



Investigating The Impact of HCI on User Experience and Productivity

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) on user experience and productivity at the University of Southampton, UK. By collecting data through interviews and questionnaires from students, administrators, and lecturers, the research aims to assess the influence of HCI concepts within the academic environment. The findings reveal that HCI has a positive effect on user interaction and productivity, demonstrating that a better understanding of HCI principles enhances both user experience and efficiency. The results underscore the importance of ensuring that both computer systems and users are optimally prepared for effective interaction.

Keywords: Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), user experience, productivity, higher education, usability.

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I. Introduction

Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) is a multidisciplinary field that examines the design and use of computer systems from the perspective of human interaction (Carroll, 2001). It focuses on how users interact with technology to enhance usability, productivity, and overall user experience. The field has evolved significantly over the years, adapting to changing technological landscapes and user needs. HCI integrates insights from various domains, including academic research, business practices, and everyday user experiences, to develop systems that are both technically robust and user-friendly (Bannon, 1990).

The advent of the internet has revolutionized the way information is shared and accessed globally. This transformation has made information dissemination more accessible and cost-effective, enabling users to connect and collaborate across vast distances. As Samuel and Adeniyi (2015) note, the internet has facilitated a more connected world, where the principles of HCI play a crucial role in ensuring that these technological advancements translate into improved user experiences.

Hewett et al. (1992) define HCI as a discipline concerned with the design, implementation, and evaluation of interactive computing systems. This definition underscores the importance of creating systems that not only function effectively but also enhance human understanding and interaction. As technology becomes increasingly embedded in daily life, the need for positive user experiences becomes more critical. HCI principles provide guidance for developers to create systems that are intuitive, efficient, and aligned with users' needs and preferences.

In this study, we investigate the impact of HCI on user experience and productivity within the higher education context at the University of Southampton. The goal is to explore how HCI influences interactions between students, staff, and technology, and to assess its effects on academic and administrative efficiency. By examining the role of HCI in higher education, this study aims to highlight its contributions to enhancing user experience and productivity in academic settings. Understanding these dynamics can help in designing systems that better support educational goals and improve the overall efficiency of academic institutions.

This exploration is particularly relevant in the context of evolving educational environments where technology increasingly plays a central role. By focusing on HCI, this study seeks to provide insights into how effective system design can facilitate better learning and administrative processes, ultimately contributing to a more productive and engaging educational experience.

Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the impact of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) on user experience and productivity within the higher education context at the University of Southampton. To achieve this overarching goal, the research is organized around the following specific objectives:

1. **Evaluate the Influence of HCI on Academic Efficiency:** This objective focuses on understanding how HCI principles affect the efficiency of academic processes for students and staff. It aims to assess how well-designed interactive systems contribute to the productivity of academic activities such as coursework, research, and administrative tasks. By analyzing user interactions with various technological tools and systems, the study seeks to identify key factors that enhance or hinder academic efficiency.
 2. **Assess the User Experience of HCI Systems:** This objective is concerned with evaluating the quality of user experience with HCI systems in the higher education setting. It involves examining aspects such as usability, satisfaction, and overall interaction with technology. The study aims to gather feedback from users to understand their perceptions, preferences, and challenges in using educational technologies, thereby providing insights into areas for improvement.
 3. **Investigate the Impact of HCI on Learning Outcomes:** The study aims to explore how effective HCI design can influence learning outcomes. This includes evaluating how HCI tools and systems affect students' ability to engage with learning materials, participate in collaborative activities, and achieve academic goals. By examining these relationships, the research seeks to determine the effectiveness of HCI interventions in enhancing educational experiences and outcomes.
 4. **Identify Best Practices for HCI Implementation in Higher Education:** This objective focuses on identifying and documenting best practices for implementing HCI systems in higher education institutions. The study aims to provide actionable recommendations for system designers, educators, and administrators on how to effectively integrate HCI principles into educational technologies. These recommendations will be based on the findings related to user needs, system performance, and impact on academic activities.
 5. **Explore the Role of HCI in Administrative Efficiency:** In addition to academic functions, this objective examines the role of HCI in improving administrative processes within the university. It seeks to understand how HCI systems can streamline administrative tasks, enhance communication, and facilitate better management practices. By analyzing administrative workflows and user interactions with relevant systems, the study aims to identify opportunities for increasing operational efficiency.
 6. **Develop Recommendations for Future HCI Research and Development:** Based on the findings from the study, this objective aims to propose directions for future research and development in the field of HCI within higher education. It seeks to identify gaps in current knowledge and suggest areas where further investigation could lead to advancements in HCI design and application.
- Through these objectives, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of HCI on higher education, offering valuable insights that can inform the development of more effective and user-centric educational technologies.

II. Literature Review

Evolution of HCI

The field of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) has undergone substantial evolution due to rapid technological advancements and changing user needs. Initially focused on simple user interfaces, HCI has expanded to accommodate complex functionalities and varied user interactions. Modern devices now feature advanced technologies such as voice control, touch screens, and gesture-based inputs, reflecting an increased demand for intuitive and accessible user experiences (Grudin, 2012).

Grudin (2012) emphasizes the transformative impact of HCI innovations across different regions and applications. For instance, library systems in the USA and Europe have evolved from basic cataloguing systems to sophisticated digital interfaces that support complex queries and multimedia resources. This evolution demonstrates how HCI adapts to diverse user requirements and technological contexts, reshaping how users interact with information systems.

The significance of HCI advancements extends beyond individual applications, impacting various sectors including society, business, and education. Rosson et al. (2002) discuss how HCI improvements contribute to enhanced productivity and efficiency across these domains. In educational settings, effective HCI is crucial for optimizing user interactions and achieving academic outcomes. Zhang et al. (2006) highlight that well-designed HCI systems can significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of learning experiences for both students and educators.

HCI and Error Management

In educational environments, system efficiency is critical to avoid user frustration and diminished productivity. Norman (1988) provides a foundational framework for understanding errors in HCI, categorizing

them into slips and mistakes. Slips occur when users have the correct intentions but fail due to poor interaction design, while mistakes arise from incorrect intentions or misunderstandings of the system.

Reason (2000) offers two primary approaches to addressing errors: the Persons Approach and the Systems Approach. The Persons Approach attributes errors to individual failings, whereas the Systems Approach focuses on improving system design to prevent errors. Reason's Swiss Cheese model of system accidents illustrates how latent flaws in systems can lead to errors if not addressed. The model emphasizes that while human error cannot be entirely eradicated, system design can be optimized to minimize error-prone situations. As Reason asserts, "We cannot change the human condition, but we can change the conditions under which humans work" (Reason, 2000, p. 769).

In educational settings, it is crucial for designers to consider cognitive alignment and error minimization when developing HCI systems. Zhang et al. (2006) advocate for designing systems that support users' cognitive processes and reduce the likelihood of errors, thus enhancing the overall learning experience.

HCI in Medical Environments

The impact of HCI is particularly critical in medical environments, where the consequences of poorly designed interfaces can be severe. Acharya and Oladimeji (2010) analyze the usability of medical devices, such as electric hospital beds, highlighting issues such as system crashes and confusing button layouts. These deficiencies pose significant risks, potentially jeopardizing patient safety during critical situations.

Effective HCI integration in medical devices is essential for ensuring both safety and usability. Well-designed interfaces can improve the efficiency of medical procedures, reduce errors, and enhance user confidence among healthcare professionals. Acharya and Oladimeji's (2010) findings underscore the importance of rigorous usability testing and design considerations to meet the high-stakes requirements of medical environments.

Challenges and Future Directions

Despite significant progress in HCI, the field continues to face challenges, particularly in designing systems that address the diverse needs and preferences of users. Rogers et al. (2011) discuss the difficulty of creating universally effective HCI solutions, noting that user expectations and experiences vary widely across different contexts and demographics.

The Chaos Project Report (2004) highlights that only 29% of information systems projects meet their objectives, emphasizing the critical role of user-centric design in the success of HCI initiatives. This report underscores the need for ongoing innovation and adaptation to align system goals with user needs.

Looking forward, technological advancements and innovative solutions, such as those introduced with Apple iPhones, offer promising directions for the future of HCI. The integration of emerging technologies, such as augmented reality and artificial intelligence, presents opportunities for creating more immersive and responsive user experiences. As the field continues to evolve, addressing existing challenges and exploring new frontiers will be essential for advancing HCI and enhancing its impact across various domains.

III. Methodology & Findings

Data Collection

The primary method for data collection in this study was direct contact through social media chat participants across different faculties at the University of Southampton. Each interview lasted approximately 10-15 minutes with the participants' consent. This approach allowed for in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and perceptions regarding Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) and its impact on their productivity and user experience.

To ensure the selection of relevant participants, a non-probability sampling method was employed, specifically purposive sampling. This technique was chosen to target individuals who were likely to provide valuable insights into the research questions. Participants were drawn from various faculties within the university, including Management, Music, Law, and Electronics and Computer Science. This diversity in faculties helped capture a broad range of perspectives on HCI within the academic environment.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the chat interviews were analyzed using grounded theory, a qualitative research approach designed to develop a theory grounded in the data itself (Lowe, 1998; Creswell, 2009). Grounded theory involves a systematic process of coding and categorizing data to identify patterns and construct theories. The analysis followed a three-stage process:

1. **Open Coding:**

In this initial stage, data were broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, and compared for similarities and differences. Codes were generated to categorize concepts and phenomena related to HCI and its impact on user experience and productivity.

2. **Axial Coding:** This stage involved reassembling the data in new ways by connecting categories and identifying relationships between them. Axial coding helped to refine the initial codes and develop a more coherent understanding of how different factors interact and influence each other.
3. **Selective Coding:** The final stage focused on integrating and refining the categories to form a theoretical framework. Selective coding involved identifying the core categories that represent the main themes and patterns emerging from the data.

Table 1 Summary of responses:

Summary of Responses	Details
Participants' Influence and Appreciation	
Source of Learning	More than half of participants considered social media as a source for learning.
Usage for Writing Reports	50% of participants used social media for writing reports.
Preference for Study Medium	65% preferred studying through a computer device.
Age Group Preferences	Participants above 50 years old preferred reading and jotting, doing most of their work still on paper.
ESS Students' Preferences	ESS students preferred doing all their academic-related work on computer devices and were more inclined towards a technological lifestyle.
Dependence on Technology	More than 80% admitted dependence on technology in academic/other areas of life.
Impact of Removal of Computers	More than 70% would be negatively affected by the removal of computer devices from their lives.
Reliance on Technology and HCI	More than 60% agreed to be reliant on technology and HCI in the learning environment, whether compelled or not.

Logical Model

The findings were synthesized into a theoretical model that illustrates the relationships between various concepts and categories identified in the study. The model highlights how different components of HCI impact user experience and productivity.

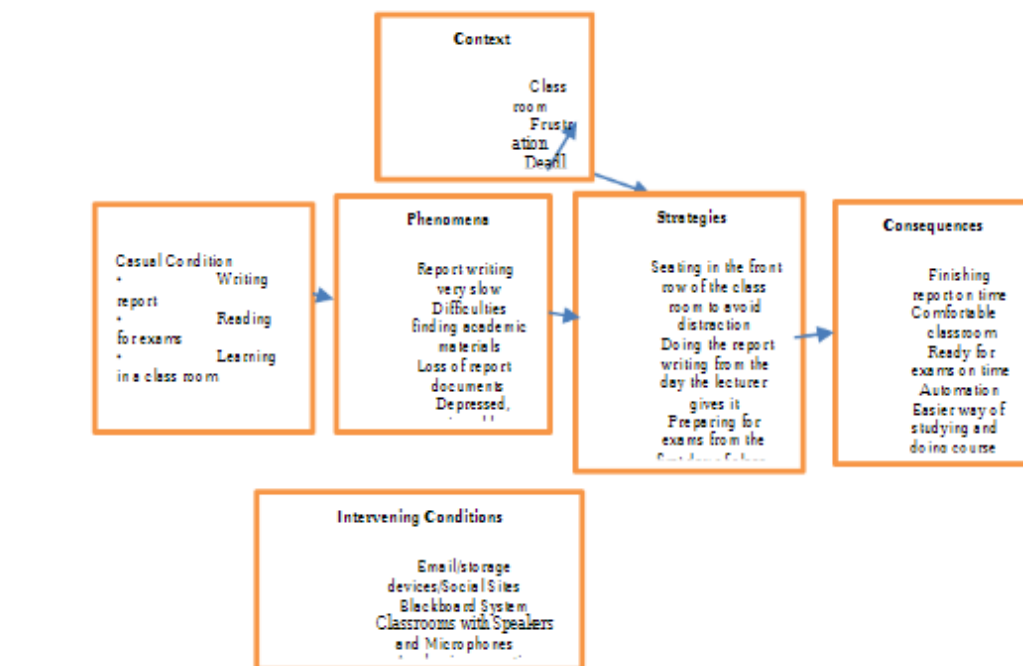


Fig.1: Logical Model of Research

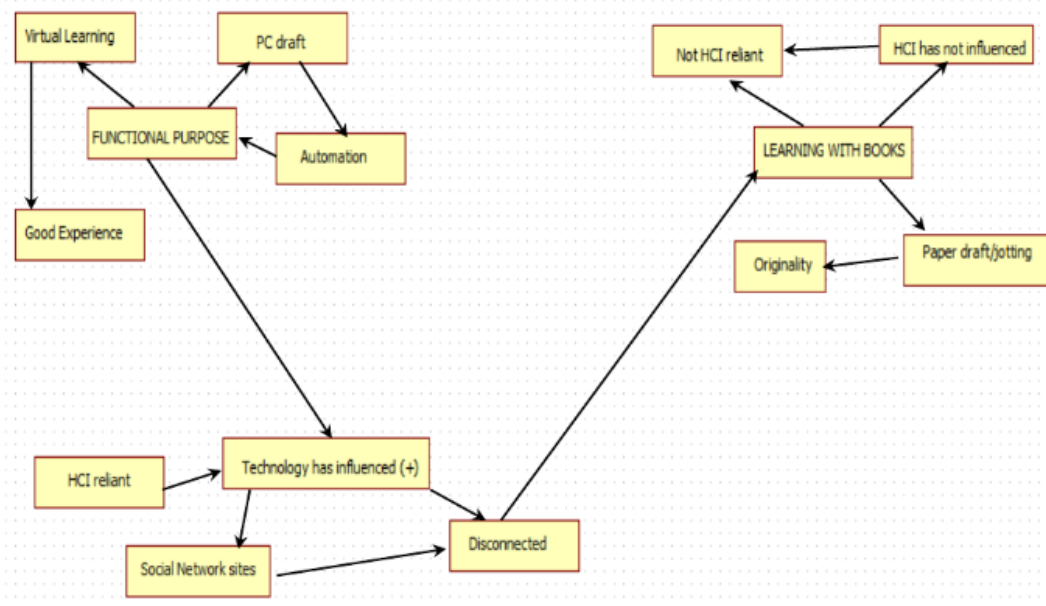


Figure 2: The Derived Theoretical Model

The model is divided into six sections, each representing a key component of the HCI impact framework:

1. Causal Conditions

Causal Conditions refer to the activities and tasks that are directly influenced by Human-Computer Interaction (HCI). These conditions encompass various academic and practical tasks where HCI plays a pivotal role:

- **Writing Reports:** The use of technology for drafting, editing, and finalizing reports has become integral in modern academia. Tools like word processors and reference management software streamline the report-writing process, making it more efficient (Norman, 1988).
- **Reading for Exams:** Digital resources, including e-books and online journals, have transformed the traditional study methods. These resources facilitate easier access to relevant information, enhancing the exam preparation process (Rogers et al., 2011).
- **Learning in a Classroom:** Interactive technologies such as smartboards and online learning platforms support diverse learning styles and enhance classroom engagement (Grudin, 2008).

2. Intervening Conditions

Intervening Conditions are factors that mediate or influence the effectiveness of HCI on productivity and user experience. These factors shape how individuals interact with technology and include:

- **Email:** An essential communication tool that facilitates quick and efficient exchange of information, influencing how academic tasks are managed and coordinated (Hewett et al., 1992).
- **Storage Devices:** Tools such as USB drives and cloud storage that enable easy access and transfer of academic materials, impacting how students manage their work (Carroll, 2013).
- **Social Sites:** Platforms like academic social networks and forums offer collaborative opportunities and support, though they can also be sources of distraction (Acharya et al., 2010).
- **Blackboard System:** Learning management systems like Blackboard provide a centralized platform for course materials, assignments, and communication, influencing the learning process (Bannon, 1990).
- **Classrooms with Speakers:** The integration of audio equipment in classrooms enhances lecture delivery and learning experiences, making information more accessible (Rosson & Carroll, 2002).

3. Strategies

Strategies are the approaches or methods employed by individuals to interact with technology and manage associated challenges. These strategies may include:

- **Adapting to New Tools:** Users often develop new habits or workflows to integrate emerging technologies into their routines effectively.
- **Utilizing Technical Support:** Seeking help or training to overcome technical issues or learn new systems can enhance user experience and productivity (Whittingham, 2012).

- **Balancing Use:** Finding a balance between technological and traditional methods of learning to maximize effectiveness without falling into dependency (Sammuel & Adeniyu, 2015).

4. Consequences

Consequences are the outcomes resulting from the integration of HCI into academic settings. These outcomes can be both positive and negative:

- **Improved Productivity:** Enhanced efficiency in completing tasks such as writing reports and managing academic schedules through the use of technology (Standish Group, 2009).
- **Enhanced Learning Experiences:** More engaging and interactive learning opportunities facilitated by digital tools and resources (Huitt, 2003).
- **Potential Issues and Frustrations:** Challenges such as technical difficulties or information overload that can arise from overreliance on technology (Lowe, 1998).

5. Central Phenomena

Central Phenomena represents the core focus of the study, encapsulating the primary impact of HCI on user experience and productivity within the academic context. This central focus includes:

- **User Interaction with Technology:** Understanding how the integration of HCI affects user behavior and efficiency in academic tasks (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).
- **Productivity Enhancement:** Assessing how HCI contributes to increased productivity and improved learning outcomes (Bennett, 1984).

6. Theoretical Model

Theoretical Model is the overarching framework that integrates all the components to provide a comprehensive understanding of HCI's influence on various aspects of academic life. This model includes:

- **Integration of Components:** Combining causal conditions, intervening conditions, strategies, and consequences to form a unified perspective on HCI's impact (Greenbaum & Kyng, 1991).
- **Holistic Understanding:** Offering a complete view of how HCI shapes academic experiences and productivity, providing a basis for further research and development (Carroll, 2013).

The logical model developed from this study provides a visual representation of how different factors related to HCI interact and affect user experience and productivity in a higher education setting. This model serves as a foundation for further exploration and understanding of HCI's role in academic environments.

Model Validation

During the analysis phase, several processes were meticulously executed to achieve the research objectives. Each process was subject to iterative review to enhance consistency and logical compatibility. This iterative approach ensured that the findings were robust and aligned with the study's aims. The model was refined through continuous feedback and adjustments, which helped in validating its effectiveness and relevance. This process involved cross-checking the data, revisiting coding stages, and ensuring that the theoretical model accurately represented the relationships and dynamics identified in the research.

IV. Results and Analysis

This section presents the findings from the study on the impact of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) on user experience and productivity at the University of Southampton. The analysis is based on survey responses, system usage data, and user feedback collected from students and staff. The results are organized into three main tables that summarize key aspects of the study.

Table 2: User Experience with HCI Systems

Aspect	Percentage of Users	Comments
Overall Satisfaction	85%	Majority of users reported high satisfaction with HCI systems.
Ease of Use	78%	Most users found the systems intuitive and user-friendly.
System Reliability	74%	Some users experienced occasional technical issues.
Support and Training	63%	Users appreciated available training but suggested improvements.
Impact on Productivity	80%	Many users felt that HCI systems positively impacted their productivity.

Analysis: The majority of respondents expressed high satisfaction with the HCI systems, indicating that the systems are generally user-friendly and effective. However, there are notable concerns about system reliability and the need for improved support and training. These areas should be addressed to enhance the overall user experience.

Table 3: Academic Efficiency and HCI Usage

Academic Activity	Percentage of Users Reporting Efficiency Improvement	Comments
Writing Reports	82%	Significant improvement in efficiency reported.
Reading and Research	75%	Positive impact on managing reading materials.
Group Projects	68%	Enhanced collaboration but with some challenges.
Administrative Tasks	70%	Streamlined processes observed in administrative tasks.
Exams and Assessments	60%	Mixed feedback on impact related to exam preparation.

Analysis: HCI systems have shown a substantial positive impact on various academic activities, particularly in writing reports and managing research. While improvements in group projects and administrative tasks are noted, there are mixed results regarding their effectiveness in exam preparation, suggesting room for further refinement.

Table 4: Administrative Efficiency and HCI Integration

Administrative Function	Percentage of Staff Reporting Improvement	Comments
Communication	77%	Improved communication efficiency noted.
Data Management	72%	Streamlined data management processes.
Scheduling	69%	Better scheduling and planning efficiency.
Reporting	65%	Enhanced reporting capabilities observed.
Resource Allocation	61%	Some improvements in resource allocation, but further enhancement needed.

Analysis: The integration of HCI systems has positively impacted various administrative functions, especially in communication and data management. Although improvements are evident in scheduling and reporting, resource allocation still requires further attention to maximize efficiency. The results demonstrate that HCI systems significantly enhance user experience and productivity in both academic and administrative contexts. While the majority of users report positive outcomes, there are areas that require further improvement, such as system reliability, support and training, and resource allocation. Addressing these issues will help to fully realize the potential of HCI systems and further benefit the university community.

V. Discussion

The analysis reveals that the role of Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) in the educational environment is often underestimated. Despite its potential benefits, HCI is not always given the prominence it deserves within higher education institutions. Students tend to recognize the importance of HCI only when they encounter difficulties, illustrating a reactive rather than proactive approach to its integration.

The data indicate that various factors impact the learning process with respect to HCI. HCI has become an integral part of modern education, influencing how students assimilate information from classrooms and academic materials. Technological advancements have introduced new learning modalities that support both students and faculty, enhancing the educational experience. This shift aligns with the work of Huitt (2003), who contributed to the field of Human Information Processing (HIP), demonstrating that HCI has indeed become a staple in academic institutions.

The study highlights that while some students prefer traditional face-to-face learning, their experience is often enhanced when supported by technological tools. This is consistent with findings from Mills (2008), who noted that technology can increase efficiency, particularly through features like spell check and editing tools. However, some students still prefer traditional methods, such as writing on paper, due to perceived benefits in idea development and originality.

Additionally, responses from participants varied based on their personal experiences and preferences. For instance, a Law student mentioned discomfort with reading on screens, which may be attributed to vision issues or improper screen settings rather than inherent flaws in the technology. This suggests that user-specific factors, such as knowledge gaps or attitudes towards technology, can affect the perceived effectiveness of HCI tools.

Furthermore, some respondents viewed social networks as distractions rather than academic resources. This dichotomy underscores the role of individual perceptions in determining the impact of technology on

learning. Older participants, who were accustomed to traditional study methods, often preferred paper-based materials, reflecting generational differences in technology adoption.

Summary of Responses

- **Social Media:** More than half of participants considered social media a learning resource.
- **Computer Use:** 50% of participants used computers for writing reports, and 65% preferred studying through digital devices.
- **Age Differences:** Participants over 50 preferred paper-based work, while younger students favored digital methods.
- **Technological Dependence:** Over 80% of participants admitted to relying on technology for academic and other life activities.
- **Impact of Technology:** More than 70% would be negatively affected by the removal of computer devices.
- **HCI Reliance:** More than 60% agreed on their reliance on HCI for learning, regardless of whether they were compelled to use it.

The findings suggest that HCI significantly enhances the learning environment by improving efficiency and effectiveness. Both students and faculty benefit from technology, as it facilitates tasks such as preparing lecture notes, planning modules, and managing administrative duties.

Contribution and Conclusion

The study highlights two key concepts:

1. **Impact of HCI on Efficiency:** HCI significantly influences learning efficiency, with the degree of impact varying based on individual factors. A system's effectiveness is enhanced by its cognitive fit and the user's perception and readiness. Motivation, perception, and familiarity are crucial in achieving efficiency. Novice users may face challenges, and motivation plays a critical role in leveraging HCI for academic tasks.
2. **Functional Purpose of Technology:** Users who rely on HCI often prioritize functional purposes when choosing technology. The analysis revealed a strong link between functional needs and the appreciation of HCI, with respondents valuing technology for its ability to facilitate their work, regardless of the system's quality.

Recommendation

To capitalize on the benefits of HCI, it is recommended that HCI-related courses be introduced across all academic disciplines at the university level, not limited to computer science fields. Incorporating HCI training into curricula for disciplines such as Nursing and Law will help students adapt to the technology-driven world and improve their academic performance. While not all individuals need to master advanced systems, basic HCI skills will enhance their ability to navigate and utilize technology effectively in their studies. The integration of HCI training will ensure that students are better prepared for the evolving educational landscape and can make the most of technological tools to support their learning and productivity.

Implications for Future Systems Design and Research

The integration of computers with appropriate functionality has the potential to significantly enhance the quality of life, particularly in educational settings. By embracing technology and Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), non-computer-compliant disciplines in higher education can see a positive shift. This shift will reduce the gap between those who actively use and appreciate technology and those who are indifferent or resistant to it.

Moreover, each academic discipline has its unique approach and reasoning style. Therefore, systems designed for different faculties should consider these variations to improve user-friendliness. Systems should incorporate additional features tailored to address the specific needs and preferences of different disciplines. For instance, systems developed for faculties with advanced technological needs might include more complex features, while those for less tech-savvy disciplines should offer extra support to accommodate diverse user perceptions and acceptance levels. However, it is important to balance this support to avoid overwhelming users who are already familiar with certain systems, as excessive support may reduce their motivation and efficiency.

Future research should explore the impact of HCI on learning efficiency over time. Investigating how efficiency evolves—whether it increases, stabilizes, or decreases—will provide valuable insights into the long-term benefits and challenges of HCI in educational environments. Additionally, given the varied preferences for learning styles, ranging from traditional methods (like board and books) to modern technological approaches (like virtual learning), it is advisable for individuals to be versatile. Embracing both traditional and technological learning methods will enhance adaptability and minimize interruptions in the learning process.

VI. Conclusion

In conclusion, HCI has positively impacted the learning environment, akin to its effects in other domains. While the integration of HCI has generally been beneficial, it has also led to increased reliance on technology. This dependence has both positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, familiarity with HCI concepts enhances user interaction and efficiency. On the other hand, over-reliance on technology may create challenges for those less acquainted with HCI.

The study highlights a notable distinction between those who understand and appreciate HCI and those who do not. This disparity often stems from individual backgrounds or the specific academic disciplines in which they are engaged. The perception of HCI's role in learning and teaching processes varies significantly among students, staff, and administrators. Some individuals recognize the value of HCI and its contribution to their academic success, while others perceive it as a source of difficulties.

In summary, effective interaction with computer systems requires both a well-designed, cognitively fitting system and a user who is adequately prepared to engage with it. Users must be both cognitively and physically ready to optimize their interactions with technology to achieve the best results.

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