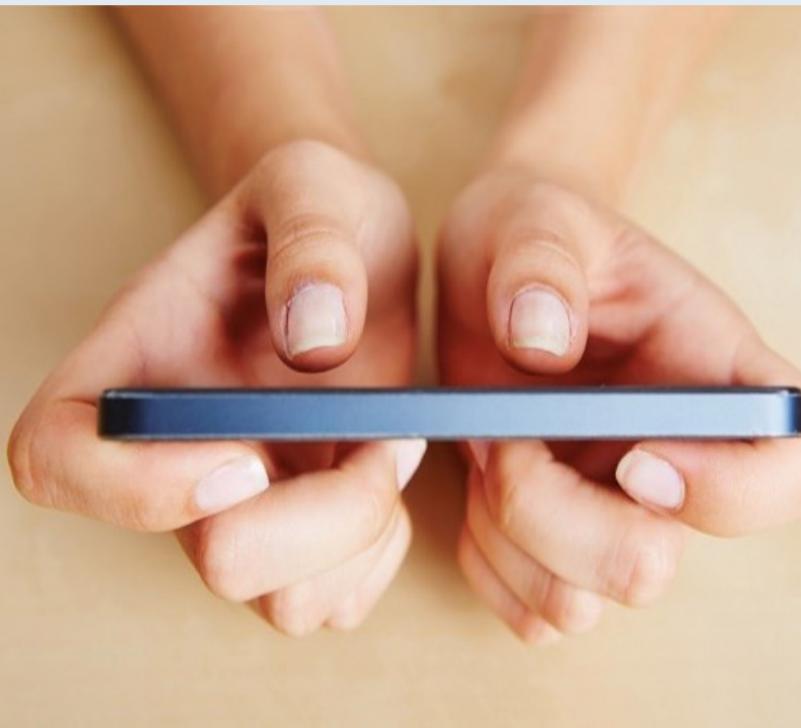


Student Smartphones: Tools or Barriers?

Attitudes amongst students in Higher Education in Chile and the UK — By Adriana Wilde

Why smartphones?

Smartphones are now more affordable than ever before, making them ubiquitous amongst some groups, such as students in Higher Education.

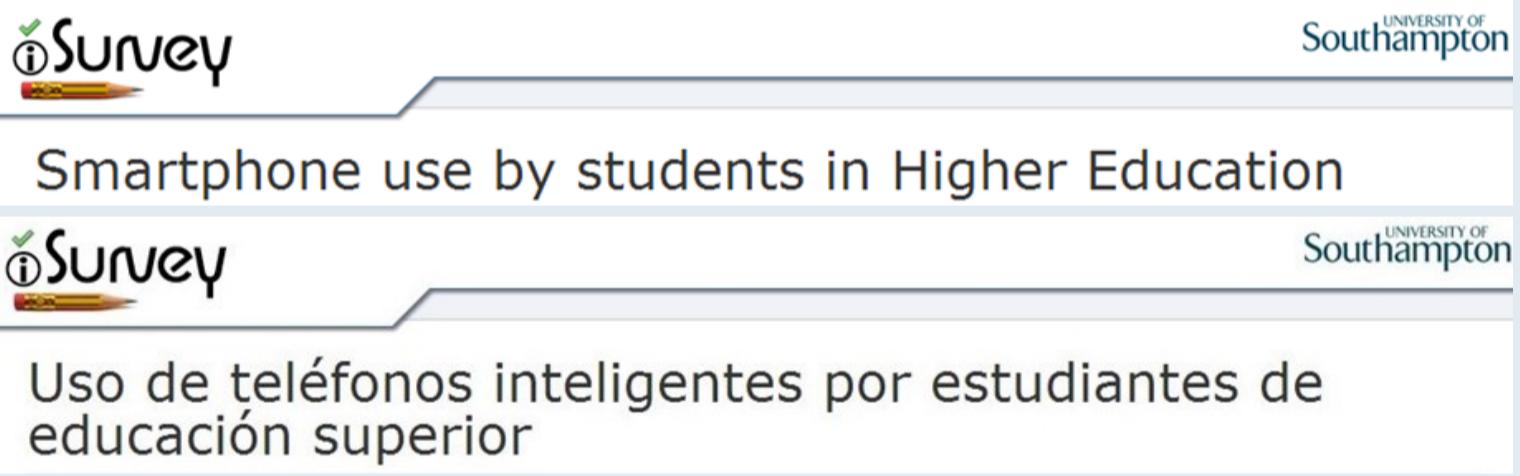


Their sensing, processing, and interconnection features offer many opportunities for learning and leisure.

But do they help or hinder student success?

Methodology

Higher Education Students in the UK and Chile took online surveys on their use of smartphones.



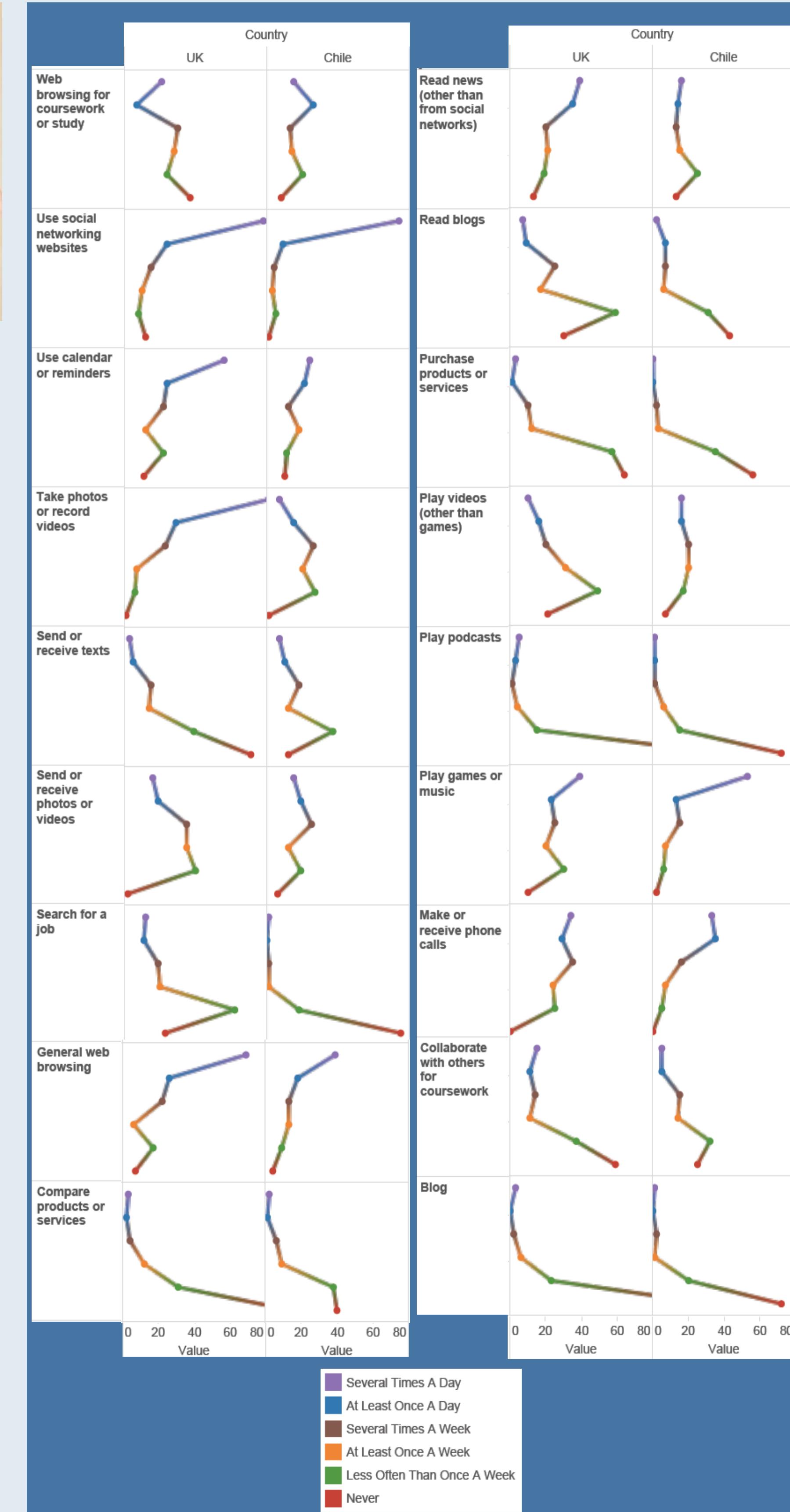
Quantitative and qualitative data from 164 participants in the UK, and 121 in Chile were collected during two months at the start of their respective academic years.

Only 10% in each group declared not to own a smartphone. Remaining participants answered questions about their **typical use** of smartphones as well as their **views** on whether they **help or hinder**.

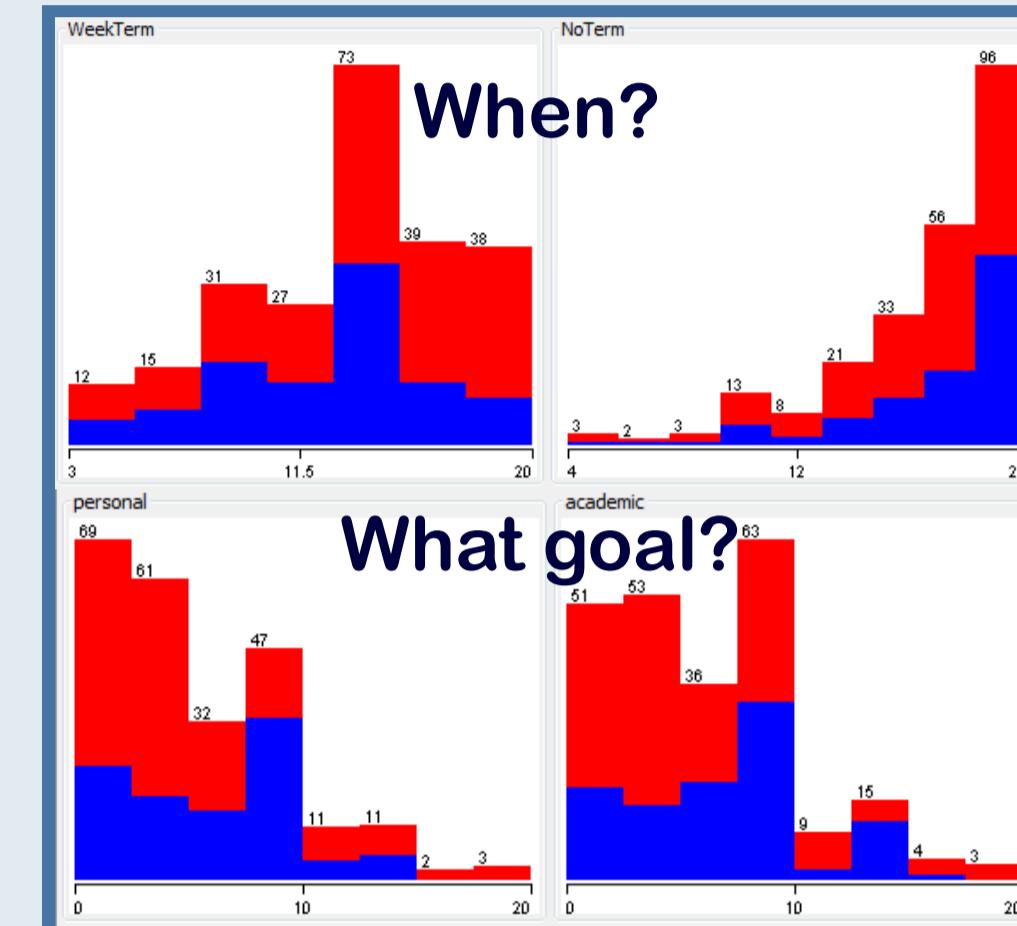
Open-ended questions were about features that a future educational application might present, such as those for mobile digital **behavioural interventions** (MDBI)^[3], i.e. context-gathering and recording as well as feedback provision.

Finally, general demographics were collected as an optional part of the survey.

Typical use (%)



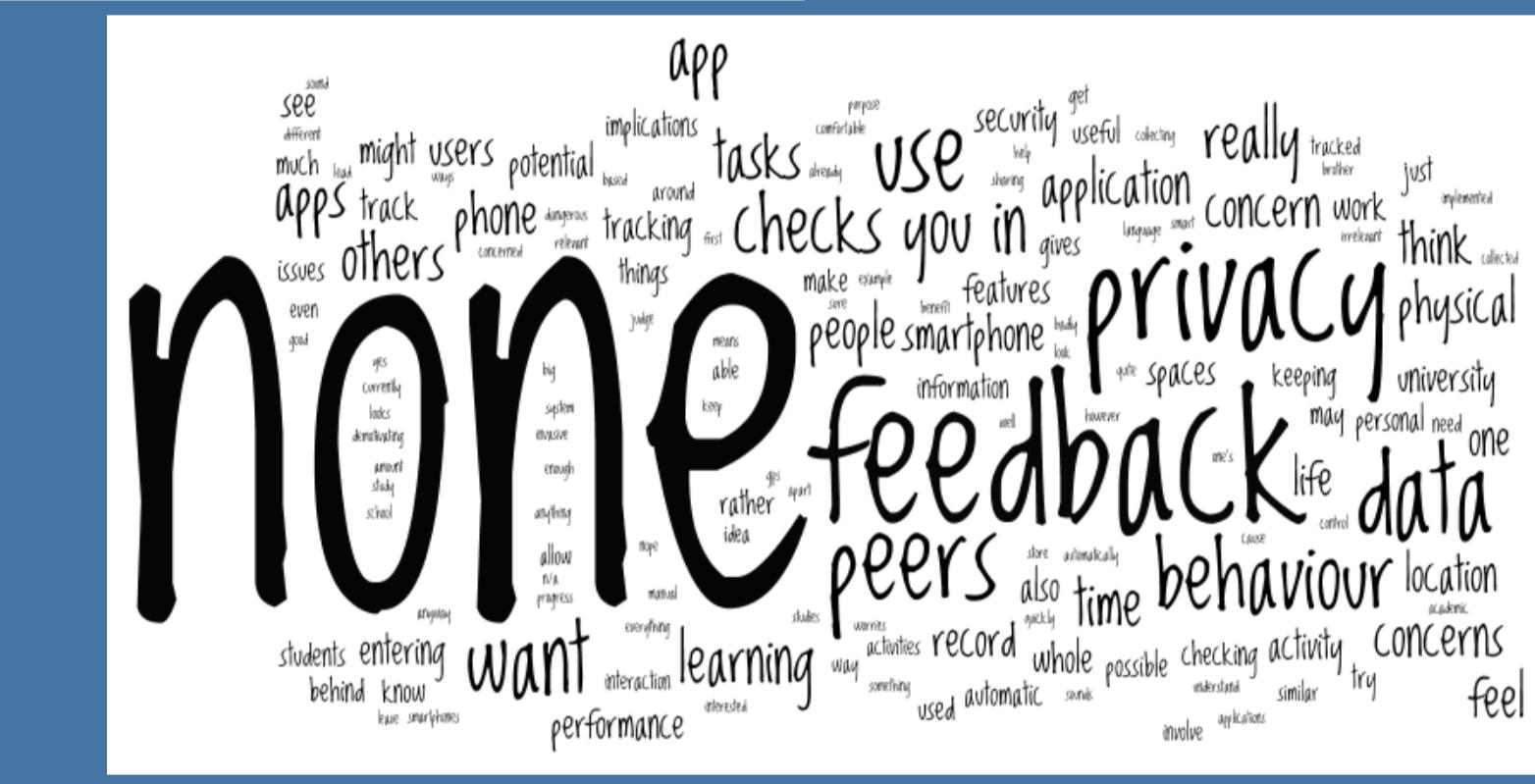
Views



For studies?
Personal reasons?



Helping tool? Barrier?



Conclusions

- With few exceptions, the usage patterns of smartphones are **very similar** between the surveyed groups. The participants report a **high frequency** of smartphone use (several times a day) for social networks, games and general web browsing.
- Further similarities are that participants in both groups view phones as a **helping tool** for their personal goals. Phones are scarcely used for academic purposes outside term time or weekends. Whilst most participants **don't object** to an app capable of delivering MDBIs, a main concern is that of privacy and the provision of feedback.
- Descriptive statistics showed no significant correlation between any of the studied variables (of typical use or of views) and the demographic data.

References

- [1] Survey “*Smartphone use by students in Higher Education*”, open for participation in the period 16 August to 18 October 2013 (hosted at www.isurvey.soton.ac.uk/8728), Ethics number: ERGO/FoPSE/7447
- [2] Survey “*Uso de teléfonos inteligentes por estudiantes de educación superior*”, open for participation in the period 13 January to 15 March 2014 (hosted at www.isurvey.soton.ac.uk/10807), Ethics number: ERGO/FoPSE/7447(amendment)
- [3] Dennison L . et al. Opportunities and challenges for smartphone applications in supporting health behaviour change: qualitative study. *J Med Internet Res.* 2013;15(4):e86