ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to provide some insights about the use and perception of undergraduate students about the applications of these devices at University and the importance they give to the adoption of mobile technologies in their education. The methodology used for this purpose was a designed survey distributed to different undergraduate students of Medical Schools from University of Salamanca. It collects information of the most relevant aspects that the students consider when they interact with mobile devices, how often they use them and the type of apps they download. Also, it makes an especial mention of training apps and their handling by the participants. The survey is based on the Technological Acceptance model of Davis. This model helps us to understand the current situation of mobile technologies from the point of view of students. This paper also analyses the existing relationships between the different factors that could influence in their attitude to accept the mobile technology.

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INTRODUCTION

The use of mobile devices is a reality in our Society. In fact, according to the last report of International Telecommunications Unit, there were around 7,000 million users in the world with a mobile line by end 2014, which represents a penetration rate of 96%. The number of Internet users globally was almost 3 billion (40% of world’s population). In Europe, ITU estimated the mobile users’ penetration was around 125% and the Internet penetration rate reached 75% by end 2014. Due to the increasing growth of smartphones in the world, apps have become very popular. In fact, currently there are more than one million apps in each main marketplace: Google Play market (for Android System Operating) and App Store (for iOS).

Therefore, there has been an incredible growth in the market of mobile devices in the last two decades. Until approximately 2012, Nokia was leading the market with its Operating System (Symbian), and then Google and its Operating System Android beat it. Google wanted to be part of the mobile phone market, so in 2005, acquired the start-up Android Inc., looking for its Operating System (Dahiya, Pahal, & Saroha, 2014; Elgin, 2005). In 2006, only ten percent of Americans owned a Smartphone (Podins, 2009). According to Industry Strategy Outlook, in 2Q 2008 smartphones accounted for 18.5% of the European subscribers’ devices as it is cited in (Podins, 2009). However, 2007 was a turning point in the mobile phone world with a stunning number of new models of smartphones being launched. The first iPhone owned by Apple turned out to be a revolution redefining the entire mobile world appearing as an opportunity to introduce new business dimensions: it introduced the mobile application development and the market space (Sarwar & Soomro, 2013) in the mobile phones’ ecosystem. An App - adopted slang for mobile application- is software running on mobile devices to help people’s activities (Molina & Gallardo, 2014).

Therefore, in July 2008, the first App Store was given to birth by Apple with about 800 Apps (Yoffie & Slind, 2008). Android market stepped in only three months later (now called Play Store). The Marketplace by Nokia, Blackberry World and Windows Phone Store appeared subsequently in 2009 (Molina & Gallardo, 2014).

The growth of these application-markets has been exponential. Nowadays, App Store and Play Store are offering more than one million Apps (148Apps, 2015).

According to experts the number of Apps considered in health category is estimated at no less than 40000 (Statista, 2015), where approximately 23500 of them appeared in the App Store (Pelletier, 2012).

However, in this health category, a lot of the existing apps have been developed targeting the same functionality, so it is very hard to know which one can be considered the best one among them. This is the main problem that the medical professionals find in order to choose the App they should use. Even in the education context it is not possible to know which one is considered more effective or even easier for the students to use. In addition, there is a report published by TheAppDate Company that analyses the way that consumers discover new apps. They reported that the 39,47% of consumers discover new apps through Internet and marketplaces in Spain (The AppDate, 2015). However, there is a lack of information about its utility and if they are really using it. One literature review performed for understanding the use of smartphone in medicine concludes that “there are very few good-quality studies to answer many questions about its use” (Oz dalga, Oz dalga, & Ahuja, 2012). On the contrary, the Global Research Study reports that the mobile technology offers real opportunities for health. Besides, some figures also support this new emerging market. The physicians have a preference for using smartphones and tablets. In Spain, this trend is also very similar as 90% of the