

# Mobile Application as a New Method in Learning the History of Photography Course

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Published: 7 September 2018

## ABSTRACT

Photography has an extraordinary history and numerous theories have been applied to its history and practice as part of an analytical research process contributing to the understanding of the medium. In this new era of technology, photography has become more affordable and transformed mobile phones into a digital camera. Not only for communication but smartphones has grown more with the application where a small program can make it more fun and useful. However, informal studies about History of Photography, students still relying on the slideshow in the classroom, copying notes and lending books from the library. This traditional method of studies sometimes set the limit on the students to access the information. Parallel with Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) to propel the nations' higher education to the next level, a quantitative study has taken place to get the feedback from students on using the mobile application in learning History of Photography course. A survey was conducted with 53 of students from semester two in photography program in a local public university. The findings of this study clearly show a very positive response towards the mobile application notes rather than the traditional learning methods.

**Keywords:** History of Photography, Mobile Application, Learning, Photography.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Wherever in the world we are reading or seeing, one thing is certain that photography and images are exactly not the same as it was during the conventional practice and method. It is almost unrecognizable when compared to image making between the era of analogue and digital. Nowadays, image makers need an entirely different set of skills to develop a successful career in this field. Apart from shadowing the traditional photographic markets, progress in technology has transformed mobile phones into a digital camera, pocket cinemas, and persuasive communication tools among the society. All these changes bring photography to another level of more exciting and challenging than ever before the conventional period (Diprose, 2012).

Photography has a bizarre history and plenty of theories have been applied to its progress and practice as part of an analytical research process contributing to the understanding of the medium. Fox (2012) believe that through the growth from the variety of movements knowledge about camerawork and its histories is becoming a worldwide subject. Histories of photography connect photographers together and often propose ideas about how things are related to a specific storyline.

History is one of those subjects in schools and universities curriculum that has consistently grieved from negative view. This problem clearly stated Joseph (2011), individual with no interest in the subject often make comments to advocate that history is boring and irrelevant to contemporary and daily life. In the formal studies about History of Photography, students are completely relying only on the slideshow in the classroom, copying notes and lending a book from the library as another initiative. The problems arise when there are not enough books for everyone to borrow and the book is too big and

bulky. This traditional method of studies sometimes set the limit on the students to access the information.

In order to enhance learning method in History of Photography subject, a mobile application notes on History of Photography has been developed. This research intended to ensure the knowledge on History of Photography course is acceptable and easy to access by students

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 History of Photography

Throughout its history, photography rapidly changed its technological means, though each type was a variant of light writing. Within a decade of presentation to the world, photography was enmeshed in modernity while it helped to shape the modern condition in which knowledge is increasingly visualised. In 1852, the photographic practice had extended to so many applications that one observer concluded: "photography is at the same time a science, an art, and an industry" (Marien, 2011).

The photographic process has been in existence for over a hundred and fifty years. From its initial purpose as a visual record keeper to its recognised status as an art form today, Photography is all around us (Moh, 2004).

### 2.2 The Rule of Mobile Application in Education

Smartphones have gone from being just a toy for the tech-obsessed to something that almost everyone on this planet has in their pocket. Whitfield (2014) explains that alongside the smartphones have come the world of 'apps' where small programs that can make a phone, even more, fun or useful. He also clarifies that there are many types of the phone application, either to pass the time such as games and an application to keep people up to date with latest news and information from eye-catching websites or the biggest newspapers on the planet. This study parallel with the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) tagline; "*SOARING UPWARDS*".



Figure 1: MOHE tagline

This tagline (Fig.1) is used to portray Malaysia's higher education landscape that is progressively improving, while at the same time, it acknowledges that continuous effort is needed to propel the nation's higher education to the next level (MOHE,2017)

### 2.3 Transformation in Communication

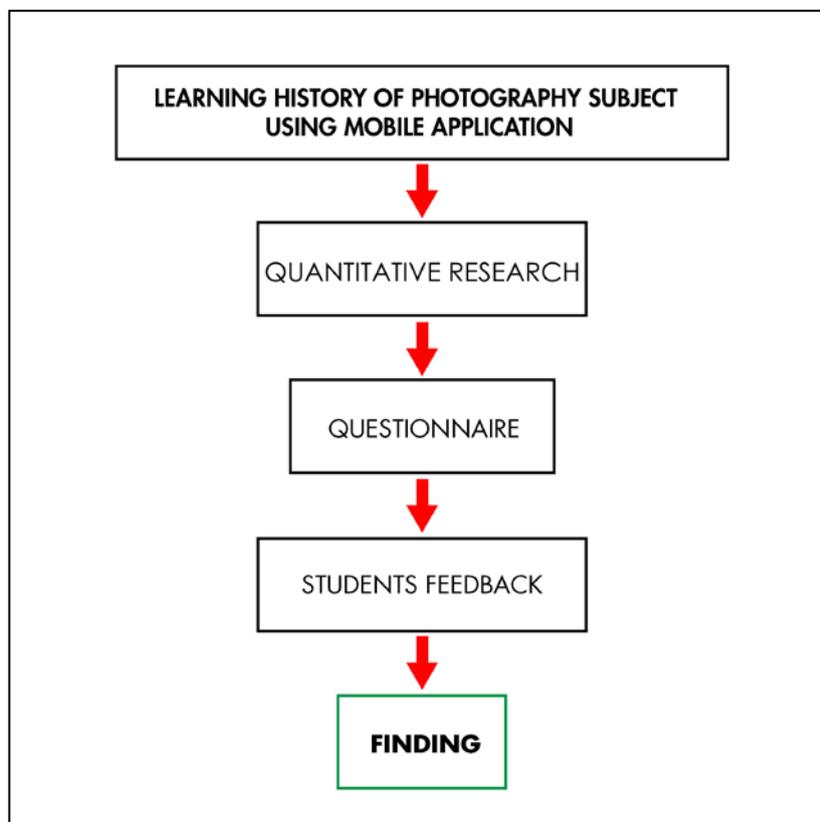
The process of change in communication is an essential process towards the developments of the overall country. Society in a nation-emerging, communications needs change by way of their lives whether in the field of social, economic, and political conditions could be improved. There is no doubt that a change in communication is the core of all development (Muhammad, 2014).

## 2.4 Mobile Learning

The explosive growth of internet services and the widespread diffusion of mobile devices are offering ubiquitous and time-independent access to a massive amount of online resources. In particular, educational experiences on non- conventional context have been made possible and the use of mobile learning (m- learning). The availability of open technologies has participated in the diffusion of such a trend (Salomoni, 2011).

The mobile learning community has demonstrated that it can enhance, extend and enrich the concept and activity of learning. Learning with mobile devices increases learners' enthusiasm and motivation (Traxler, 2013)

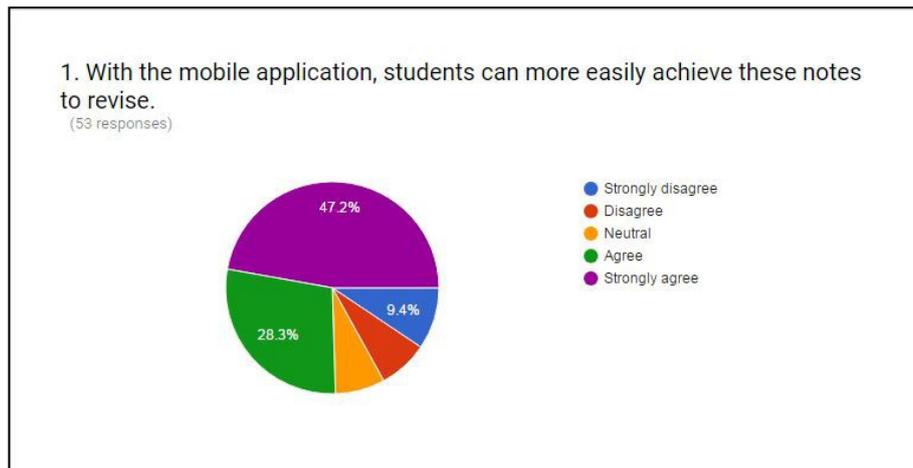
## 3. METHODOLOGY



**Figure 2:** Research Design

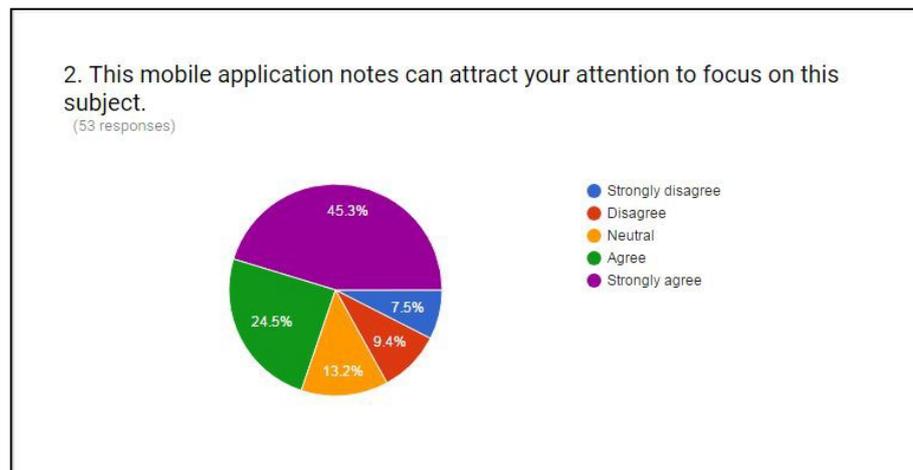
This research applies the quantitative approach by contributing the questionnaire towards the 2<sup>nd</sup>-semester photography students that register the History of Photography subject in their curriculum structure. The result of the survey from 53 respondents compiled as below:

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



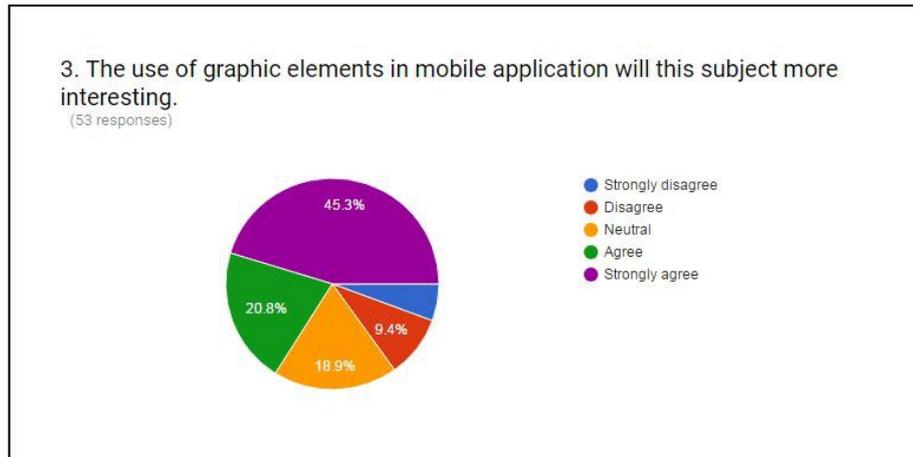
**Figure 3: Result 1**

The result is shown in figure 3 that 47.2% strongly agree and 28.3% agree with students that mobile application will be coming handy to them. 7.5% of students' remains to disagree and 7.5% neutral towards this mobile application learning. 9.4% of students disagree with this advanced method of learning.



**Figure 4: Result 2**

Referring to figure 4, 24 students strongly agree that mobile application will attract their attention more to focus on the history of photography subject while 13 students also agree. 7 students show a neutral response. A total of 4 students strongly disagrees, and the balance 5 students disagree with the new approach.



**Figure 5: Result 3**

Figure 5 shows 24 out of 53 students strongly agree with mobile application approve because of the graphic elements that can stimulate their interest. 20.8% also agree with this new approach. However, 10 students remain neutral reaction toward the idea. 5 students disagree, and only 5.7 students strongly disagree towards this fresh innovation style.

## 5. FINDINGS

Overall, the majority of the students show a very positive response towards this mobile application notes. It shows that most of the students agreed that mobile application could make them access this History of photography notes easier rather than current method. This mobile application also can grab their attention by having the more graphic element on it. Almost half of the students strongly agreed that mobile application notes might attract their attention and more focus on this subject classes.

## 6. CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, the learning of History of Photography subject is important to photography students so that they can understand more about the evolution of the photography technique and the functions of the camera itself. The use of mobile application as a tool in learning History of Photography subject is an alternative way to make the learning in the classroom more efficient and more understandable to students. This is equivalent to what the Ministry of Higher Education had suggested.

## 7. RECOMMENDATION

These study findings should be shared by other related students that encountered the same problem in learning history course. This can be a helpful tool to produce an effective learning experience for the students and be used as a guideline, especially for future students. For future researchers, a depth study using Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) can be applied on the mobile application notes prototype to determine the behavioural intention to use towards the different group of users.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our gratitude goes to the Department of Photography, UiTM (Perak) for their support and cooperation in data collection stage. We also thank to the reviewers towards their helpful comments and suggestions which have improved this paper.

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