

Academic Distraction and Students' Attitudes Towards Learning in a Nigerian University

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study is to find out the factors influencing academic distractions on students' attitude towards learning in University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Four research questions and hypotheses were formulated based on the variables of the study. The research design of the study was descriptive survey. The study was conducted in University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Simple random technique was used in selecting three hundred (300) undergraduate students from the campus that runs a full time programme. Fifty from faculty of Environmental, Fifty from Faculty of Business Administration, Fifty from Faculty of Education, Fifty from Faculty of Social Science, Fifty from faculty of Engineering and Fifty from faculty of Sciences. A structured questionnaire titled 'students' academic distraction and attitude towards learning questionnaire' (SADATLQ) was used to collect data for the study. Data generated were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation for answering the research questions while Independent T-test was used in testing the hypotheses. The findings revealed that, use of social media, gambling, peer group, and frequently listening to music by students influences students' attitude towards learning in University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study concluded by recommending among many others that, Orientation officers should on the day of interactive session with the students should encourage the students to make friends students that will help and enhance their attitude towards learning.

Keywords: Academic Distractors, Distractions, Students Attitudes Towards Learning.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Distraction is a construct that has affected students in achieving a better educational outcomes. It is always saddening when teachers cover their course content and students do not pass their examination base on the course content. Although examination is always said not to be a true test of knowledge but students are meant to be tested base on what they were taught. When students do not pass the given test the teacher begins to imagine what could be the reasons for students' poor academic performance. The teacher begin to ask question like: is my method of teaching bad? Is the student not reading? What could be distracting them? According to Merriam-Webster (2014), a distraction is something that makes it hard for one to think or pay attention. The researchers personally believed that social media, gambling, peer group, and music are one of the factors that leads to academic distractions among students', also Mobile phone which has been an aspect of information technology is becoming an integral part of most people, especially students. While this device can be used to facilitate learning, it can also lead to distraction in the classroom and thus, lower academic performance of the students. The word distraction has a negative connotation because it is generally thought of as being detrimental to academic performance.

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Attitude is a tendency which is attributed to individuals and creates ideas, feelings and behaviors about a psychological object in an orderly manner (Çetin, 2006). According to Oncul (2000), attitudes which cause individuals to always behave in the same way to people, objects, events and foundations are constant and unchangeable beliefs, feelings and tendencies (Kara, 2010). While the positive attitudes serve a better comprehension of the nature of learning for the learners, it also makes the students more open to learning, increases their expectations from learning process and reduces their anxiety levels.

Tesch, Coelho & Drozdenko (2011) examined student perceptions of the magnitude of 36 externally produced and 21 self-produced classroom distractions. Difficulty in understanding the instructor and students talking in class were rated the most potent distractions. Overall, external distracters (i.e., those produced by other people and things like music) were significantly more potent than distractions produced by the students themselves.

Wang (2015) investigated the effect of media distraction on students' memories. Results showed that college students from both China and the USA spent a sizable amount of their study time on media activities; lab experiments showed that media activities negatively affected students' logical memory and reading comprehension, but did not affect performance. In addition, the effect of media distraction on reading was negatively related to students' daily social media usage, suggesting that heavy social media users might have developed adaptations to media distractions. Current college students have grown up with social media websites, and many of them are constantly connected to smart devices. By studying the impact of these technological experiences on their learning and cognition, the dissertation identifies problems of student learning in this digital era, which in turn has implications for educational practices. It also contributes to understanding of the interaction between technological development and changes in human cognition.

Similarly, Rosen, Carrier & Cheever (2013) investigated the distractions that student encountered in their self-study activities. Students were asked to study 15 minutes mean while their behaviour was observed. They found that on average students only focused on task for less than six minutes before they switched to something else mostly distracted by technologies such as Facebook and texting.

Omollo & Yambo (2017) investigated influence of peer pressure on secondary school students' drop outin Rongo Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya. The findings revealed that peer pressure influenced student drop out was at 43.75%. High dropout was as a result of parent/ guardian financial status and family headship which lead to inadequate guidance/ mentorship to the students. The study also found that in most cases where students are most often sent home there are high chances that some never returned to school due to the fact that their peer advise them to do so.

Kumar, Wajidi, Chian, Vishroothi, Ravindra & Aithal (2016) explore the effect of music on the curricular activity of the student and whether this trend is to rule out it is beneficial to the students in their academic performances. Present study involved 200 Malaysian students representing three major ethnicities. Among them, 120 students prefer to listen to music while studying and remaining 80 were not. Data obtained from the responses of participants compiled in the form of graphs and charts 47% believes that music helps them to concentrate while studying. 29% claims that music would keep their mind calm, and 17% stated that it would prevent sleepiness. 78 out of 80 students said that listening to music while studying distract their concentration. Experimental data revealed higher incidence (75%) of correct answers while listening to soft music than other fast track or instrumental music.

The findings above by several authors shows that student can be easily distracted by anything that is trendy. Currently what is trending in the area of the study includes but not limited to use of social media, gambling, peer group, and frequently listening to music by students'. This variables has been a source of distraction to students who had come to the great citadel of learning solely to read and learn so that they could make a living from it.

Though, studies might have been conducted on use of social media, gambling, peer group, and frequently listening to music by students' and students' attitude towards learning but little or no study has been done on students' academic distractions on attitude towards learning in University of Uyo to the best of the researchers' knowledge. Therefore, this study was conducted to find out factors influencing academic distractions on students' attitude towards learning in University of uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to find out the factors influencing academic distractions on students' attitude towards learning in University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The Specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Find out the influence of social media usage on students' attitudes towards learning in University of Uyo.
2. Investigate the influence of peer group on students' attitudes towards learning in University of Uyo.
3. Investigate the influence of gambling on students' attitudes towards learning in University of Uyo.
4. Examine the influence of music on students' attitudes towards learning in University of Uyo.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated based on the variables of the study

1. Is there any significant influence of social media usage on students' attitudes towards learning in University of Uyo?
2. Is there any significant influence of peer group on students' attitudes towards learning in University of Uyo?
3. Is there any significant influence of gambling on students' attitudes towards learning in University of Uyo?
4. Is there any significant influence of music on students' attitudes towards learning in University of Uyo?

1.3 Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses were posed to guide the study

1. There is no significant influence of social media usage on students' attitudes towards learning in University of Uyo.
2. There is no significant influence of peer group on students' attitudes towards learning in University of Uyo.
3. There is no significant influence of gambling on students' attitudes towards learning in University of Uyo.
4. There is no significant influence of music on students' attitudes towards learning in University of Uyo.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research design of the study was descriptive survey. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) stated that this is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering questionnaire to a sample of individuals. The design was identified as the most convenient and could ensure that the data obtained gave answers to the research questions. Descriptive survey is used when a researcher intends to describe a situation or a condition as it is (Kothari, 2004). The study was conducted in University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The university has three campuses that run full time programmes with fifteen faculties and another one that run Foundation programmes like Basic and Remedial programme. Simple random technique was used in selecting three hundred (300) undergraduate students from the campus that runs a full time programme. Fifty from faculty of Environmental, Fifty from Faculty of Business Administration, Fifty from Faculty of Education, Fifty from Faculty of Social Science, Fifty from faculty of Engineering and Fifty from faculty of Sciences. Pieces papers with YES or NO answer written on were scrambled and placed in a bowl, well shaken and mix properly. Using random sampling technique, the respondents were asked to close their eyes and pick the slip of papers one after the other from the bowl until they were done. Those that picked YES formed the sample for the study. A structured questionnaire titled students' academic distraction and attitude towards learning questionnaire (SADATLQ) was used to collect data for the study. Data generated were analyzed using Mean and Standard Deviation for answering the research questions while Independent T-test was used in testing the hypotheses.

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3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research Question 1: Is there any significant influence of social media usage on students' attitude toward learning?

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Table 1: Influence of Social Media Usage on Students' Attitude toward Learning in University of Uyo

Variables	N	Mean	S.D
Social media usage	300	14.28	4.01
Attitude toward learning	300	13.96	3.12

Data presented in Table 1 reveals the mean responses of influence of social media usage on students' attitude towards learning in university of Uyo. The analysis shows that the overall mean responses of students with respective to social media usage and attitude towards learning are 14.28 and 13.96 respectively. This implies that there are influence of social media usage on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo.

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Research Question 2: Is there any significant influence of gambling on students' attitude toward learning?

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Table 2: Influence of Gambling on Students' Attitude toward Learning in University of Uyo

Variables	N	Mean	S.D
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Gambling	300	21.7	5.1
Attitude toward learning	300	19.01	6.3

Data presented in Table 1 reveals the mean responses of influence of gambling on students' attitude towards learning in university of Uyo. The analysis shows that the overall mean responses of students with respective to gambling and attitude towards learning are 21.7 and 19.01 respectively. This implies that there are influence of gambling on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo.

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Research Question 3: Is there any significant influence of peer group on students' attitude toward learning?

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Table 3: Influence of Peer Group on Students' Attitude toward Learning in University of Uyo

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Variables	N	Mean	S.D
Peer group	300	35.6	3.9
Attitude toward learning	300	28.7	4.1

Data presented in Table 1 reveals the mean responses of influence of peer group on students' attitude towards learning in university of Uyo. The analysis shows that the overall mean responses of students with respective to peer group and attitude towards learning are 21.7 and 19.01 respectively. This implies that there are influence of peer group on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo.

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Research Question 4: Is there any significant influence of music on students' attitude toward learning?

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Table 4: Influence of Music on Students' Attitude toward Learning in University of Uyo

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Variables	N	Mean	S.D
Music	300	35.6	3.9
Attitude toward learning	300	28.7	4.1

Data presented in Table 1 reveals the mean responses of influence of music on students' attitude towards learning in university of Uyo. The analysis shows that the overall mean responses of students with respective to music and attitude towards learning are 21.7 and 19.01 respectively. This implies that there are influence of music on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo.

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3.1 Testing of Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant influence of social media usage on students' attitude towards learning in University of Uyo.

Table 5: Summary of independent t-test Analysis of influence of Social Media Usage on Students'

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Attitude toward Learning

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	df	t-cal	t-crit
Social media usage	300	14.28	4.01	298	5.41	1.96
Attitude toward learning	300	13.96	3.12			

Field work, 2023 significant at .05 level, $df = 298$

The result as shown in Table 5 indicates that the calculated t-value of 5.41 is greater than critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significant and 298 degree of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that says there is no significant influence of social media usage on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of social media usage on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo.

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H0₂: There is no significant influence of gambling on students' attitude towards learning in University of Uyo.

Table 6: Summary of independent t-test Analysis of influence of Gambling on Students' Attitude toward Learning

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Variables	N	Mean	S.D	df	t-cal	t-crit
Gambling	300	21.7	5.1	298	3.11	1.96
Attitude toward learning	300	19.1	6.3			

Field work, 2023 significant at .05 level, $df = 298$

The result as shown in Table 6 indicates that the calculated t-value of 3.11 is greater than critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significant and 298 degree of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that says there is no significant influence of gambling on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of gambling on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo.

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H0₃: There is no significant influence of peer group on students' attitude towards learning in University of Uyo.

Table 7: Summary of independent t-test Analysis of influence of Peer Group on Students' Attitude toward Learning

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Variables	N	Mean	S.D	df	t-cal	t-crit
Peer Group	300	35.6	3.9	298	3.02	1.96
Attitude toward learning	300	28.7	4.1			

Field work, 2023 significant at .05 level, $df = 298$

The result as shown in Table 7 indicates that the calculated t-value of 3.02 is greater than critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significant and 298 degree of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that says there is no significant influence of peer group on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of peer group on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo.

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H0₄: There is no significant influence of music on students' attitude towards learning in University of Uyo.

Table 8: Summary of independent t-test Analysis of influence of Music on Students' Attitude toward

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Learning

Variables	N	Mean	S.D	df	t-cal	t-crit
Music	300	23.8	4.3	298	3.58	1.96
Attitude toward learning	300	25.7	3.9			

Field work, 2023 significant at .05 level, df = 298

The result as shown in Table 8 indicates that the calculated t-value of 3.58 is greater than critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significant and 298 degree of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that says there is no significant influence of music on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of music on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo.

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4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result as shown in Table 5 indicates that the calculated t-value of 5.41 is greater than critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significant and 298 degree of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that says there is no significant influence of social media usage on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of social media usage on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo. This can be attributed to the fact that the university are so much fallen for social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, twitter, instagram etc. because it makes them connect faster with their friends online. This result is in agreement with earlier study by Wang (2015) who investigated the effect of media distraction on students' memories. Results showed that college students from both China and the USA spent a sizable amount of their study time on media activities; lab experiments showed that media activities negatively affected students' logical memory and reading comprehension, but did not affect performance. In addition, the effect of media distraction on reading was negatively related to students' daily social media usage, suggesting that heavy social media users might have developed adaptations to media distractions. In the same vein, Rosen, Carrier & Cheever (2013) investigated the distractions that student encountered in their self-study activities. Students were asked to study 15 minutes mean while their behaviour was observed. They found that on average students only focused on task for less than six minutes before they switched to something else mostly distracted by technologies such as Facebook.

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The result as shown in Table 6 indicates that the calculated t-value of 3.11 is greater than critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significant and 298 degree of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that says there is no significant influence of gambling on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of gambling on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo. Ember (2020) observed that gambling are prevalent in universities. Gambling may help in reducing stress and reducing social interaction. However, gambling and gaming are also linked with students seeking to escape the pressures brought on by being at university, and with poor well-being. These moments of stress appear to be coupled with greater feelings of uncertainty for students and they may turn to gambling as they feel more 'in control' of what they are doing. The negative impact of gambling on student wellbeing attitude towards learning, academic performance and social interaction becomes clear.

The result as shown in Table 7 indicates that the calculated t-value of 3.02 is greater than critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significant and 298 degree of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that says there is no significant influence of peer group on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of peer group on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo. This findings support previous findings by Omollo & Yambo (2017) who investigated influence of peer pressure on secondary school students' drop out in Rongo Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya. They found that peer pressure influenced student drop out was at 43.75%. High dropout was as a result of parent/ guardian financial status and family headship which lead to inadequate guidance/ mentorship to the students. The study also found that in most cases where students are most often sent home there are high chances that some never returned to school due to the fact that their peer advise them to do so.

The result as shown in Table 8 indicates that the calculated t-value of 3.58 is greater than critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significant and 298 degree of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that says there is no significant influence of music on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo was rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of music on students' attitude toward learning in University of Uyo. This findings support previous findings by Kumar, Wajidi, Chian, Vishroothi, Ravindra & Aithal (2016) who explore the effect of music on the curricular activity of the student and whether this trend is to rule out it is beneficial to the students in their academic performances. Present study involved 200 Malaysian students representing three major ethnicities. Among them, 120 students prefer to listen to music while studying and remaining 80 were not. Data obtained from the responses of participants compiled in the form of graphs and charts 47% believes that music helps them to concentrate while studying, 29% claims that music would keep their mind calm, and 17% stated that it would prevent sleepiness. 78 out of 80 students said that listening to music while studying distract their concentration. Experimental data revealed higher incidence (75%) of correct answers while listening to soft music than other fast track or instrumental music.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study provided empirical evidence on factors influencing academic distractions on students' attitude towards learning in University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that, use of social media, gambling, peer group, and frequently listening to music by students' influences students' attitude towards learning in University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- a) Students should be properly guided on how to use social networking site for educational purposes than just chatting, downloading of music and video.
- b) Educational institutions should discourage the gambling and sport betting among their students and ensure they participate actively during teaching and learning process.
- c) Parents should at early age educate their wards on the benefits and dangers of concentration (to music because it can be a tool to distract them

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- d) Orientation officers on the day of interactive session with the students should encourage the students to make friends students that will help and enhance their attitude towards learning.

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