

Chapter 43

Investigating the Status of Tablet Computers and E–Books Use of Open Education Faculty Students: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The increase in tablet computers and e-books use brings to mind the question of how users benefited from these technologies. In this sense, the present study investigated the status of students' tablet computers and e-books use and the reasons why students prefer to use and not use of tablet computers and e-books. Students' study habits while using e-books were also examined. In the study, which was designed as an instrumental case study, the data was obtained from 100 open education faculty students through semi-structured interview forms by making calls over the phone. In the analysis of the data, content analysis method was used. Results showed that the majority of the students stated that they use tablet computers and prefer e-books while studying. The main reasons why they prefer e-books are that they can be carried easily and studied everywhere. Considering the students' learning habits on e-books, four study habits were emerged. Interestingly, most of them study on tablets and take notes on a separate sheet. Eye fatigue and difficulty to edit the e-books are the main reasons of the students who preferred printed materials.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-1757-4.ch043

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, as a result of developments in information and communication technologies, e-books have begun to take their places in the learning environment (Kang, Wang and Lin, 2009). E-books are digital files, which make it easier to gain knowledge and read (Kang et al., 2009) and these files can be controlled by the users and written information can be displayed through electronic hardware and software (Borcher, 1999; Nie, Armellini, Witthaus, & Barklamb, 2011). In many educational institutions, especially in higher education, electronic resources are preferred due to the technological developments and additional costs caused by printed books (Ji, Michaels & Waterman, 2014).

E-books provide users with various advantages such as cost and mobility (Ji et al., 2014; Aydogan, 2014). De Oliveira (2012) investigated the attitudes of students towards e-books and stated that the most important features of e-books are portability, quick access to content, light weight, easy search option and ability to store a large number of materials. Shelburne (2009) has collected the opinions of students and faculty members regarding e-books and concluded that e-books have some advantages such as being able to make searches with keywords and being environment friendly in addition to portability and cost advantages. In their studies, Ni et al. (2011) reported that e-books provide ease in curriculum delivery through tablet computers, increase the effectiveness of students' study times, provide new reading strategies and they have benefits in terms of cost.

In spite of these advantages, there are a number of limitations of e-books reported in the literature. Small display, navigation issues and technical problems are noted as disadvantages of e-books (Shelburne, 2009). Furthermore, since e-books cause eye fatigue and there is limited number of electronic resources, students are discouraged to prefer these resources over printed materials (Shelburne, 2009). According to Embong, Noor, Hashim, Ali & Shaari (2012), students cannot have the same pleasure from e-books compared to the pleasure they have from traditional books, difficulty to take notes and scribble on e-books. Similarly Nie et al. (2011) have indicated delays occurred while turning the pages difficulty to take notes as limitations of e-books.

Considering the study habits and learning with e-books in literature, Rockinson-Szapkiw et al. (2013) have investigated the study habits of students on e-books, and they have reported that majority of the students take notes on a separate sheet, another notebook or digital environment. In addition, it has been seen that the amount of notes taken by students with e-books is higher than others studying with printed materials. Similarly, Olsen, Kleivset and Langseth (2013) have stated that students prefer to use printed materials due to study habits coming from their previous experiences. Rockinson-Szapkiw, Courduff, Carter and Bennett (2013) have investigated the effect of both printed books and e-books on learning. They have concluded that there is no significant difference between these two methods. However they have accepted that e-books are as effective as printed books as learning tools. In the study of Shin (2014) conducted with undergraduate and graduate students, it has been found that students prefer to study on printed books more in the library, but they are also willing to use e-books.

E-books require hardware and software to be able to read because of their digital features (Embong, et al., 2012). Tablets are one of these hardware devices. Tablet computers are devices, in which users can use the screen directly, and enter data manually or via a pen. Tablet computers offer students to display the content wherever they want; and provide them the possibility of learning everywhere (Siozos, Palaigeorgiou, Triantafyllakos & Despotakis, 2009; Wilson, 2003). Tablet computers have also some disadvantages in addition to these advantages. The first disadvantage is discomfort with the use of technology experienced by students. In addition, studying via technology is considered as tedious

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