Adolescents’ Mobile Phone Use While Crossing the Road

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## Sample

1080 pedestrian road crossings made with an electronic device visible to the observer (31.37%) and 2362 without an electronic device (68.62%).

## Implications For Educators About

Other

## Implications For Policy Makers About

Other

## Other PolicyMaker Implication

Road safety

# Abstract

Phones and other portable technology can be a distraction for pedestrians, affecting their ability to cross a road safely. This study focused on adolescents and investigated whether using a phone distracts attention while crossing the road. A field observation outside a secondary school in the north of England was carried out over a four-week period in 2018 with permission from the school. Observations included recording what accessories the pedestrian was carrying (phone, headphones or another electronic device) and their associated action (whether they were holding the device, speaking into a phone, looking at it, holding it to their ear or interacting with it manually). We observed whether the pedestrian looked (or failed to look) left and right before crossing the road, whether they crossed when the pedestrian light was on green or red, and whether they crossed within the cross-walk. We found that 31.37% of road crossings were made by adolescents with a phone or other device. They looked left and right before crossing less frequently when they had an electronic device with them, when looking at the screen and when texting or swiping. In conclusion, the safety of adolescent pedestrians is affected by mobile phones and music players.

# Outcome

"Almost a third of road crossings by school students on the route to and from school were made
while using a mobile phone or music player. They were observed holding and interacting with these
devices in a variety of ways while crossing, including speaking, texting or swiping, as well as listening. Regardless of whether a phone or device was in use, unsafe pedestrian behaviours were frequently observed. Mobile phones and other portable digital devices distracted adolescents’ looking behaviour at the roadside, especially when visual attention to the device was required." (Baswail et al., 2019: 7).