

How Lower Grade Students Spend Their Free Time: The Generation Y Scenario

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to discover how lower grade students of Generation Y at the Faculty of Business Management, UiTM Pahang spend their free time with media than other academic activities such as reading text books, doing assignments, discussion, and so forth. It is crucial for the educators and parents to understand the role of media in young people's lives as media is among the most powerful forces in young people's lives today. Media is also able to influence the generation Y students' activities during free time because they are born in the digital age. Lower achievement students at the Business Faculty, UiTM Pahang were chosen as respondents in this study. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and the sample was obtained using a probability sampling technique. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results from this study are hoped to give useful information and can be used as a guideline to the educators and parents who are concerned with the impact of media on youth, specifically the lower grade UiTM students.

Keywords: *free time, lower grade students, Generation Y, media*

Introduction

Time is a resource quoted by economists that can be used productively or squandered (Larson, 2001). The success of an individual does not only depend on the time spent for each activity, but will also depend on how they manage the time more effectively and efficiently. Higher learning institution students in other perspectives also need to spend their time wisely during studies in the university. Except for the environment such as building condition, building features, building age, air temperatures and quality, lighting, acoustical control, school design and classifications, learning climate, teacher behavior and attitudes, and principal leadership, time is also another important factor that will justify students' achievement in university (Uline et al., 2007). Many studies have been conducted in developed countries like the United States of America and in 2009, it was found that children and adolescents from Generation Y (ages 18-35) spend an average of 7 hours and 38 minutes in a day with media, namely television (TV), video games, computers, and social networking other than being involved in doing other activities besides sleeping (Rideout et al., 2010). The trend has also increased tremendously from time to time for the past few years because the technology allows nearly 24-hour media access as children and teens go about their daily lives. This scenario has given some impacts on promoting the healthy development of adolescents, including parents, policymakers, academicians and public health groups.

The same scenario also exists in this country. This is supported by a survey conducted by Rashid (2011) that revealed most Form Four students in Johor Bahru, Malaysia would spend their time on accessing the social networking sites such as Facebook. According to Ngah (2010) as cited in Rashid (2011), young teenagers spent 16 hours per week on surfing the net. This has made them to become more addicted to access the internet everyday and give negative effects on their studies because they would have less time to do their revision at home. In addition, previous study conducted by Hasnizawati et al. (2009) also revealed that lower grade students at the Faculty of Business Management, UiTM Pahang did admit that they did not know how to manage their time wisely and because of that, they obtained poor results in their studies at the university. Thus, this study was carried out to discover how our lower grade students at the Faculty of Business Management, UiTM Pahang spend their free time with media than in any other academic activities such as reading text books, doing an assignment, discussion, and so forth. The findings from this survey are hoped to provide some solutions especially for the academicians to design appropriate programme or workshop to help the lower grade students to improve their academic performance by using existing media they are familiar with.

Literature Review

Basically, during free time students have an option whether to do the academic activities such reading the text, completing assignments, studying, preparing reports, discussing topic related to the program taken or they may do other non-academic activities such as playing video game, watching favourite movies on television, chatting in Twitter and Facebook and so on. According to Nonis and Hudson (2006), students who spend more time on the academic activities performed better than students who spend less time on academic activities. They also found that the time spent outside classroom on doing academic activities has a significant relationship with the semester grade point average. In addition, Uline and Moran (2007) in their study revealed that school climate plays a mediating role in the effects of the quality of school facilities on students' achievement. In their study, the aspect of how students spend free time did not take into consideration regarding the students' academic performance.

Nevertheless, Tanner et al. (2009) studied the differences among the business students on how they spend their actual time and how they think they spend their time. They have come out with different devices of media that may affect students learning time; namely computer, TV and radio. Surprisingly, students spent most of their time by using computer and get access through Internet. They like to do social networking with friends, doing homework and having entertainment such as watching movie, shopping and so on. Young (2006) examined the relationship between entertainment-oriented Internet usage was negatively related to students' achievement. This result indicates that educational contents on the Internet are unlikely to contribute to academic performance of students. Moreover, 90 percent of students spent their time on entertainment rather than doing homework. Wang et al. (2011) found that eighty percent of the samples admitted that they posted or responded to the social media while completing homework. Thus, it would be likely increase distraction to the students that can affect the students' performance.

Stollak et al. (2011) added variable to test the relationship between media based social networking and students' Grade Point Average (GPA). The result shows that they are negatively related. Based on their research, they found that the time spent on several sites such as YouTube, blogs, Twitter, MySpace, or LinkedIn did not differ. Majority of students spent only 15 minutes or less for these sites but more than 30 minutes on Facebook. These major differences show a negative relationship between times spent on the social network media and one's grade. Young (2006) however, concluded in his research that the social network efficiency has positive influence on academic performance. He measured the social network as ego-network efficiency and in degree of centrality. In other words, the higher in-degree centrality and ego-network efficiency are the higher academic grades students are likely to get. Thus he suggested that our efforts for improving students' academic performance should be shifted towards focusing on promoting relations between classmates from investing in private education. Kalpidou et al. (2010) also shared the same findings but the relationship was different between the two groups; the first year and upper class students. They found that the first-year students had a stronger emotional connection to and spent more time on social network media such as Facebook, but they did not differ in their academic performance. While, the upper-class students showed a positive relationship. The results suggest that the relationship becomes positive later in college life when students use media effectively to connect socially with their peers.

Methodology

The questionnaire used in this survey was primarily adapted from previous report conducted in the United States of America from 2008 to 2009 (Rideout et al., 2010). The survey sample consists of students at the Faculty of Business Management, UiTM Pahang who obtained Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) below 2.30 based on the April 2012 examination result. The sample was obtained using a non-probability sampling which means that all students starting from Semester 2 onwards from the Diploma in Business Studies (127 students) and Diploma in Banking (66 students) were chosen as respondents. Altogether, there were 193 students. However, 145 respondents answered the questionnaire and only 74 questionnaires were fully completed by the respondents. The questionnaire was completed by the students during the class break from 12.00pm to 1.00pm in the afternoon on the date the survey was distributed. The researchers were also present at that time to provide assistance if needed.

The questionnaire consists of two parts. Part A addressed demographic matters such as gender, age, CGPA and name of programme. In Part B, students were asked to answer all questions about time which the time spent on using media was referred to the previous day in order to obtain estimation of actual use rather than projected use or asking the students to attempt to guess at their average daily use. According to Rideout et al.

(2010), media activities included in the study are known as watching television and movies, playing video games, listening to music and using computers. Thus, the types of media device the students use during their free time were also asked in the survey in Part B. The data obtained from the study were analysed using descriptive statistics executed by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 20.0.

Findings and Discussions

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 indicates that 23 (31.1%) male and 51 (68.9%) female students have completed the questionnaire. 53 (71.6%) students were from the Diploma in Business Studies and another 21 (28.4%) students were from the Diploma of Banking. From the table, 42 (56.8%) students aged 19 years old indicate that they were in Semester 2, 12 (16.2%) students aged 20 were in Semester 3 and 4; 15 (20.3%) students aged 21 were in Semester 5 and 6; 1 (1.4%) students aged 22 and 4 (5.4%) students aged 23 years old were in Semester 7. It shows that majority of the respondents who obtained CGPA below than 2.30 were the first year students.

Table 1: Demographic Profiles

Measure	Items	Frequency	Percent
Age	19	42	56.8
	20	12	16.2
	21	15	20.3
	22	1	1.4
	23	4	5.4
Gender	Male	23	31.1
	Female	51	68.9
Programme	BM111 (DBS)	53	71.6
	BM112 (DIB)	21	28.4

Question 1: Personal items owned by the students

Table 2 shows the number of personal media device owned by the students and they were allowed to mark as many answers as they need. 64 (86.5%) students stated that they owned a cell phone, 59 (79.7%) students owned a laptop computer and 30 (40.5%) owned a smart phone such as Blackberry, Samsung Galaxy and others. Only 11 (14.9%) students owned an iPod or other MP3 player, 3 (4.1%) students owned a handheld videogame player and 2 (2.7%) owned a discman or walkman. However, none of them owned a PDA. It indicates that every student at the Faculty of Business Management, UiTM Pahang owned at least one of the personal media device listed in the table.

Cell Phone Use

Question 2: How often, if ever, do you do each of the following activities on a cell phone?

Referring to Table 3, we can see that most of the students often used their cell phone to text messages with the percentage of 54.1% (40 students). Next, 33 (44.6%) students often listened to music on their cell phone and followed by 19 (25.7%) students often used their cell phone to get connected to Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and other online activities. Out of 74, 15 (20.3%) students often got connected to the Internet via their cell phone and 12 (16.2%) students often took pictures with their cell phone. 7 (9.5%) students claimed that they often used their cell phone to play games, 5 (6.8%) students watched video and 3 (4.1%) students watched TV shows via their cell phone. On the other hand, majority of the students did not use their cell phone to take video as there was only 1 (1.4%) student reported that he/she often used his/her cell phone to take video. We can say that students prefer to use their cell phone to send/receive text messages, listen to music and use the Internet for entertainment and communicating with friends and family. This result supports the finding obtained in Table 2 where majority of the students owned at least a cell phone.

Table 2: Personal Media Device Possessed by the Students

Items	Frequency	
	Yes	No
1. Cell phone	64 (86.5%)	10 (13.5%)
2. A laptop computer	59 (79.7%)	15 (20.3%)
3. Smartphone such as Blackberry, Samsung Galaxy, others	30 (40.5%)	44 (59.5%)
4. iPod or other MP3 player	11 (14.9%)	63 (85.1%)
5. A handheld videogame player	3 (4.1%)	71 (95.9%)
6. Discman or walkman	2 (2.7%)	72 (97.3%)
7. PDA	0	74 (100%)
8. None of these	0	74 (100%)

Table 3: The Frequency of Cell Phone Use in Relation to Activities

Items	Frequency			
	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1. Text messages	40 (54.1%)	24 (32.4%)	8 (10.8%)	2 (2.7%)
2. Listen to music	33 (44.6%)	27 (36.5%)	5 (6.8%)	9 (12.2%)
3. Connect to Facebook, Twitter, MySpace etc	19 (25.7%)	28 (37.8%)	13 (17.6%)	14 (18.9%)
4. Connect to the internet	15 (20.3%)	31 (41.9%)	18 (24.3%)	10 (13.5%)
5. Take pictures	12 (16.2%)	30 (40.5%)	24 (32.4%)	8 (10.8%)
6. Play games	7 (9.5%)	27 (36.5%)	31 (41.9%)	9 (12.2%)
7. Watch video	5 (6.8%)	36 (48.6%)	23 (31.1%)	10 (13.5%)
8. Watch TV shows	3 (4.1%)	26 (35.1%)	23 (31.1%)	22 (29.7%)
9. Take videos	1 (1.4%)	22 (29.7%)	26 (35.1%)	25 (33.8%)

Question 3: Thinking only about yesterday, about how many text messages did you send?

Since majority of the students claimed that they often used their cell phone to text messages, Table 4 shows that 11 students spent their free time by sending more than 101 text messages to their friends and family but most of the students sent 51 to 100 text messages in one day. Nevertheless, 7 students reported that they did not send any text message a day before the survey was conducted.

Table 4: The Frequency of Sending Text Messages via Cell Phone

Items	Frequency
a. More than 101	11
b. 51-100	20
c. 26-50	12
d. 11-25	15
e. 1-10	9
f. None	7

Question 4: Thinking only about yesterday, about how much time did you spend texting on a cell phone?

Table 5 indicates that 23 students took about 5 to less than 30 minutes on texting via their cell phone, 11 students spent 30 minutes to 1 hour and 22 students spent 1 to 3 hours. Surprisingly, 7 students reported that they spent between 3 to 5 hours on texting and 4 students spent more than 5 hours texting on their cell phone in one day. This finding was also supported by Miller (2009) in her study on the impact of increased technology use on the free-time choices of fifth and seventh grade students in a Southern School District whereby her survey reported

that a cell phone texting took a substantially larger portion of students' free-time than talking on a cell phone. Lenhart et al. (2005) also indicate that texting among youth was on the rise. In addition, Reid and Reid (2007) stated that a short-messaging system (SMS) is expected to dominate mobile messaging in both traffic and volume in the last quarter of the present decade.

Table 5: The Frequency of Time Spent on Texting on a Cell Phone

Items	Frequency
a. None	7
b. 5 min – less than 30 min	23
c. 30 min – 1 hour	11
d. 1 -3 hours	22
e. 3 – 5 hours	7
f. More than 5 hours	4

Television Viewing

Question 5: Thinking only about yesterday afternoon between noon and 6 pm, about how much time did you spend on watching TV on a TV set?

Table 6 shows that out of 74 students, 14 (18.9%) students watched television between 5 minutes and less than 30 minutes, 3(4.1%) students watched television between 30 minutes to 1 hour and another 3 (4.1%) students watched television for 1 hour to 3 hours respectively. However, 54 (73%) students did not spend their time in watching television from 12.00 pm to 6.00 pm.

Table 6: The Frequency of Time Spent on Watching TV on a TV set

Items	Frequency				
	None	5 min – less than 30 min	30 min – 1 hour	1-3 hours	More than 3 hours
Between 12noon to 6pm	54 (73%)	14 (18.9%)	3 (4.1%)	3 (4.1%)	0
Between 6pm to midnight	54 (73%)	15 (20.3%)	2 (2.7%)	2 (2.7%)	1 (1.4%)

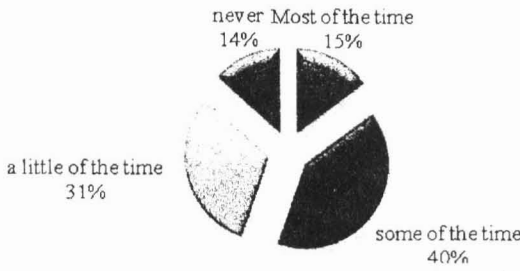
Question 6: Thinking only about yesterday afternoon between 6 pm and midnight, about how much time did you spend on watching TV on a TV set?

On the other hand, 15 (20.3%) students spent their time watching television between 5 minute and less than 30 minutes, 2(2.7%) students between 30 minutes and 1 hour, 2(2.7%) students for 1 hour to 3 hours, and another1(1.4%) student for more than 3 hours from 6.00 pm to 12.00 midnight as shown in Table 6. However, it was found that 54(73%) students did not spend their time watching television from 6.00 pm to 12.00 midnight. We can say that probably our students did not spend too much time on watching television because they do not have TV set at their hostel or rental house.

Question 7: When you watch TV, how often do you do any of the following activities at the same time: use computer, read, play video games, text message or listen to music?

The students were also asked to rate how often they use the computer, read, play video games, text messages or listen to music at the same time while watching television. Figure 1 shows that 11(14.9%) students often spent most of the time on using computer, read, playing video games, text messages or listening to music at the same time. This is followed by 30(40.5%) students who often spent some of the time on doing all those activities at the same time and another 23(31.1%) students spent a little of the time. 10(13.5%) students claimed that they never used computer, read, played video games, text message and listened to the music while watching TV.

Figure 1: Activities Done At the Same Time While Watching TV:use computer, read, play video games, text message or listen to music

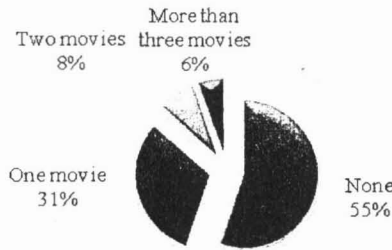


Movies

Question 8: Thinking about yesterday, how many movies did you see in a movie theater?

Referring to Figure 2, it was found that 41 (55.4%) students did not watch any movie in the movie theater the day before the survey was conducted. However, 23(31.1%) students did watch one movie, 6 (8.1%) students watched two movies, and surprisingly 4(5.4%) students did spend their time watching three or more movies at the movie theater.

Figure 2: Number of Movies Watched At A Movie Theater



Video Games

Question 9: Thinking only about yesterday, about how much time did you spend on playing video games on each of the following devices?

As seen in Table 8, the study also found that the number of students who were playing a video game hooked up to television between 5 minutes to 30 minutes was 10 (13.5%) students, 4 (5.4%) students for 30 minutes to 1 hour, and 3(4.1%) students for more than 3 hours. 57 (77%) students did not play a video game that hooked up to television set. Meanwhile, the number of students who were playing a video game in the cell phone for at least 5 minutes to 30 minutes was 29(39.2%), 7(9.5%) students for 30 minutes to 1 hour, 3(4.1%) students for 1 to 3 hours and only 2(2.7%) students spent for more than 3 hours on playing a video game in the cell phone. The remaining 33(44.6%) students did not play video game on the cell phone. It means that our students prefer to play a video game on their cell phone rather than playing a video game player hooked up to TV. Probably, it is easier for them to move around and spend their free time as they wish.

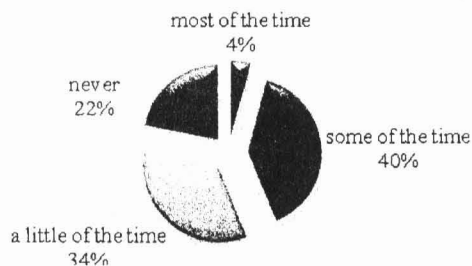
Table 8: The Frequency of Time Spent on Playing Video Games

Items	Frequency			
	None	5 min – less than 30 min	30 min – 1 hour	More than 3 hours
A video game player hooked up to TV	54 (73%)	10 (13.5%)	4 (5.4%)	3 (4.1%)
A cell phone	33 (44.6%)	29 (39.2%)	7 (9.5%)	3 (4.1%)

Question 10: When you play video games, how often do you do any of the following activities at the same time: use computer, watch TV, read, text message or listen to music?

As seen in Figure 3, the number of students who were most of the time using computer, watching television, reading, text messaging and listening to music when playing video games was 3 (4.1%) students, followed by 29(39.7%) students spent some of the time doing other activities at the same time while playing video games, another 25(34.2%) students spent a little of the time and 16(21.9%) students never used computer, watched television, read, text message and listened to music when playing video games.

**Figure 3: Activities Done At The Same Time While Playing Video Games:
Use Computer, Watch TV, Read, Text Message or Listen to Music**



Music and Other Audio

Question 11: Thinking only about yesterday, how much time did you spend on listening to music on each media device: radio, CD, cell phone, iPod or other MP3 player, and computer?

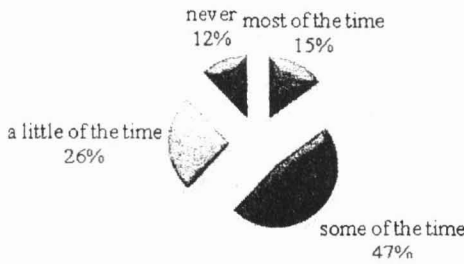
Based on Table 9, 31(41.9%) students would at least spend between 5 and less than 30 minutes in a day listening to music from the cell phone, followed by listening to music from the computer (22 students), listening to music from the radio (16 students), listening to music from CD (7 students), and listening to music from an iPod or other MP3 player (5 students).

While listening to the music, it was found that 11(14.9%) students used computer, watched television, read, text message, and played a video game most of the time. Some of the time 35(47.3%) students used computer, watched television, read, text message, and played a video game while listening to music, another 19(25.7%) students spent a little of the time, and 9(12.2%) students never used computer, watched television, read, text message, and played a video game at the same time when listening to music. The finding can be seen in Figure 4.

Table 9: The Frequency of Time Spent on Listening to Music on Each Media Device

Items	Frequency				
	None	5 min – less than 30 min	30 min – 1 hour	1-3 hours	More than 3 hours
a. A radio	44 (60.3%)	16 (21.9%)	6 (8.2%)	3 (4.1%)	3 (4.1%)
b. A CD	65 (89%)	7 (9.6%)	1 (1.4%)	0	0
c. A cell phone	20 (27%)	31 (41.9%)	17 (23%)	6 (8.1%)	0
d. An iPod or other MP3 player	61 (82.4%)	5 (6.8%)	6 (8.1%)	2 (2.7%)	0
e. A computer	30 (40.5%)	22 (29.7%)	14 (18.9%)	7 (9.5%)	1 (1.4%)

Figure 4: Activities Done at the Same Time When Listening to Music: Use Computer, Watch Television, Read, Text Message, Play Video Games



Computer Use

Question 12: Thinking only about yesterday, about how much time did you spend on using the computer for the following activities?

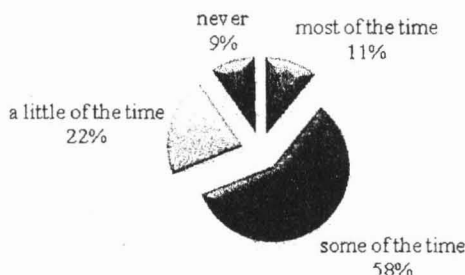
Table 10: The Frequency of Time Spent on Using Computer for Certain Activities

Items	Frequency				
	None	5 min – less than 30 min	30 min – 1 hour	1-3 hours	More than 3 hours
Doing the school work	28 (37.8%)	16 (21.6%)	20 (27%)	6 (8.1%)	4 (5.4%)
For playing games	45 (62.7%)	16 (21.6%)	8 (10.8%)	2 (2.7%)	3 (4.1%)
For instant messaging	45 (60.8%)	20 (27%)	6 (8.1%)	3 (4.1%)	0
Emailing	56 (75.7%)	15 (20.3%)	2 (2.7%)	1 (1.4%)	0
Reading magazines & newspaper online	55 (74.3%)	13 (17.6%)	5 (6.8%)	1 (1.4%)	0
Doing graphic (photo editing, web design)	44 (59.5%)	21 (28.4%)	7 (9.5%)	2 (2.7%)	0
For Facebook	22 (29.7%)	30 (40.5%)	15 (20.3%)	3 (4.1%)	4 (5.4%)
For website, upload and watching video	38 (51.4%)	22 (29.7%)	8 (10.8%)	3 (4.1%)	3 (4.1%)

Based on Table 10, 30 (40.5%) students would at least spend between 5 and less than 30 minutes in a day on computer for Facebook, followed by surfing the website to upload and to watch video (22 students), doing graphic such as photo editing and web design (21 students), for instant messaging (20 students), playing games (16 students), doing the school work (16 students), for emailing (15 students) and lastly for reading magazines and newspaper online (13 students).

Question 13: When you use a computer, how often do you do any of the following activities at the same time: watch TV, read, listen to music, text message or play video games?

Figure 5: Activities Done at the Same Time While Using a Computer



Referring to Figure 5, it was found that the number of students who spent most of the time watching television, reading, text messaging, listening to the music or playing video games while using a computer was 8(9.5%), followed by 43(58.1%) students spent some of the time doing other activities at the same time while using a computer, another 16(21.6%) students spent a little of the time and 7(9.5%) students never watched television, reading, listened to music, text message or played video games at one time when using a computer.

Conclusion and recommendations

The researchers concluded that 92.2% of the lower grade students at the Faculty of Business Management spent their free time with computer for other purposes rather than doing an academic activity such as doing the school work in a day. Another 83.63% of the lower grade students spent their free time in a day with their cell phone, and 55.64% of the students listened to music on different devices in a day and 73% of the students did not spend their free time watching television on a TV set. This study also shows that the lower grade students generally spend their free time more on the non-academic activities, and probably this situation has derived them to earn poor academic results in their final examination every semester.

The result of this study gives some challenges to educators at UiTM Pahang. Since there is a special programme named "Kudup Akan Berkembang" (a mentoring programme) run by a PDCA (*Plan, Do, Check, Action*) group under the Faculty of Business Management, the researchers which are also part of the mentoring programme should consider of designing a workshop that use interactive media for the students in order to grasp their attention and interest to help them to improve their learning styles. The students who are also known as the Generation Y are more attracted to use media device most of their time in their everyday life. According to Azniza et al. (2010) in their survey on the use of video as a teaching tool in a Malaysian Economy class, all students agreed that the learning activities became more interesting and enjoyable in the classroom. Perhaps the use of internet for online activities, video and music, to name a few, should be included in the module in order to increase the presence of lower grade students to join any workshop conducted by the faculty in the future. The students also prefer to use media devices such as cell phone, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace to communicate with their friends, family and even lecturers instead of meeting face to face with them.

Furthermore, instructors or lecturers could also be more creative in delivering their lesson to the Generation Y students through the usage of technological devices because the students would spend most of the time on doing non-academic activities. Perhaps using Facebook, Twitter or other technological social communication tools when dealing and giving instruction to students with regard to the lesson taught or any matter in the classroom including the social interaction would encourage their students to participate in the lecture. Sometimes, lower grade students pay less attention in the classroom, but they would behave oppositely when they are out of the classroom especially when using media gadgets or other technological devices. Lecturers are urged to open a Facebook account or Twitter in order to communicate well with the Generation Y students. This could also help them to understand their students better. Any information regarding on the tests, quizzes, assignments, group projects and others could be informed via the technological social communication media, rather than delivering and discussing the subject matter in the classroom. It is hoped that the number of lower grade students could be reduced with the aid of media. They should also be guided continuously and monitored by the educators about their studies with the usage of technological devices during the free time.

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