

STUDENT ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT MOBILE APPLICATION: A CASE OF STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY (2014 eLearning Innovations Conference and Expo-Kenya)

Track 1: Mobile Learning: There's an App for That!

Fatma BALALA, Ismael ATEYA and Everlyne MAKHANU
@iLabAfrica, *Strathmore University, P.O Box 59857, Nairobi, 00200, Kenya*

Abstract: Over the last decade, students in higher education around the world have been facing a number of challenges and potential threats to attain academic excellence. The major problem identified in this research was the lack of a solution based on current technology and data infrastructure to provide response to address student challenges. Most of the students face poor time management skills, unavailability of academic records, ineffective communication links to lecturers and no guide to funding/bursary information and lack of instant announcement notification.

This paper is based on an applied research which implemented research tools such as observations, interviews and questionnaires with the aim of identifying the common challenges encountered in higher education and thereafter proposing a hi-tech unified solution for the students. Strathmore University students were provided with questionnaires to collect data and also inferences were drawn from observation to document the features and services of details of Strathmore system were documented. Few students from a public university were interviewed use response draw comparisons. Eventually a comprehensive review of challenges and current solutions were presented from findings of the survey. The suggestions obtained from the literature review and conclusions of research findings' influenced the design of an academic solution. Hence an android based mobile application was developed to address students' challenges in the following sections Planner, Timetable, Records, Communication and an instant notification service.

The prototype application was tested among a few Strathmore students and an acceptance level of 81.5% calculated from findings. The test results showed that the application has improved students' time management skills by 25%, enhanced communication by 33% and has improved the students' general performance by a grade difference of 15%. These values are a proof of the positive impact it has on university and college students. The dissertation has systematically identified the student challenges, literature about common architecture and solutions, carried out a survey using questionnaires and interviews, analyzed the results and drew conclusions. Finally a mobile application was designed to fill the identified technological gap and tested to prove its acceptance and effectiveness.

Keywords: Prototype application, instant notifications, mobile application planner, hi-tech unified solution