

The Importance of Reminders and Students' Performance

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ABSTRACT

Reminder is a message that helps people remembers something. As the current life style has gotten busier, people have an increasingly hard time to keep track of the many deadlines and due dates that they need to meet in daily life. The purpose of this study is to identify the types of reminders that are mostly preferred by students, to investigate the importance of reminders in students' performance and to analyze the effectiveness of reminders in students' performance. The students' Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) in the last two semesters is used in analysing the improvement in their CGPA. A set of questionnaires has been developed and distributed randomly to 110 students in UiTM Pahang as the respondents. This paper has found support for this prediction based on the data that has been analysed using descriptive analysis. Students need constant and continuous reminders to improve their CGPA. The reminders will be more effective when they increase the salience of specific events such as tests, quizzes, assignments or final examination.

Keywords: reminders, cumulative grade point average

Introduction

A reminder is a special type of message that people send to themselves or others, to inform about some future activities that they should engage in. For example, a colleague might send a reminder asking us to bring a copy of a paper to the next class. The reminders are used to signal others and ourselves that a task still needs to be worked on and/or that the task is ready for further processing. Reminders may be used to re-establish needed information in short term memory so that the trigger conditions for these reminders can be satisfied. Depending on the context, this has the potential to result in late fees, embarrassment and other problems.

The problem of deciding what to be done today, which topics need to be revised for the exam purposes, and when is the dateline to submit assignments require a consideration of all students' attention to get better grade in their current semester. This can be considered as an opportunity to them if they are planning smartly in their life. Buehler, Griffin and Ross (2002) stressed on 'planning fallacy' where people systematically underestimate the time required in completing tasks. However, Forsythe and Burt (2008) were prodding people to list specific sub-components of tasks to improve the accuracy of time-completion estimates. This evidence illustrates the potential for overlooking specific items when making plans.

Research Objectives

The objectives of this paper are:

- a) to identify the types of reminders that are mostly preferred by students.
- b) to investigate the importance of reminders in students' performance.
- c) to analyze the effectiveness of reminders in students' performance.

Research questions

In line with the aims and objectives of the research mentioned above, this investigation was designed to answer the following questions:

- a) What are the types of reminders that are mostly preferred by students?
- b) Are reminders important in boosting students' performance?
- c) Are reminders important in boosting students' performance?

Research Significance

The significance of this paper will be useful to the academic communities, the public and other institutions who are interested in improving students' CGPA during their periods of study in the universities and in considering a shift towards excellent human capital in future leaders.

Limitation and Scope of Study

The paper of this study does not look into variables other than reminders that may have influence over the improvement in students' CGPA. Hence, these aspects may be examined in future research.

Literature Review

Today, people's daily lives are full of activities, especially students in tertiary level of education. Besides classes that need to be attended, students also have to fulfil their co-curriculum activities, sports and also society requirements. Sometimes these situations tend to make them forget about their coming quizzes, tests, homework and assignment that need to be submitted in a given limited period of dateline. As a result, it will affect their performance and final exam result for that semester. Thus, sometimes we do need someone or something which may remind us about something or even for a tiny task that we already know. It is intended to refresh the information that has been recorded in the mind like a little knock on the back of our head that we need to shake loose of this stored information. Similarly, students also need reminders in their daily life as to be more organized and well prepared. These, may directly contribute to excellent performance in their studies. Basically, there are some studies that have been done on this topic such as Hart (2010), Stot(2007), Hulm(2010), Franco(200), Naismith(2007) and Markett et. al (2002).

According to Hart (2010), a study on Asperger's Syndrome Students is on how reminders can help them in organising their classes. According to him, teachers can use reminders to remind older students with Asperger's that a transition will be forthcoming. Students who understand the concept of time will be prepared to end their present activity when they hear sentences such as "Math is ending in five minutes and then it will be time for Science." Teachers should also be sure to provide ample time for notifying children with Asperger's syndrome of a special event that is not a normal part of the classroom routine. So they will have smooth learning time.

However, according to Stott (2007), reminders that use verbal communication, the effectiveness will reduce as times goes on. It is because, when students become familiar with the reminders, they tend to ignore and neglect those reminders. Thus, Stott (2009) also mention in another article, in order to make verbal reminders is more effective, the body language also should

give the same meaning. So the students will receive a clear instructions and it is easy for them to complete their task and thus perform in study.

As our technology becomes more advanced day by day, various high technological software or gadgets have been used to create reminders such as in their mobile phone, e-calendar and others. Students may set the reminders in their mobile phone to remind them about their coming tests, quizzes and others. Hulm (2010) mentioned that the SMS technology has given the opportunity to communicate instantaneously regardless of time and location. The idea was supported by Franco (2009). He argued that mobile phones can help students to be more organised. Students no longer need to bring along a paper planner but bringing a mobile phone is sufficient in order to write all the reminders.

In the scope of higher education, Naismith (2007) provided a discussion on the text messaging as a way of delivering message among the system. Lecturers, administrative staff and students communicated with each other using SMS. This will influence their actions and understanding of situations effectively. Markett et al. (2006) also had demonstrated that text messaging may promote interactivity in classroom.

Moreover, in medical education, most studies claimed that the reminders are needed in order to increase the awareness of the patients as well as the medical practitioners in certain preventive procedures. Rosser W.W (1991) used the Computerized Reminder Systems (CRS) to improve the delivery of preventive services in family practice.

Other than that, there are other studies on the importance of the reminders that is also being discussed in other field. Studies done by Sohn, T. et al (2005) they found that place-it notes were often used for creating motivational reminders to perform activities that would vary in priority over time. However, reminders can be more helpful if it is present at appropriate times in appropriate places. For example, a grocery list reminder is beneficial when we are passing the grocery shop rather than when we are at the workplace. So, they try to come out with new idea, called location based reminder as 'Place-Its'. It is a reminder at a physical location. Although a person is at home for the night, he can post a note at work to be retrieved in the following morning upon arrival. The reminders that people want extend beyond life in the research lab into all aspects of their personal lives. Therefore, reminders can be more helpful when rich contextual information is used to present them at appropriate times in appropriate places.

Other than that, reminders are also important in decision making process. A study done by Rausch (1999) revealed that a simple set of questions can serve as a reminder in some issues that need to be considered in every decision making process. Therefore, an efficient decision can be made which will give benefits to all organisations.

Tobias, R. and Buchsbaum, T. (2009) developed a model to investigate the effect of reminders used in campaigns for promoting new behaviour. According to them, the important function of reminders is to stabilise new behaviour patterns to allow habits to develop. The former behaviour was known to be frequently forgotten. Therefore, habits are needed as it is the basis for a long-lasting effect of a behavior-change campaign. Clark, C. V. (2008) also stressed that reminders are important in improving task efficiency. He argued that reminders are needed in a way that it develops a motivation process in the project management as the project leader reminds their project teams to be more effective in meeting the project deadlines.

According to Clark (2001), reminders can help project managers to improve project communications by standardising task reminders in project plans, reminding teams directly to clarify and heighten the importance of the task, using face-to-face communications and time reminders wisely throughout the task life cycle.

On the other hand, reminders sometimes can be a distraction to some people. They think that reminders are not particularly effective methods for them but more to disturbing them in doing their task. In addition, it is obvious that such reminder system can be ineffective as it has a number of weaknesses. People have to handle all these papers all the time and this can be quite laborious when there is a lot of task to be completed. For example, such system can cause littering the desks and monitors with sticky notes. Sometimes people may not have time to prepare the next sticky notes. One of the main disadvantages of such system is that papers are silent as they cannot act and effectively attract our attention.

Research Methodology and Data collection

Research Design

This paper is an exploratory study on the types of reminders, the importance and effectiveness of reminders in students' performance. A set of questionnaire was distributed in order to obtain information.

The Participants

The participants are among the UiTM Pahang's students from the Faculty of Business Management and the Faculty of Accounting. The survey questionnaires were distributed to respondents to be completed manually. These questionnaires were randomly distributed to 150 students from the Faculty of Business Management and the Faculty of Accounting in UiTM Pahang. 110 out of 150 respondents have completed and returned the questionnaires. The aim of this questionnaire is to gain the information according to students' perception on the importance of reminders. Later, we tested this information according to the students' performance. In analysing the improvement, decline or constancy in the students' performance, we referred to the students' Cumulative Grade Point Average in the last two semesters.

Procedures of Collecting Data

The procedures of collecting the data were done by distributing questionnaires with a mixture of open-ended and close-ended questions. Students were given nine (9) questions regarding the types of reminders that they usually use, their opinion on the importance and the effectiveness of reminders. We used the Likert Scale from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (agree) and 4 (strongly agree). Moreover, they were given a space to include their comment or suggestion (if there is any).

Procedures of Data Analysis

The data collected in this study has been analyzed by using cross tabulation analysis between all nine variables and CGPA. This is important to identify the multivariate frequency of variable distribution.

Data Analysis and Findings

The results are presented using descriptive statistics in table 1. Several variables which represent the importance of reminders contributed to the boosts in the students' CGPA. From the 110 of total respondents, 82.7 % were female and 17.3% were male.

Table 1: Percentage of participants' gender

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|-----------|---------|
| Male | 19 | 17.3 |
| Female | 91 | 82.7 |
| Total | 110 | 100 |

The data were collected from four programs, which are 40% from BM111, 37.3 % from BM112 and 22.7% from AC110 as illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2: Percentage of participants' programme

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|
| BM111 | 44 | 40 |
| BM112 | 41 | 37.3 |
| AC110 | 25 | 22.7 |
| Total | 110 | 100 |

The cross tabulation analysis between all the nine variables and the students' CGPA is shown in Table 3. First, an analysis has been done to verify the question on the types of reminders that are mostly preferred by the students. 41 students strongly agreed to be reminded verbally whereas 23 students were on non-verbal. These students have shown a boost in their CGPA. Meanwhile, 23 students have agreed to save their reminders using technological device such as the mobile phone. This is parallel to the study done by Hulm (2010) and Franco (2009).

Most of the respondents also strongly agreed on the importance of reminders as one way to increase the CGPA. Based on the table, 34 of them strongly agreed that reminders can make their life more systematic in a way that they can organize their task based on their priority. Other than that, 40 students who have increased their CGPA believed that reminders can ease their life and assist them in their academic field.

A test on the effectiveness of reminders has also been done using the same method of analysis. 37 students agreed that as they followed the reminders, they increased their CGPA. This is explained by 32 students who also agreed that the reminders made them well prepared for the future examinations, quizzes, assignments and others whereas 25 of them disagreed that the reminders are distractions.

Table 3: cross tabulation analysis

| | Variable | | CGPA | | | Total |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|-------|
| | | | Increase | Decrease | Constant | |
| Types of Reminders | I prefer to be reminded (verbally) | Strongly disagreed | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| | | Not agreed | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| | | Agreed | 17 | 11 | 1 | 29 |
| | | Strongly agreed | 41 | 33 | 2 | 76 |
| | I prefer to be reminded (non verbally) | Strongly disagreed | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| | | Not agreed | 9 | 3 | 0 | 12 |
| | | Agreed | 21 | 22 | 3 | 46 |
| | | Strongly agreed | 27 | 20 | 1 | 48 |
| | I prefer to save the reminder | Strongly disagreed | 2 | 3 | 2 | 7 |
| | | Not agreed | 20 | 8 | 0 | 28 |
| | | Agreed | 23 | 20 | 2 | 45 |
| | | Strongly agreed | 15 | 15 | 0 | 30 |
| Importance of Reminders | Reminder can make my life more systematic | Strongly disagreed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Not agreed | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| | | Agreed | 23 | 16 | 0 | 39 |
| | | Strongly agreed | 34 | 29 | 4 | 67 |
| | Reminder can ease our life | Strongly disagreed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Not agreed | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| | | Agreed | 18 | 14 | 0 | 32 |
| | | Strongly agreed | 40 | 30 | 4 | 74 |
| | Reminder can assist me in academic | Strongly disagreed | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | Not agreed | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| | | Agreed | 18 | 18 | 1 | 37 |
| | | Strongly agreed | 40 | 26 | 3 | 69 |
| Effectiveness of Reminders | I always follow all the reminders | Strongly disagreed | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| | | Not agreed | 13 | 10 | 2 | 25 |
| | | Agreed | 37 | 30 | 2 | 69 |
| | | Strongly agreed | 7 | 5 | 0 | 12 |
| | Reminder always make me well prepared for exam, quiz and etc | Strongly disagreed | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| | | Not agreed | 4 | 3 | 0 | 7 |
| | | Agreed | 32 | 22 | 2 | 56 |
| | | Strongly agreed | 23 | 20 | 2 | 45 |
| | Sometime I feel distracted with reminders | Strongly disagreed | 7 | 5 | 0 | 12 |
| | | Not agreed | 25 | 13 | 2 | 40 |
| | | Agreed | 20 | 16 | 1 | 37 |
| | | Strongly agreed | 8 | 12 | 1 | 21 |

In the analysis of qualitative data regarding the comments and suggestions based on the questionnaire, only 3 were filled out whereas the others were left blank. The first comment was highlighted on the importance of reminders. They agreed that reminders can increase CGPA and made them well prepared for the coming events.

I always set a reminder to remind me about the coming test and quiz at least a week before. This will ensure that I will be well prepared and confident to answer the questions... (respondent 4)

Another respondent has commented that strict monitoring should be done in order to ensure that they adhere to the instruction, otherwise they may ignore the reminders. He also stated in the questionnaire that his CGPA is dropping as he wrote:

Lecturers should announce and remind students every day. Sometimes I just ignore the reminders that I have put on my computers, hand phone and others... (respondent 53)

The other respondent added that he needed a reminder as it can be a motivation for him to study and complete his task on time.

I will make my own reminders like posting a short note on my study desk. So, every time I study, I will read the reminders as it keeps on reminding me. This is somehow like a motivation for me to study and complete my work earlier... (respondent 71)

In addition, he also gave some suggestions on how reminders should be conducted. The suggestions are:

Reminders should be changed to warning alarms. Students will feel afraid to ignore them... (respondent 4)

Lecturers should SMS students personally and check the progress... (respondent 53)

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, there are two aspects that need to be emphasised in order to deliver effective reminders which are the verbal or the non-verbal. Verbal reminders are delivered constantly by important people such as lecturers and parents directly to the students whereas non-verbal reminders are delivered by the systems such as sticky notes, notice board, SMS, emails, i-learn and others. We believe that if students are given continuous reminders, they may improve their CGPA as these reminders create awareness and attention. Moreover, by having reminders students' life will be more organised and systematic. This paper is limited to only the discussion of the types, the importance and the effectiveness of reminders in improving students' CGPA. The scope can be widened by looking at the relationship between reminders and CGPA boosts in future research.

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