioural addiction. In another study on severity of mobile phone and internet use among B.Sc. nursing students, it was revealed that 84.2% of the young persons in the age group of 19-20 years owned mobile phone. There was no severe or moderate addiction to mobile phone. The mild addiction was observed in 1.84% people (Arpita Kumari, D'Souza, Dhar, Savita, & Alex S., 2013). Atul Patel and Dr. Harishchandra Sing Rathod (2011) studied the mobile phone use habits of students coming from rural area to the town and found that the most used feature of mobile phone use was SMS because it was cheaper and the students with limited financial resources could communicate effectively. The study also showed that the male students sent more SMS than female students.

Alpana Vaidya, Vinayak Pathak and Ajay Vaidya (2016) in their study 'Mobile Phone Usage among Youth' points that gender differences were not observed in time of usage of mobile phone and data usage; Android operating system is the most popular among the college students and regarding the brand Samsung is the most popular brand among the college youth. Subramani Parasuraman and Aaseer Sam (2017) in the study 'Smartphone usage and increased risk of mobile phone addiction: A concurrent study' finds that students were aware about mobile phone/radiation hazards and many of them were extremely dependent on smart phones. One-fourth of the study population was found having feeling of wrist and hand pain because of smart phone use which may lead to further physiological and physiological complication.

Based on the available literature, it is concluded that students are heavily using mobile phones, distracting the teaching and learning. Students are also misusing their mobile phones for creating disturbances. Therefore, the focus of this paper is to conduct a survey among college students in Alappuzha district under University of Kerala to verify their views about mobile phone usages, research in this area needs frequent updating because the proliferation of new technology is growing at an exponential rate. Also the survey addresses the frequency and intensity of non-class related digital distractions in the classroom and aims to reveal students' surfing habits.

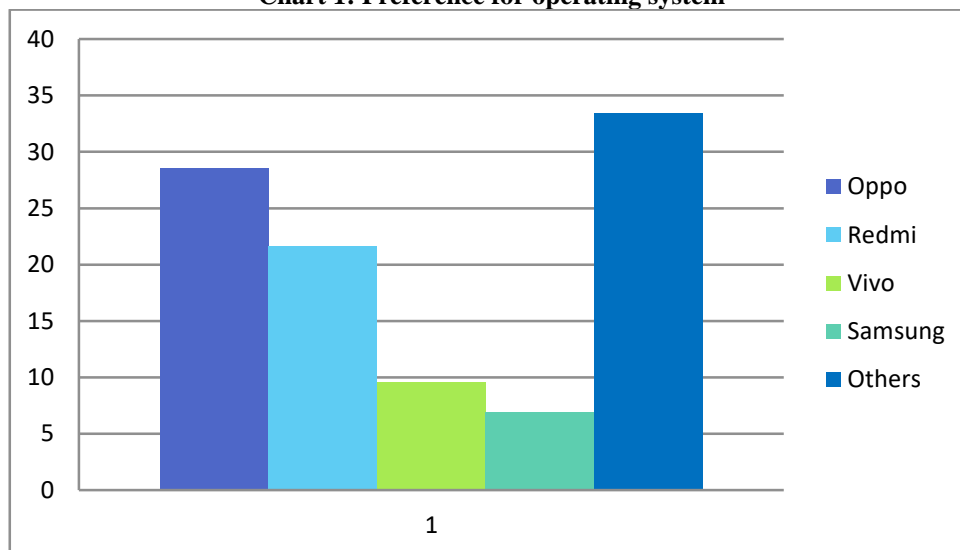
**3. METHODOLOGY :**

To analyze the pattern of mobile phone usage during online class session among college students in Alappuzha under University of Kerala, an online survey is conducted. To explore the impact of dissonance in online classes, the study used questionnaire, personal interviews and observation techniques. Within the study, students were asked to report on their own use of mobile phones in class, as well as their observations of others. Specifically, students were asked to report about the use of phones before and during class, as well as during assignments, seminars and exams. In the Stratified random sampling, the sample consisted of college students between the age group of 18 to 25 from different arts and science colleges of Alappuzha District. Data were collected from 410 students; out of which 245 were girls and 165 were boys. It was originally decided to collect data from 500 students. But in the final analyses only 410 students were taken as others have not filled up the questionnaire properly or not responded to all the questions. Using simple statistical methods, the percentage analysis of various types of services used by the students was carried out.

**4. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS :**

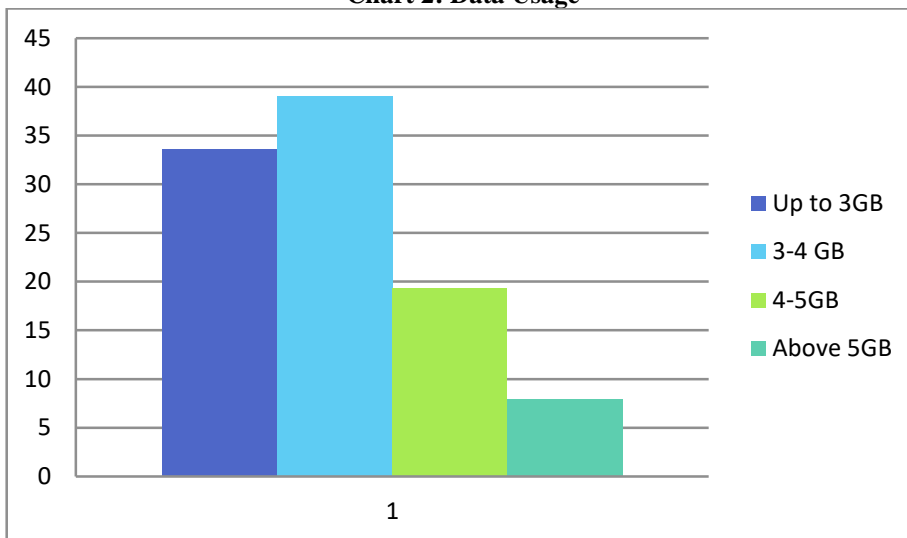
Obtained results showed that 97% of the students were using smart phones and only three percent of the students were not using Laptops. This shows the popularity of the smart phones among youth. When the students were asked regarding the operating system 100% of the students had android mobile phones. This shows the popularity of android phones over other phones among youth. When the students were asked about which brand of mobile phone they mostly use 28.50% of the students said Oppo, 9.58 % Vivo, 6.88% Samsung, 21.62% Redmi, other mobile users 33.41%.

**Chart 1: Preference for operating system**



Almost 97.54% of the students had internet connection on mobile only 2.46% had no internet connection on mobile phone but avail hotspot tethering from parents phone . Regarding the data usage 33.58% of the student users' data usage was up to 3 GB, whereas, 39.05% were having data usage between 3 GB to 4 GB, 19.40% of the students use data up to 4GB to 5GB and more than 5GB data usage in case of 7.96% of students.

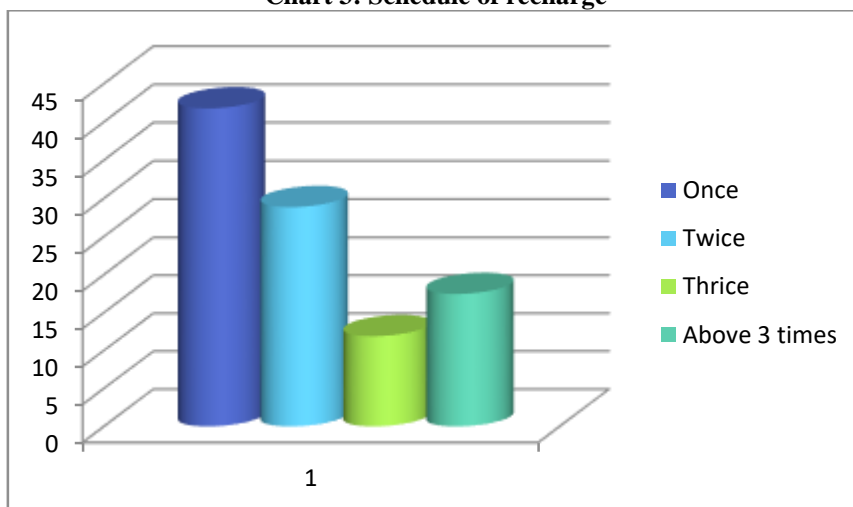
Chart 2: Data Usage



Other than online class use, most of the students use mobile for listening to music (67.39%), whereas 16.63% of the users use it for playing games, 62.08% for social networking and 7.61% for just browsing, and 33.31% use for all the above. Thereby, results show the importance of getting socially connected with others as important factor in mobile use. Regarding the time spend on mobile phone (41.03%) of the students said that they spend between four to six hours on mobile. 25% of the students responded with between six to eight hours and 11.79 responded with eight and nine hours. 11.79% responded with more than nine hours. Regarding notification check, results of percentage analyses revealed that 62.33% check mobile when they get notification, 22.85% after every 15minutes and 6.70% after every 30 minutes. This is significant because during the class hours also, 60% of students are checking chat notifications and respond on time.

Results regarding number of recharge in a month revealed that 41.77% recharge once a month, 28.86% twice a month and 11.89% thrice a month and more than thrice a month in case of 17.46% of the students. Here, the option recharge for talk time is neglected by the respondents; all they choose data with unlimited talk time packages. Regarding the Internet service provider 61.53% of the students preferred 4G service, 22.33% of the students have no preference and 12.65% of the students preferred WiFi and 4G. Around 67.84% of the students reported that they experience Network problem, 32.16% reported that they experience network problem sometimes.

Chart 3: Schedule of recharge



Regarding the time when boys check mobile phone, it was found that most of the boys check their phone whenever they get a notification. The obtained results in case of boys showed that 71.51% of boys check mobile when they get a notification, 15.75% after every 15minutes, and 13.74% after every 30minutes. For girl mobile users, 62.89% of the girls said that they check mobile when they get a notification, 17.68% check mobile every 15 minutes, 19.43% after every 30minutes.

Regarding the social media use, 97.85% of boys use social media and turns online all time. In the case of girls, 27.55% are turn online every time in social media. Results show that 94% of boys check their notifications, update their status and respond to others posts every day. WhatsApp (97.8%), Instagram(86.45%), Teligram (78%), Facebook (71.39%) are the most used social applications by the boys. There are a few dating aaps also listed by 21.85% boys. In the case of girls, 53.87% students are up-to-date in social media. WhatsApp (96.4%), Facebook (74.85%), Instagram(66.45%), Teligram (51.8%)are the most used social applications by the girls. Regarding dating aaps, 9.25% girls reported the use regularly.

**Table1: Usage of Social Media among college students**

Social Media	Gender	Always(%)	Sometimes(%)	Rarely(%)	Never(%)
WatsApp	Boys	67.5	28.3	2	2.2
	Girls	51.5	34.6	10.3	3.6
Facebook	Boys	51.5	17.5	2.39	28.61
	Girls	44.6	17.25	13	25.15
Instagram	Boys	56.45	20	10	13.55
	Girls	37.3	20.15	9	33.55
Teligram	Boys	51.5	16.5	10	22
	Girls	36.8	9.5	5.5	48.2
Sharechat	Boys	24.5	11.5	2	62
	Girls	12.5	8.5	7.5	71.5
Messenger	Boys	48.9	22.7	10.5	18
	Girls	31.9	23.4	12.5	31.2
Twitter	Boys	3.5	1.5	2	93
	Girls	1.8	1.5	2.7	94

From the above table it is clear that twitter is the least preferred social media among college students both in boys and girls. Boys prefer Teligram over Facebook because for movies and web series sharing. Those who opt ‘always’ option in case of social media were always turns on online.

The interesting part of the result is about online class sessions. During the live class sessions, 72.28% of boys turns online, login and physically quit the classes. They are with friends (39.47%), traveling or do other activities (27.64%), play online games or social media activities (17.35%) and other types of engagements (15.54%) during online class sessions. About the recorded classes, 71.98% of boys check the updates, 53.5% downloads the content on time and only 18.25% follow the recorded classes on time. The results regarding the girls’ shows 91.65% are attending online classes actively. But on recorded classes, 59% are follow the content on time, 32.8% download the content and checks later and only 8.2% check the notifications and responds later.

## 5. MISUSE OF MOBILE PHONES :

Concentration is the key element in the process of learning. Today, a mobile phone is a potentially potent tool for learning but strangely feared the uses in immature hand. All of the technology in the classroom had one thing in common: it was controlled or utilized by the teacher. Perhaps the most interesting, challenging, and controversial technology to be introduced, that is the mobile gadgets, does not belongs to or controlled by the teacher, but rather the student bring these and controlled in the online classroom. No one can deny the fact that mobile phone is exactly an emergency in the present education scenario. Those students use gadgets, with all sorts of the latest technology, could easily surf the Internet that contains information and websites not in the pursuit of children. Moreover, the pages in internet are full of links and advertisements which are pornographic and adultery. They are ‘irresistible’ to any users. To check this danger, children and teenagers should be advised and trained by parents and teachers to use the mobile sparingly. But the real situation is rather strange today.

It was very difficult to elicit information about the abuse of mobile phones among students because they feared about the disclosure of such personal matters. Unlike the reporting of personal experience, respondents chose to share their friends experience in this regard. So, objectivity and reliability lacks in this segment because of the high lie factor and third party reporting. Among the respondents, 62% are answered the questions about mobile phone abuse.

According to the findings of the study, it is observed that around 35% of the respondents visited pornographic pages on mobile phone while searching academic matters or information. About 37% of the students noticed adultery advertisements in internet on mobile phone. Only approximately 11% of the respondents spend more than 5 minutes in such websites on mobile phone.

About the sharing of adultery videos and contents, 39% of boys and 17% of girls experienced pornographic content sharing. Out of curiosity, 7.82% of girls and 32.5% boys visited pornographic sites. Regarding chat abuse, 27.65% boys and 11.95% girls experienced abuse chat in watsaap; 41.45% boys and 34.85% girls experienced chat abuse in messenger. Regarding dating apps usage, 7.58% of the respondents are using dating apps regularly and 12.25% using rarely.

Phubbing can occur by texting, surfing the web, checking time, answering a call etc. The multiple choice question about the usage purpose of mobile phones except attending online classes revealed the phubbing activities. The results show that checking time or date forms the greatest portion of phubbing. However, students do not feel that teachers are aware of their phubbing habits. Almost half of the respondents indicated that it is easy to text in class without the teacher being aware. Majority of the students (64.3%) confess that it is easier to spend time with phones if the teacher prefers to explain the content during the class.

Online gaming has emerged as a popular and successful source of entertainment and played by people of all ages, especially by youth. From the analysis, it finds that there is a neutral online gaming effect in majority of the respondents. Through students aware that continuous playing will causes its addiction and addiction to online games affects various dimensions of health, increases sleeplessness, and reduces direct social interactions, they are playing it for entertainment. On the positive side online games helps in enhancing mental development, critical thinking and stress relief also. Out of 410 students, 57.5% (boys) and 42.5% (girls) used to play online games. Gaming hours of respondents recorded in between 5 to 20 hours in a week is 47.5%, 20 to 50 hours in a week is 22.8% and above 50 hours in a week is 8.125%. It is also noticed that, 32% were responded neutrally on the interruption of sleeping due to online games and 13% were not disrupted their sleeping hours. 32.5% of respondents may or may not agree that they use online gaming as a way of escaping from stress and depression. It is found that 40% of respondents have severe headache due to playing games.

## 6. POSITIVE ASPECTS :

Mobile phones are helpful for the students as well as teachers for exchanging of useful information with their classmates about their studies. Some of the studies proved that this technology has increased the academic performance. In this context, the study tried to find out the positive effects on learning achievements of the students. Majority (69%) agreed that they can easily contact the teachers for study purposes. Among the respondents 93% agreed that they can easily contact their classmates for help in studies. 56% students agreed that their academic performance has been increased due to mobile phone whereas 12% students disagreed and also 48% respondents agreed that mobile phone has helped to increase the level of quality of education whereas 27% disagreed with this opinion. Majority (91%) use it as search notes and videos, reference, dictionary in their academic activities.

## 7. CONCLUSION:

The most serious problem faced today is the lack of a sound and safe framework for online instruction which can generate effective face to face instruction and education. But considering great advantages that mobile phone can bring, the adoption of mobile phone as a study tool should be greatly encouraged. But the fascinating entertainments offered by these gadgets, especially on online platforms, which distract the attention of the students and deviate their studies. This study suggests that most of the student participants are aware about mobile phone/radiation hazards and many of them developed dependent behavior with mobile phone. For one-fourth of the student population is having a feeling of wrist and hand because of mobile phone usage which may lead to further physiological and physiological complications. A proper regulation is needed for the use of mobile phones and internet by the student community in general. Teachers were the prime advocates against the use of mobile phones by the students till 2019, but COVID altered the scene and now the process of education is regulated by mobile phones. The limitations of mobile phones may be a temporal concern if we look at the rapidly advanced functions and numerous applications being introduced every day. In essence, mobile phones are beneficial for learning but learners have a tendency to abuse them. Higher institutions can take advantage of the potential and capitalize on the mobile phone for educational purposes because of the intrinsic motivation of university students is wanting to communicate amongst themselves. So the mobile phone designers must take into account how young people use cell phones for educational purposes seriously.

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