Perceived Value of and Core Factors in Smart Devices and Applications for Academic Learning: The Case of Chinese College Students

Jingwen Du, Shaoshi Zou, Qinglai Shao, Jiaxu Zhang

Recently, a rapidly increasing number of smart devices and applications have made a huge difference in people's lives by providing them with more connected and enjoyable lifestyles. As a result, these devices and applications have spread across the world, enabling people to play games, read books, and search for needed information anytime, anywhere. In addition, an increasing number of people are using smart devices and applications for educational purposes. Some take online classes during their transit to work by using their smartphones and work on team-based school projects with other members online by using their smart tablets running cloud-based applications. This suggests that the diversity, quality, and accessibility of smart devices and applications may be the core factors driving students' use of smart devices and applications for learning. In this context, given the critical role played by education in economic growth and social development, there is a need to have a clear understanding of how smart devices and applications can be better used to facilitate students' learning process and educational achievement. That is, this understanding can bring about better ways to use smart devices and applications in learning/classroom environments. In addition, it can have valuable policy implications for policymakers, regulators, and school administrators interested in introducing policy initiatives concerning technology-based learning systems for students of all ages. It can also have valuable practical implications for educators and device/application providers interested in finding innovative ways to help students better learn a wide range of educational topics. This study examines students' perception of smart devices and applications in the context of their academic learning because these individuals are the actual users of these tools for their learning. For data collection, Chinese college students are surveyed because they are the main user of smart devices and applications for academic learning. The questionnaire address the extent to which college students perceived the value of using smart devices and applications for their academic learning and what core factors they perceived to be important in helping them to learn better through smart devices and applications. In addition, the analysis assessed any gender difference between male and female Chinese college students. The respondents perceived smart devices and applications to be crucial for their academic learning and emphasized their "anytime, anywhere" feature. There was a significant gender difference.

Keywords: Smart Devices and Applications, Chinese College Students, Academic Learning