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How texting affects college students' academic grades

Introduction

With the emergence of information technology and advancement in engineering smaller portable, multifunctional and affordable mobile devices have emerged. These devices have been integrated in schools and colleges to deliver and disseminate information between students and teachers. With the emergence of social media and affordable telephone services students have been using texts as a common communication tool (Vosloo). According to (Horstmanshof and Mary 75) the current modern college students multitask more than any other in the past. Today's Net Generation University students multitask more than any previous group, mainly utilizing e-communication tools (Horstmanshof and Mary 75). This paper seeks to investigate the impact of texting on the college students' academic grades.

Literature review Looking at the rather short history of mobile technology generally and specifically Short Message service text messaging, it is quite astonishing that the amount of interest it has degenerated between researchers and book authors globally. Not much literature material has been written on this matter though. Hannu Luntiala a Finnish author in 2007 wrote the first material ever regarding the text message language, relating to an executive business travelling across India and Europe. Several studies on the effect of short message service texting have also been carried out with its outcomes published in websites, journals, and newspapers. Such material relate to negative and positive impacts of text messaging on a variety of aspects of social life plus students' academic work. Some school of thought are of the opinion that the short message service is a curse since it

negatively affects the communication skills of students, specifically writing skills; another school of thought agrees that short message service texting is not harmful to the literacy of students but it rather better it. There is absolutely no doubt that the short message texting service affects the way students write and talk some positive and some negative according to the context and content. A college student can be described as anybody who is enrolled in college or university. College student are mostly teens or young adults between the ages of 16 to 34 (Horstmanshof and Mary 75). A national study recently done shows that 84% of Americans are 18 years and above. Over 95% of people between 18 and 34 years have a mobile or cell phone. New phones come with a number of functionalities that were not available in the past phones: they are no longer utilized to make voice communication alone. College students with these phones can now enjoy an array of functionalities, which include texting; emailing, video chats among others offered by these Mobile phones (Plester, Clare, and Victoria 137-144). Texting is the capability to send or receive texts to or from another person. This feature is the most popular feature in the modern day mobile phones. Statistics shows that 94% of people between the ages between 18 and 34 years report to have sent or received text messages on their phones. Another ongoing survey in the US of 60000 phone bills showed that in the early 2007 teenagers text at a rate of 435 text messages a month and by the end of 2010, the number rose to 3, 705 messages a month. In general, the study found that 66 percent of all phone users use texting services at an average rate of 1, 707 text messages per month for young adult, 1, 178 text messages for preteens. A further research by Pew Internet & American Life

project found that texting is the most popular form of communication between teenagers with 54% using text messages, 38 % using the voice service and 33% making face-to-face communication. Texting brought a new form of communication channel that is popular among the college student and helped them stay in contact with their friends and relatives. A thing that was not possible in the past years. The tutors are concerned that the student too much connection to the outside world have a distracting effect on their concentration in their studies (Uzunboylu et al 381-389). Substantial research results reinforce this concern, postulating that this habit potentially divide their concentration that lead them to miss out some important concept being presented in class and as a results their grades are adversely affected (Uzunboylu et al, 34). Effect of texting Learning mainly involves paying attention to details, use of functional memory, long-term memory, short-term memory and metacognition to synthesize information. A study by Mayer, which tests how texting affect the agents of information processing, anything that distract the functioning of any of the agents of information processing would affect learning. Texting especially during class time divide the student attention, and distract attention from the task on hand. Consequently, information processing in the short or working memory may not be completely captured which may lead to storage of incomplete information in the long-term memory (Vosloo 2-6). A number of studies carried out on the distractive effects of texting have been carried outside the education environment, and the results supported that texting affect information processing (Vosloo 2-6). A study carried out by Vosloo on the effects of mobile phone usage on the performance of a driver showed that

talking or texting while driving failed to read the visual road signs, traffic lights and the environment in general thus increasing the likelihood of causing accidents on the road. The author concluded that phone use compete for the drivers attention resources. Similarly, for students and tutors texting cause distraction, which significantly affect academic grades negatively. A study by the University of New Hampshire showed that college students turn attention to their phones between one and 5 times at class. Furthermore, " Faculty Focus" echoed that texting at class time adversely affects students' grades and disturbs other students from learning (Plester, Clare and Victoria 137-144). In spite of the worrying adverse effects of texting, 88% percent of the college students continue texting during class time when the tutor is writing on the board, during group discussion. Note taking is among the most important practice that is commonly observed in student's behavior. Vosloo made a comparative study on the performance of students who take notes in class and those who do not take notes, and he observed that student who takes notes scored higher than those who do not take notes in class. Note taking enable a student to easily comprehend and record accurate information in the long-term memory. Texting during class time distract the students from taking complete and accurate notes, which consequently will slow the student comprehension, thus directly impacting his or her performance. Harley, Dave, et al (45) states that the quality and quantity of the notes significantly affect the capability to recollect and use information. Another research by Horstmanshof et al further demonstrate that college students with texting habits develop nonacademic behaviors, such as failure to complete their assignments, class absents, lower academic

confidence and many issues that negatively affect their studies. Some students have been known to spend more time of their night texting until they sleep late. Research illustrates that insufficient quality sleeps may negatively affect cognitive functioning and the general health (Brown, Buboltz, & Soper, 45). Extensive use of the texting large, which mostly use abbreviation, may affect the student writing skill. The students might transfer the style of writing short text messaging to writing academic work. Furthermore, the student who are used to writing and reading short text messages might find it difficult to glean meaning from long sentenced academic resources. Other dissenting views argue that Media technology tools like text, if utilized properly are great devices that can augment learning. Texting may permit students to promptly communicate and collaborate with peers (Bernard, 2008). Bellarmine University study established a number of teachers use mobile phones as training tools. Teachers text students, sending reminders and allowing them seek clarification or ask questions on issues they did not understand. Online voting, where students send their reactions and the outcomes are displayed for everyone to see is another helpful means students can use texts. Texting provides a means for college students to connect to their relatives and friends. Family connect create confident in the part of the students, thus making him able concentrate on his academic work in a stress free environment (Buboltz, Brown, & Soper). Children with low self-esteem who are not comfortable in a face-to-face communication can use text messages to comfortably convey their messages. These 'special needs' students do well in a setting where they pass their information through write rather than

speak, they can take time to evaluate their answers before texting. Texting makes the child with special need feel like any other student since his/her shortcoming is hidden, thus he/she can confidently take part in a discussion forum involving texting. Conclusion Texting can considerably affect a college student's grades if it distracts his attention resources in class. Attention distraction affects the degree at which the student process information in class. Furthermore, texting may create addiction, which will prevent the student from concentrating in his/her class. However, texting can be a great tool that can be used to augment learning if the teachers and the parents collaborate to ensure the students are thought the values of self-restrain in utilizing this form of communication. The students should be educated on the appropriate use of their mobile phones. The mobile phones have many disadvantages like saving time and it allows the students to revise well for their examinations. If the mobile phone is utilized well by the students, it becomes a powerful tool for them but if they misuse it leads to problems of great magnitude. Many researchers have done research on the negative effects of texting of student academics but there is a grey area on the how texting habit of the college student can be earnest to augment the education system. Further research should be carried out to explore the possibilities of turning the negatively perceived habit to benefit the students. This may require the participation of the mobile manufacturing companies.

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