

# Disrupting Distraction: Understanding Smartphone Use in University Classrooms

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## ABSTRACT

The growing trend of smartphone use in university lectures has sparked concern among educators, as research increasingly highlights its detrimental impact on student involvement, focus, and overall academic achievement. To better understand this issue, a comprehensive study was conducted to examine the ways in which students use their smartphones during classes, as well as the perceptions of instructors and support staff. The research combined observations of classroom behavior, in-depth interviews with instructors and student affairs professionals, and a large-scale survey of students. The results showed that many students frequently use their smartphones for personal activities, such as browsing social media and texting, which can lead to a decline in their attention span and participation during lectures. Instructors are finding it increasingly challenging to manage these distractions, particularly in the absence of clear guidelines from their institutions. However, both instructors and students acknowledge the potential benefits of using smartphones for educational purposes, like interactive quizzes and polls. Rather than imposing a blanket ban on smartphones, the study recommends that universities establish consistent policies to encourage the intentional use of mobile technology in a way that supports learning goals. By doing so, institutions can foster more engaging and productive learning environments, contributing to the ongoing conversation about digital habits in higher education.

**Keywords:** academic focus, classroom distraction, digital behavior, higher education, smartphone use