

Title:

The Effects of Mobile Use in Online Higher Education: Evidence from Massive Open Online Courses

Abstract:

With the prevalence of affordable mobile devices, some higher education institutions anticipate that learning facilitated through mobile access can make education more accessible and effective, while on the other hand, critics of mobile learning worry about the efficacy of small screens and possible distraction factors. To examine the impact of mobile use in online higher education, we analyze individual-level data from Massive Open Online Courses. To resolve possible self-selection issues in mobile use, we exploit changes in the number of mobile-friendly, short video lectures in one course (the “non-focal course”) as our instrumental variable for a learner’s mobile intensity in the other course (the “focal course”), and vice versa, among learners who have taken both courses during the same semester. Results indicate that high mobile intensity either impedes, or at best, does not improve, course engagement, due mainly to distractions from other mobile activities unrelated to learning. We also discuss practical implications for researchers and higher education institutions to improve the effectiveness of mobile learning.

=====
Sang-Pil Han
Assistant Professor, Department of Information Systems
W.P. Carey School of Business
Arizona State University
Homepage: <https://wpcarey.asu.edu/people/profile/2430491>
=====

