The Influence of Short-Form Social Media Content on Palestinian Students' Attention and Classroom Engagement in Efl Classes: A Pilot Study of University Students Perceptions

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Abstract:

This study investigates the influence of short-form social media content, including TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts, on Palestinian undergraduate students' attention span and engagement in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. The study adopts a quantitative, descriptive, and correlational research design. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to a convenience sample of 88 undergraduates at Palestine Polytechnic University. The findings revealed that short-form video consumption is deeply integrated into students' daily routines, with 56.8% of participants spending between one and three hours and 27.3% spending between four and six hours per day watching short-form videos. Entertainment was identified as the primary motivation for use (65.9%), followed by educational purposes (42.0%) and psychological relief from stress (37.5%). The results also indicate moderate to high levels of digital overstimulation ("brain rot"), with students reporting symptoms such as mental fatigue, reduced attention span, difficulty focusing on lengthy academic tasks, and a tendency to become bored during long lessons. Findings suggest that increased exposure to short-form videos is associated with higher levels of cognitive overstimulation, reduced attention, and lower classroom engagement. Despite these negative effects, students express positive perceptions regarding the educational value of short-form videos when used appropriately. The study concludes that excessive exposure to short-form social media content may negatively affect students' attention and engagement in English language learning. Therefore, it recommends that educators adopt attention-supportive teaching strategies and that universities promote digital wellness and responsible media consumption among students.

Keywords:

Short-form Videos, Digital Overstimulation, Brain Rot, Attention Span, Classroom Engagement, English Language Learning, Palestine.