

94 percent of high school students accessed social media on their phones during class

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Of Israeli high school pupils 94% access social media via their cell phones during class, reveals a new study conducted by the University of Haifa. Only 4% reported not using their cell phones at all during class. It was also found that in classes with more permissive teachers, cell phone use was lower than in classes where the teacher imposed strict discipline.

"The students use their mobile phones in various ways – to surf the Internet and access social media, to listen to music, take photos, play games, and send text messages and photos," the researchers point out. "Based on our findings, there is almost no moment during any class when some pupil isn't using their cell phone."

Although the vast majority of [high school students](#) in Israel have cell phones, the extent of their use has never been examined in depth. This new study sought to determine the scope of use, types of use, when they are used (in which classes), and whether there was a [correlation](#) between cell phone use in class and the type of discipline the teacher imposes in the classroom. The study, which was conducted at the University of [Haifa](#)'s School of Political Sciences by Dr. Itai Beeri and Dana Daniel, a research student in the pre-doctorate research studies track, included 591 [pupils](#) in grades 9-12 and 144 teachers of various subjects in three Jewish high schools. The identities of the participants and the schools were not disclosed.

Most common uses:

As noted, 94% of the pupils admitted to accessing [social media](#) or file-sharing sites (such as [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)) during class, from time to time or even more frequently. Some 95% of the pupils take pictures or make recordings during class for non-study purposes; 94% send e-mails and text messages; 93% listen to music during class and 91% actually talk on their phones during class.

The researchers also sought to determine the frequency of the students' cell phone use during class (from "never" to "very often"). The data indicates that on average, every pupil uses a cell phone in 60% of his or her classes.

"What stands out is the high use of interactive, multi-user functions, which can be very disruptive during the course of the lesson, and which have potential for long-term, ongoing and cumulative disturbance and damage that far exceeds the physical boundaries of the classroom or the time spent in class," the researchers noted. They also stated that, "The potential damage stemming from heightened cell phone use during class casts a pall on the entire educational system, on the school atmosphere, on the educational achievements of the class, on the pupil's own learning experience and on the teacher's burnout having to cope with discipline problems in class."

Does the teacher or class subject matter?

Cell phones are use more frequently in humanities classes than in math and science classes, and as the difficulty of the subject matter rises (in subjects such as math or English, which have higher-level classes), cell phone use goes down. Age also influences cell phone use: 10th graders use their phones in class most frequently, while 12th graders use them the least. Use of cell phones in class drops when the teacher is more experienced, but the gender of the teacher has no influence on class phone use.

The researchers also sought to determine whether there was a link between a teacher's discipline style (as reported by the teacher himself) and the extent of cell phone use in their classes (as reported by the students). Surprisingly enough, in classes where the teacher was more permissive ("I don't think students have to obey regulations and behavioral rules just because of someone holding authority"), cell phone use was less, while with students with a tougher teacher ("When I tell my pupils what to do, I expect them to do it immediately, without asking questions"), [cell phone](#) use increased.

"The research data shows that the use of cell phones during class has become routine," the researchers said. "Even if on an individual level such use is only occasional, in the standard learning unit – a class of 30 to 40 pupils – in nearly every [class](#) a majority of pupils are using their mobile phones in some fashion. At any given moment, at least some of the pupils are using their cell phones, and there is no teacher who hasn't been forced to cope with the phenomenon of [cell phone use](#) on a regular basis."

Provided by University of Haifa

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