



The Effect of a Technology Ban on Professor-Student Rapport in the College Classroom

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Introduction

- Technology usage in the classroom has become an increasingly important issue. However, the results of studies investigating the impact of technology usage have been mixed (Hembrooke & Gay, 2003; Poirier and Feldman, 2007).
- Most research has focused on academic performance but not on how technology usage impacts student-teacher interactions.
- Rapport is defined as the mutual respect, level of comfort, and engagement between professors and students.
- Recent research indicates that students who reported experiencing rapport with their professor felt more engaged with the Instructor and the course material (Benson et al., 2005).
- These students also indicated that they were more likely to participate in pro-academic behaviors such as attending class regularly, communicating effectively with professors, and studying.
- Technology usage in classrooms could impact rapport, as students who are subjected to less distraction may be able to engage more extensively both with the course content and with the professor.

Hypothesis

We hypothesize that students subjected to a technology ban will report higher levels of rapport with the professor as well as higher midterm grades in comparison to students who are permitted to use technology without restriction.

For more information about this poster please contact Aileen Lian (AL7168@Bard.edu).

Participants

Technology-Ban Condition

- 17 participants
- 8 male, 11 female
- Average age: 19 years old

Technology-Permitted Condition

- 21 participants
- 8 male, 13 female
- Average age: 19 years old

Method

Thirty-eight participants were recruited from two Introductory Psychology courses taught by the same professor. A technology ban (i.e., restriction of all technology usage including usage of laptops, tablets, phones, and other electronics during class; the “**technology-ban**” condition) was instituted for students in one of the courses. Students in the other course (i.e., the “**technology-permitted**” condition) were permitted to use technology without consequence. Halfway through the semester, research assistants administered a survey to the students in both classes. The survey consisted of four demographic questions and 51 questions assessing their self-reported interest in the class and perceived rapport with the instructor and incorporated standard measures such as the Professor-Student Rapport Scale (Wilson et al., 2010).

Results

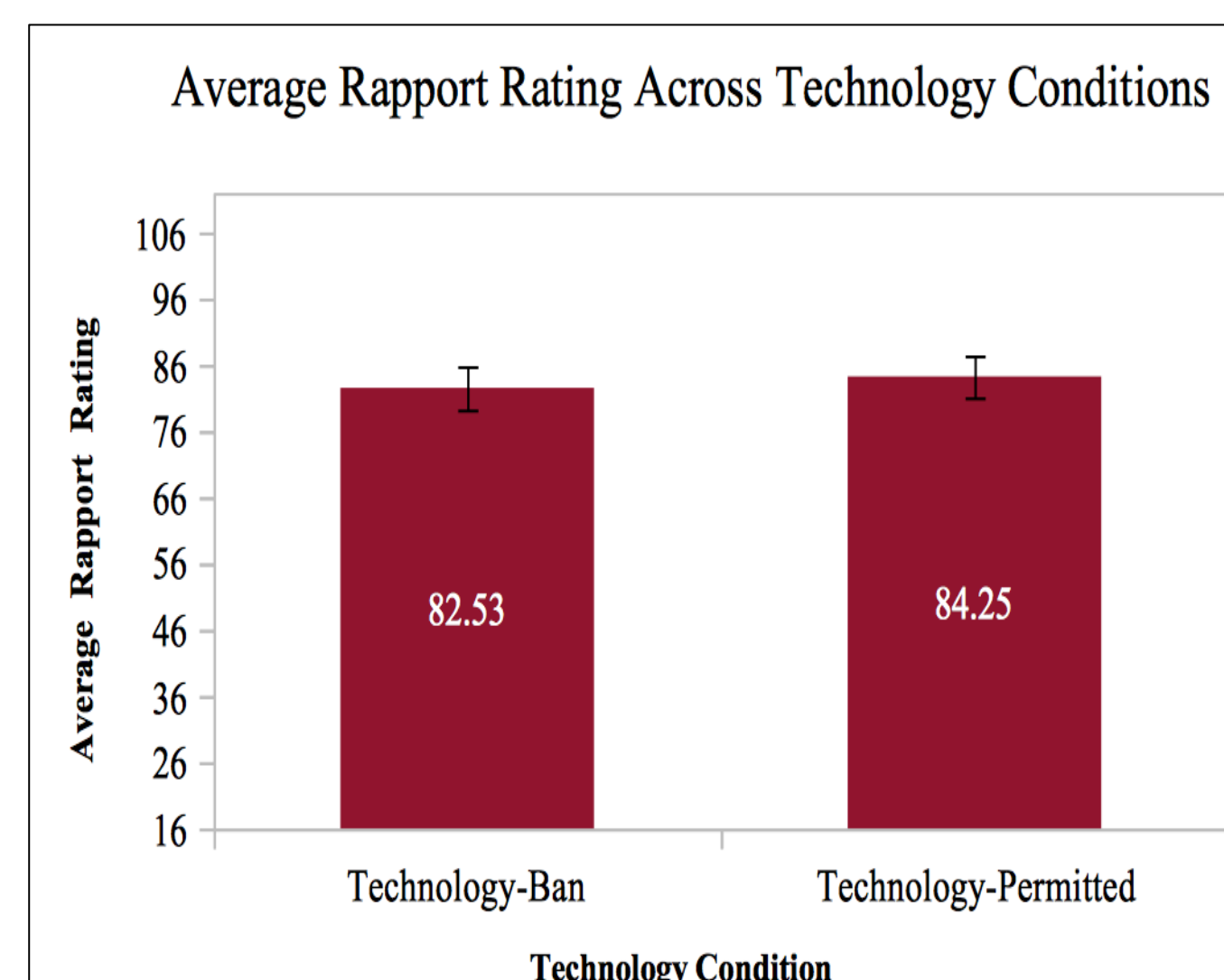


Figure 1. There was no significant difference in average rapport ratings between the technology-ban condition ($M = 82.53, SD = 13.53, t(36) = -.376, p = .709$) and the technology-permitted condition ($M = 84.25, SD = 14.13, t(35.47) = -.378, p = .708$). Error bars represent the standard error of the mean.

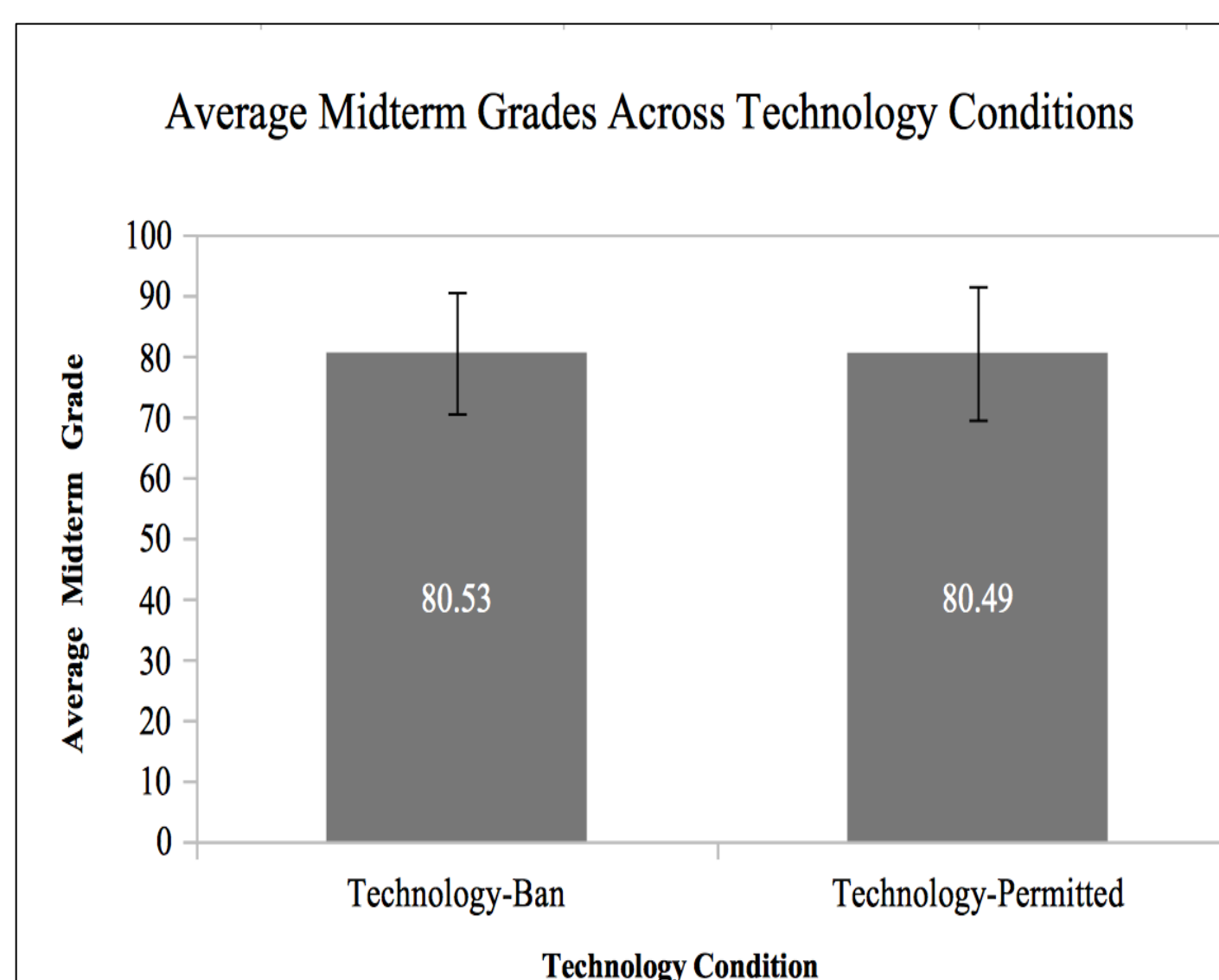


Figure 2. There was no significant difference in average midterm grades between the class with the technology ban (the technology-ban condition) and the class without a technology ban (the technology-permitted condition). Error bars represent the standard deviation.

Conclusions

The technology ban did not significantly affect student-professor rapport. The technology-permitted class did not have significantly lower midterm grades than the class with the technology ban. This was likely impacted by the fact that most students in the technology-permitted condition did not actually utilize technology as an integrated part of the course ($n = 19$). This may have been due to the structure of the lecture-based course.

Further research could include a manipulation of technology usage in order to ensure relatively equal distribution of technology and non-technology users. Additionally, more data could be collected on students' typical technology habits in the classroom in order to determine if technology usage is as prevalent as research suggests.

References

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