

THE EFFECT OF TECHNOLOGY ON STUDENT BEHAVIOUR IN KENYA UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Technology is part of human day-to-day life; its presence in the education sector no exception. Thus teaching and learning have become digital. We live in a digital world of technology, and we are part of the Net Generation. The percentage of people who have smartphones and computers is very high and students in universities use technology to acquire and receive information, do research, conduct online business, and manage boredom. Behaviour is how human beings act or respond to a particular stimulus and behaviour change takes place in the physical, mental, and social phases of human life from infancy through childhood, adolescence to adulthood. In this paper, we focus on the effect of technology on students' behaviour in Kenyan universities. The paper is based on a theoretical review of the literature. We start with a conceptual definition of terms such as "technology" and "technology in education" and then move on to define "behaviour change." After the definitions, we discuss the uses of technology in universities in Kenya and its effects on the behaviour of students. Behaviour change is discussed about teaching and learning, academic integrity, academic performance and social interaction. The positive and negative effects of technology on student behaviour are highlighted and we make suggestions on how technology can be used in universities for positive behaviour change among students.

Keywords: Technology, Technology in Education, Behaviour Change, Academic Integrity, Social Media

Introduction

Technology is everywhere and effects our lives in the modern digital world. This applies to the educational field as well since technology has fundamentally changed how we teach and learn. Use of technology in higher education institutions for teaching and learning is growing, and students are now more dependent on it than ever before (Bourner and flowers 1997). It is therefore crucial to investigate the effect of technology on changes in student behaviour in higher education institutions.

This paper uses a literature review to determine the effects of technology on changes in student behaviour in higher education in Kenyan Universities. The use of human inventions and discoveries to satisfy human needs and desires is referred to as "technology." In this paper, technology is used to include the use of computers, tablets, and smartphones (Pokhrel and Chetri 2021). The various ways this technology has been incorporated into higher education are highlighted and the way use of technology has affected how students' in Kenyan Universities study, communicate and interact with one another is discussed.

Definition of Terms

Technology – all the ways people use their inventions and discoveries to satisfy their needs and desires. It is a planned, systematic method of working to achieve planned outcomes, thus people use technology to achieve their goals.

Technology in Education is the application of technology to the processes involved in operations of educational institutions including teaching and learning.

Social media is the mode of interaction between people where they share, create and exchange information and ideas on platforms like twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and others. According to Mayfield (2008), use of social media has been highly integrated in education.

Use of Technology in Teaching and Learning

Technology has long been integrated in higher education with a range of technological tools and applications being used in the classroom to enhance learning. Some of the most commonly used technologies include online learning platforms, educational software, mobile applications, and social media (Dutta, 2020).

Education in 21st century, has evolved significantly thus one can study from the comfort of their homes whenever it suits them. The introduction of the internet has made this easier. Thus students can miss a physical class and still learn what the teacher taught because classes are recorded using a voice or video recorder and listen to recorded content whenever they choose to (Morris et al, 2019).

Many universities have adopted e-learning platforms like Moodle, Blackboard, and Google Classroom to facilitate online learning and provide students with access to course materials, submit assignments, and interact with their peers and instructors (Raza et al 2022). With the rise of remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, video conferencing tools like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet have become essential for conducting virtual classes, lectures, and meetings. These platforms offer a range of features, such as video conferencing, discussion forums, and instant messaging, which enhance student engagement and participation in the learning processes (Pokhrel and Chetri 2021).

Many universities also have digital libraries that provide students and faculty access to a wide range of electronic resources, including journals, e-books, and databases. Equally, interactive whiteboards are widely used in classrooms to enhance the learning experience by providing students with visual aids and interactive elements (Hendal 2020).

Mobile applications such as Dropbox and Google drive have become increasingly popular in higher education due to their flexibility and convenience. These applications provide students with easy access to course materials and information on the go enabling students to store, organize, and share information from their mobile devices.

Social media among them Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn have also had a significant impact on higher education having facilitated communication and collaboration among students and instructors, enables easy dissemination of course materials, promotion of events, and facilitation of discussions.

Effects of the Use of Technology on student behaviour change

The following areas of student behaviour have been affected with introduction of technology in the learning space:

Teaching and learning

Technology has significantly influenced student learning styles in Kenyan universities. The lecture based-teacher centered traditional teaching methods in Kenya have been significantly impacted by technology driven new ways of learning, such as online discussions, multimedia presentations, and collaborative learning platforms.

Technology has also made it possible for students to take courses and earn degrees online, which has given them greater flexibility and convenience (Kearsley 2002). Online learning has allowed students to learn at their own pace and from anywhere in the world especially post the COVID-19 pandemic period using online learning platforms like Google Meet, KNET, Google Conference, Zoom, and Microsoft Team. Through the use of the internet, students can do research, complete assignments, and communicate with lecturers from remote locations.

According to Youssef and Dahmani (2008), technology has made learning more interactive and engaging, and led to increased student participation in classroom activities. Thus, with the use of multimedia tools such as videos, images, and audio,

students can better understand complex concepts and engage more actively in the learning process.

It has facilitated collaborative learning through online peer to peer discussion forums, and video conferencing, improved group work, and more active participation in classroom activities and equally made it easier for instructors to provide timely and detailed feedback to students, which has helped to improve student understanding of the subject matter and their performance. This has also led to changes in student behaviour, with many becoming more receptive to feedback and willing to improve their work.

Collaborative learning has also reduced direct person to person contacts leading to physical loneliness among the students since students do not enjoy face-to-face meetings during lectures.

Academic integrity

Both positive and negative effects of technology have been seen on academic integrity. The accessibility of online resources like digital libraries and databases is one of the benefits of technology for maintaining academic integrity. These tools give students access to a wealth of knowledge that can improve their research and writing abilities. Also, adoption of plagiarism detection software has improved professors' ability to spot cases of plagiarism, which has enhanced student accountability and responsibility. Technology has also made it possible to conduct online assessments, including quizzes, exams, and assignments.

Technology also has negative effects on academic integrity one of them being the use of technologies to cheat in University examinations through the use of smartphones and mobile devices Bain, (2015). Thus students can access the internet and search for answers to examination questions or use messaging applications to communicate with each other and share answers but can also use mobile devices to store notes or prewritten answers, which they can then access during the examinations. This has resulted in deterioration of reasoning power of students as they rely on the internet for answers to examination questions and on calculators for calculations. Thus the brain of the internet users are more aligned to efficiently finding information than thinking through the questions to generate logical answers.

There is also risk of contract cheating through hiring other persons to accomplish a task or examination on a student's behalf (Walker and Townley 2012). Thus, students can now pay someone else to finish their academic work thanks to the existence of internet firms that promise to write essays and complete tasks. Contract cheating has significantly increased as a result, jeopardizing integrity of examinations and as many students no longer take University examinations seriously creating a vicious cycle where students continue to cheat and the quality of education continues to decline as students become more and more lazy in their studies.

Finally, universities and teachers are under increased pressure to implement anti-cheating measures. This requires significant time and resources, which could be better spent on improving the quality of education.

Academic Performance

There is improvement in the performance of the students since they can acquire a wide range of learning material. Technology has also enabled personalized learning, where students can learn at their own pace and style. Online learning platforms and educational applications can provide personalized feedback and adaptive learning activities, which can help students identify their strengths and weaknesses and improve their academic performance.

Online discussion forums, group projects, and video conferencing can promote peer-to-peer learning, stimulate critical thinking, and improve communication skills. Students who use technology to play games and search for information on the internet and are thus more enabled to improve their ability to find answers and better understand concepts.

Technology has also made it easier for students to manage their time and stay organized. Thus, online calendars, reminders, and productivity applications can help students keep track of their assignments, deadlines, and examination timetables hence reducing the stress and leading to improved academic performance.

Academic dishonesty through plagiarism have also increased yet the use of technology has made it more challenging for educators to identify cases of academic dishonesty.

Socializing

Despite the unhealthy impact of social media, many students use the media to develop vital skills and get access to online training, business and employment opportunities. On the other hand, parents have helped by purchasing smartphones and computers for their children to be used for additional productive causes like enabling the students to accomplish school work, research and staying in touch with family, friends and school mates.

There are several social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, Linked-in, YouTube, blogs, WhatsApp, wikis, and tik-toks, where you may interact with new people through talking, video calling, blogging, using mobile connectivity, and sharing videos and images Talaue et al, (2018). Although these tools have some negative effects on students, they also improve user's abilities, keeping them informed and connected to the digital world.

How students communicate with one another has also been greatly impacted by technology (Ben et al 2010). Thus, it has become simpler for students to stay in touch with one another because of the increased connectivity brought about by technology. As a result of their improved ability to communicate and work together, students now mingle and interact with one another in different ways and find it simpler to keep in touch with friends and classmates inside and outside of school using instant messaging applications

like WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, and Twitter which have consequently changed the way they engage in social activities and to establish and maintain relationships.

The widespread availability of social media and instant messaging has led to an increase in technology addiction and dependence, which can harm students' mental and physical health as well as their academic performance.

Thus technology has introduced new distractions into the classroom, such as smartphones which the students use to stay connected to the internet throughout the lectures surfing the internet which is destructive to learning.

The internet generation has also used technology, particularly social media, to obtain incorrect information, watch inappropriate advertisements, and engage in other activities that corrupt their minds and thinking. The freedom of expression and access to social media has allowed people to express themselves by doing or writing whatever they want. Students are mostly affected by these actions; they are misled by the activities. In their free time, students tend to watch unproductive things on the internet, like pornography. Whenever one is surfing the internet, there are always advertisements that pop up that are inappropriate to watch.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Technology in the education sector is not something that can be ignored. Students are using technology in different ways, like in research, writing assignments, acquiring information, and socializing, among others. It has, however, been used to cheat during examinations and for plagiarism. This study has looked into all areas of the use of technology in school and given recommendations on the way the Universities should help to ensure that they are used in the right way for the right purpose and that there is no cheating in examinations. The following are the recommendations to be incorporated:

1. Due to the increase in cheating and copying of assignments, there is increased pressure on universities and teachers to **implement anti-cheating measures**. This requires significant time and resources, which could be better spent on improving the quality of education.
2. To manage the impact of technology on students' attention spans, institutions should encourage students to take a **digital detox**, a break from electronic devices and spending time in nature or engaging in other activities that do not involve technology. This can help students reset and improve their ability to focus on tasks.
3. To manage the impact of technology on plagiarism, institutions should **educate students on the importance of academic integrity through** workshops on proper citation and referencing as well as software tools that can detect plagiarism. Institutions should also have a clear policy on academic integrity and enforce it rigorously.

4. **Institutions should encourage students to** reduce continuous, prolonged hours spent surfing the internet and strict rules imposed on the content and information that students access.

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