International Journal of Educational Research and Technology
IJERT: Volume 16 [3] September 2025: 01-06
P-ISSN 0976-4089; E-ISSN 2277-1557

Website: www.soeagra.com/ijert.html
DOI: 10.15515/ijert.0976 4089.16.3.16

Distracting Factors and Students' Academic Performance of Adolescence in Secondary Schools in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State

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ABSTRACT
This study determined the relationship between distracting factors and students' academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Two objectives, research questions and hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study consisted of 6,083 SS II students in the 15 public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area for the 2023/2024 academic year. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 250 SS II students for the study. Data was collected using a researcher developed instruments named, Distracting Factors Questionnaire (DFQ) and Performance Test on Government (PTG). DFQ and PTG were subjected to face validity by three experts. The reliability of 0.83 and 0.81 for DFQ and PTG were determined using Cronbach's Alpha reliability technique. Data analysis was done using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics. The findings of the study revealed that there was significant relationship between electronic gadgets, peer influence, and students' academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo. It was recommended among others that students need guidance on leveraging social networking sites for academic enhancement.
***Key words**: Distracting factors, academic performance, electronic gadgets, peer influence adolescence.*

Received 20.05.2025 Revised 21.06.2025 Accepted 10.08.2025

CITATION OF THIS ARTICLE
Jane Bassey E, Roseline Ekim D E and Ekong Emaeyak E. Distracting Factors and Students' Academic Performance of Adolescence in Secondary Schools in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State. Inter. J. Edu. Res. Technol. 16[3] September 2025; 01-04.

INTRODUCTION

Distraction is the process of diverting the attention of an individual or group from a desired area focus and thereby blocking or diminishing the reception. It is also an internal intension of the mind towards involvement of the person, (Aligoldbandi, 2015). The most common type of distraction among students is hijacked distraction where an individual is focused on something but is not in control of his attention, as something else captures the attention of the individual and as such focus on the wrong thing. So, this kind of distraction is not about being unable to concentrate, but it is about concentrating on the wrong thing at the wrong time because one's attention is pulled away.

According to Chambliss, Gartenberg, Honrychs, Elko, March and McGillet (2017), technological advancements have made managing potential distractions among today's adolescents quite challenging. In their study, the researchers engaged a sample of 62 students aged 17-23 years enrolled in an introductory psychology course in the mid-Atlantic region of the US. Findings of the study revealed that Netflix binge watching; Instagram and other social media appear to be disrupting academic success for many. The researchers further reported that sports viewing and electronic game playing were more distracting for male students than for female students who reported greater problems with being side-tracked by social media sites.

According to Leung (2015), distractions keep people from maintaining focus and productivity. In a study conducted to explore the effect of distraction on task performance and enjoyment among San Jose State University students, Leung found that participants who were promotion-focused performed better in mathematics compared to their prevention-focused counterparts who aimed at preventing or avoiding failure. The constant presence of mobile devices, together with the accessibility and ease of checking new messages quickly makes these devices present a direct interference in activities that demand attention

and concentration, such as academic activities (Troll et al., 2020). Dependence on mobile devices linked to moderate academic engagement is a psychological and social problem common to students (Zhen et al., 2020). Easy access to mobile devices, always connected to the Internet, enables an "online" atmosphere, with the constant use and checking of devices is a common phenomenon and it is common to think that this behavior will also extend to the period of classes. The most disturbing and problematic aspect revealed is that, instead of using digital facilities to improve academic performance and quality, students usually use technological devices for leisure and social purposes (Labăr & Ţepordei, 2019).

Distraction is the process of diverting the attention of an individual or group from a desired area of focus and thereby blocking or diminishing the reception. It is also an internal intension of the mind towards involvement of the person (Aligoldbandi, 2015). Effective study is the ability to review materials already learned in order to make sure one does not forget them, usually in preparation for an examination or test. In order to ensure effective study, all the distracting factors must be identified and removed. Some researchers studied some factors that can lead to poor performance in several areas of studies. These distractions can be internal, such as thoughts or emotions, or external, such as environmental noise or digital devices. These factors can include peer influence, the use of electronic gadgets, and the pervasive influence of social media.

Peer influence refers to the impact of friends and classmates on students' behaviors, choices, and priorities. Electronic gadgets on the other hand are devices which can carry out many actions at a time with extensive speed, making the hard work and logical ones convenient for many occasions and can save time, money, deliver information and decrease drudgery. Electronic gadgets, such as smart phones, tablets, and laptops, have become ubiquitous among adolescents, providing both opportunities and distractions. It is perceived that if students spend quality time on social network sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and Yahoo Messenger, their study habits will be affected as valuable time is lost. The study by Karpinski (2019), shows that users who spend more time on social network like Facebook spend less time in studying. Study habits are learning tendencies that enables students to work privately, while social media is the collective term for websites and applications that focus on communication, community based input, interaction, content sharing and collaboration. People use social media to stay in touch and interact with friends, family and various communities. Social media platforms, with their constant stream of notifications and engaging content, have also emerged as significant distractions for students.

The academic performance of adolescents is a crucial aspect of their educational development and future prospects. High academic achievement not only opens doors to higher education but also equips students with the necessary skills and knowledge for success in their personal and professional lives. Therefore, understanding the impact of distracting factors on students' academic performance is of paramount importance. In the vibrant city of Uyo, secondary schools serve as crucibles for molding the academic and social futures of adolescents. These formative years are characterized by intense growth, exploration, and the development of personal identity.

Hanushek and Woessmann (2021) in their book titled "The Knowledge Capital of Nations: Education and the Future of Prosperity" defined student academic performance as the outcome of education, which is typically measured by student achievement in standardized tests, such as reading and mathematics assessments. They emphasize the importance of improving student outcomes to enhance economic growth and development. They further added that student academic performance is the outcome of the quality of education that students receive. They argue that factors such as teacher quality, school resources, and educational policies play a significant role in determining student outcomes.

In addition, Adolescence is a dynamically evolving theoretical construct informed through physiologic, psychosocial, temporal and cultural lenses. This critical developmental period is conventionally understood as the years between the onset of puberty and the establishment of social independence (Steinberg, 2017). The most commonly used chronologic definition of adolescence includes the ages of 10-18, but may incorporate a span of 9 to 26 years depending on the source (Steinberg, 2017). Inconsistencies in the inclusion criteria of "adolescence", and adolescent sub- stages, can create confusion in the construction of adolescent research and adolescent program planning. Although an appreciation for developmental variability is imperative when discussing adolescence, there is an equal necessity for conceptual clarity. Adolescence is a distinct phase of the developmental life cycle in humans and other animal species. Among humans, adolescence is a complex, multi- system transitional process involving progression from the immaturity and social dependency of childhood into adult life with the goal and expectation of fulfilled developmental potential, personal agency, and social accountability.

Consequently, peer influence refers to the impact that friends and classmates have on each other's behaviors and decisions. Research suggests that adolescents are highly susceptible to peer pressure, which can affect their academic performance. Negative peer influence, such as engaging in disruptive

behaviors or prioritizing social activities over studying, can lead to lower academic achievement. Peer influence can be both negative and positive. While we tend to think that peer influence leads teens to engage in unhealthy and unsafe behaviors, it can actually motivate youth to study harder in school, volunteer for community and social services, and participate in sports and other productive endeavors (DeGuzman, 2017). Therefore, it's crucial for students to choose friends who support their academic goals and to be mindful of the influence they have on others in their academic community. In line with this, Mohammed et al (2022) investigated the effects of electronic gadgets on the academic performance of secondary school students in Islamabad. The study was descriptive in nature and a survey method was used for the collection of the data. Data was collected through questionnaires and the researcher administered the questionnaires with the help of a research assistant. The result of the data reflected a significant impact of electronic gadgets on the academic performance of secondary school students.

In a similar vein, Ogundele (2017) carried out research on the relationship between electronic gadget and students' Academic Performance of Secondary Schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 1200 respondents comprising of the principals, Vice-principals, class teachers, core subject teachers. Split-half reliability method was used to determine the reliability index of .67 after subjected to spearman ranking order statistics. Pearson product moment correlation statistics was used to test all the three operational hypotheses at 0.05 significant level. The findings revealed that a high positive significant relationship exist between Electronic Gadgets and students' academic performance of secondary schools in Kwara State Nigeria.

On the other hand, Adeyemi et al (2019) surveyed the influence of peer group on academic performance of undergraduate students in selected departments in Babcock University, Ogun State, Nigeria. The study adopted mixed method design incorporating descriptive survey and ex-post facto design. Data generated from the study were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and linear regression analysis to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 significant levels. The result revealed that peer group has significant influence on academic performance of undergraduate students. In the same vein, Nwamadi (2022) investigated Influence of Peer Pressure on Secondary School Students Academic Performance in English Language in Omuma Local Government Area, Rivers State. Two hypotheses guided the study. Survey design was used for the study. A census method of sampling technique was used. Cronbach alpha reliability method was used to determine the reliability index of 0.80. Data was analyzed using independent t-test statistics. Result revealed that there was no significance difference on the influence of positive as well as negative peer pressure on secondary school students' academic performance in English language in Omuma Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Statement of the problem: The academic landscape is evolving, and with it comes an array of challenges that adolescents face in their pursuit of educational success. Among these challenges are distracting factors that can significantly impede academic performance. Understanding the specific nature and implications of these distracting factors, namely peer influence, electronic gadgets, social media etc is crucial for devising effective interventions tailored to the context of secondary schools in Uyo. The academic success of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo is increasingly threatened by various distracting factors; these distractions pose significant challenges to students' ability to focus on their studies, potentially leading to a decline in academic performance and overall educational outcomes. To address distracting factors that negatively impact students' academic performance, several measures could be implemented to solve the problem, which are technology policies that establishes clear guidelines for the use of digital devices during class and study times.

On a contrary, in as much as some distracting factors such as electronic gadgets, offer opportunities for students to know the world around them and as well using the technology in an innovative way in the classroom yet academic performance is still on the decline. Against this backdrop, the study seeks to investigate the relationship between distracting factors and students' academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between distracting factors and students' academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

Investigate the relationship between electronic gadgets and students' academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo, Local Government Area Akwa Ibom State.

To ascertain the relationship between peer influence and students' academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo, Local Government Area Akwa Ibom State

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To guide the study, the following research questions and hypotheses guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between electronic gadgets and students' academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo, Local Government Area Akwa Ibom State?
2. What is the relationship between peer influence and students' academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo, Local Government Area Akwa Ibom State?

Hypotheses:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between the electronic gadgets and students' academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area AkwaIbom State

H_{02}: Peer influence has no significant effect on students' academic performance of adolescents attending secondary schools in Uyo, Local Government Area Akwa Ibom State

Research Methods

The study utilizes a correctional research design. Correctional research design investigates into the magnitude and direction (positive or negative) of relationship that exist between dependent variable and independent variable(s) (Chikezie and Joseph,2021) .The population of this study consists of 6,083 senior secondary school (SS I1) students from15 public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area as at 2023/2024 academic year. Simple random Technique was used to select the sample size of 250 SS II Students from the 5 sampled schools. Two researcher-made instruments titled "Distracting Factors Rating scale (DFRS) and Performance Test on Government" (PTG) were used for data collection. The DFRS were structured on a four-point rating scale with response format of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (DA) and strongly disagree (SD) weighted 4,3,2,1, respectively. Three experts from faculty of education, University of Uyo validated the instrument and clarified them fit for administration. A reliability coefficient of 0.80 and 0.86 were obtained using Cronbach alpha statistics. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient statistics to answer the research questions while the Null hypotheses were tested using significance p- value at 0.05% alpha level.

RESULTS

Research Question One

What is the relationship between electronic gadgets and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo?

Table 1: Correlation analysis between electronic gadgets and students' academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo

Variables	n	r	Remark
Electronic gadgets	**250**	**.862**	**Very Strong Positive Relationship**
Student's academic performance	**250**		

Source: Source: Research Computation from field survey, (2024).
Key: n = sample size, r = correlation coefficient

Result in Table 1 revealed that r-value is .862. This implied that there is a very strong positive relationship between electronic gadgets and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo. This means that as electronic gadgets increases the students' academic performance also increases very strongly. Therefore, electronic gadgets skill could affect students' academic performance.

Research Question Two

What is the relationship between peer influence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo?

Table 2: Correlation analysis between peer influence and students' academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo

Variables	n	r	Remark
Peer influence	**250**	**-.522**	**Moderate Negative Relationship**
Students' academic performance	**250**		

Source: Research Computation from field survey, (2024).

From the result (Table 2), indicated that r-value is -.522. This implied that there is a negative moderate relationship between peer influence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo. This means that as peer influence increases, the students' academic performance also decreases moderately. Therefore, peer influence could affect students' academic performance.

($H_0$1) : There is no significant relationship between electronic gadgets and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo.

Table 3: P-value analysis of electronic gadgets and students' academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area Akwa Ibom State

Variables	n	p-cal.	p-crit.	Remark
Electronic gadgets	**250**	**.000**	**.05**	**Significant. Ho1 Rejected**
Students' academic performance	**250**			

df=248

Source: Research Computation from field survey, (2024

Result in Table 3, revealed that the p-cal. of .000 is less than the .05 alpha level of significance at the 248 degrees of freedom. This showed that the formulated null hypothesis of no significant relationship between electronic gadgets and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo was rejected and the researcher concludes that there is a significant relationship between electronic gadgets and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo.

($H_0$2): There is no significant relationship between peer influence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo.

Table 4: P-value analysis for peer influence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State

Variables	N	p-cal.	p-crit.	Remark
Peer influence	**250**	**.000**	**.05**	**Significant. Ho2 Rejected**
Students' academic performance	**250**			

df=248

Source: Research Computation from field survey, (2024)

Result in Table 4, showed that the p-cal. of .000 is less than .05 alpha level of significance at the 248 degrees of freedom. This implies that the formulated null hypothesis of no significant relationship between peer influence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo was rejected. Therefore the researcher concludes that, there is a significant relationship between peer influence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo.

DISCUSSION

The results obtained (Table 1 and 3) shows that there is a very strong relationship between electronic gadgets and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo. The findings also revealed that there is a significant relationship between electronic gadgets and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo. This finding indicates that students' academic performance depends on electronic gadgets. The result could be attributed to the fact that devices like smart phones, tablets, laptops, and e-readers provide easy access to vast educational resources, including e-books, online tutorials, and interactive learning platforms. These gadgets support individualized learning, allowing students to study at their own pace, revisit challenging concepts, and explore topics beyond the curriculum.

Moreover, electronic gadgets enable students to participate in collaborative learning through online forums, group chats, and video conferencing, enhancing communication and teamwork skills. They also help develop digital literacy, a critical skill in today's technology-driven world, as students learn how to search for information, analyze data, and use of software applications. The findings of this study agree with the work of Ogundele (2017), who reported that a high positive significant relationship existed between Electronic Gadgets and students' academic performance of secondary schools in Kwara State. Results in table 2 revealed that there is a moderate negative relationship between peer influence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo. However, in Table 4, the findings indicated that there is a significant relationship between peer influence and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Uyo. This finding indicates that students' academic performance depends on peer influence. The result could be attributed to the fact that adolescents are highly influenced by their peers, as they associate with friends who devalue academic success, thus adopting similar attitudes. For instance, students who prioritize social activities, skipping classes, or engaging in disruptive behaviors may pressure others to do the same, leading to poor academic habits like procrastination, incomplete assignments, and lack of focus during lessons. Negative peer influence can also foster a culture of academic underachievement, where striving for good grades may be ridiculed, discouraging students from putting in the necessary effort to succeed. Over time, this peer pressure can lower motivation, reduce participation in class activities, and ultimately result in a decline in academic performance. Moreover, students surrounded by peers who engage in risky behaviors such as substance abuse or

truancy may be distracted from their studies and more likely to experience disciplinary issues. This could lead to absenteeism, suspensions, or expulsions, which further hinders academic success. The findings of this study agree with the finding of of Adeyemi et al (2019) who reported that peer influence significantly influence students' academic performance. The results also collaborate with the findings of Nwamadi (2022) who revealed that there is no significant difference on the influence of positive and negative peer pressure on Secondary School Students academic performance.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the relationship between distracting factors and students' academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Nigeria. From the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is a significant relationship between electronic gadgets, peer influence, and students' academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Uyo. Hence, Students' Academic Performance depends on distracting factors. Therefore, there is need to incorporate digital literacy programme to educate students on responsible electronic gadgets use. Also peer mentoring programme that promote positive relationship and academic support among students should be implemented

Conflicts of Interest:
There is no conflict of interest

Funding Statement:
The article was funded by the author and co-authors

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