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Original Research Article

MANAGING LEARNING DISTRACTIONS AS A CATALYST FOR IMPROVED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AHOADA EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: The study examined the management of distractions for enhancing students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. Three objectives, research questions, and corresponding hypotheses guided the study. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 199 teachers from sixteen (16) public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State. Given the manageable size of the population, a census sampling technique was employed, resulting in a sample size of 199 teachers, representing 100% of the population. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled "Management of Distractions for Improved Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (MDISAPQ)". The instrument was validated for face and content validity by three experts in the Department of Educational Management, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Reliability was established using the test–retest method, yielding a reliability coefficient of .791 through Cronbach's Alpha. A total of 199 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents with the assistance of two trained research assistants, and all copies were successfully retrieved. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while the hypotheses were tested using the t-test statistical technique at the .05 level of significance. The findings revealed that effective management of distractions contributes significantly to improved academic performance among students in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State. Based on the findings, the study recommended that school administrators and teachers should establish and enforce clear guidelines for the responsible use of digital devices, limit the use of mobile phones during instructional periods, and promote digital self-discipline among students to minimize distractions arising from social media and online entertainment platforms.

Keywords: Management, Distractions, Students, Academic Performance, Public, Senior Secondary Schools, Ahoada East, Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the foundation for national development and ensuring a conducive learning environment is essential for students' academic success. One of the responsibilities of public senior secondary school administrators is to improve students' academic performance through managing workplace distractions. Students' academic performance is a fundamental indicator of the effectiveness of an educational system and a critical concern for educators, parents, and policymakers alike. Academic performance refers to the extent to which a student has achieved specified educational goals, as measured through examinations, continuous assessments, and other standardized evaluations. It is commonly used as a measure of educational attainment, intellectual progress, and readiness for higher responsibilities in life and career (Ali et al., 2019). The academic performance of students is not only a reflection of individual ability but also of the quality of instruction, availability of learning resources, family support, and conducive learning environments.

Improving students' academic performance remains a priority as it determines not only individual success but also the broader developmental prospects of any nation. As such, identifying the key factors that affect academic performance and implementing evidence-based strategies to improve it has become essential. Managing learning distractions has become essential in the enhancement of students' academic performance in secondary schools. Learning distractions such as excessive use of mobile phones, social media engagement, classroom noise, peer-related interruptions and poor study habits have over the years negatively affect students' concentration, retention and academic performance. The effective management of these distractions through proper classroom supervision, student self-regulation, parental involvement and conducive learning environments have proven to significantly improve learning outcomes. Research has shown that minimizing distractions promotes students' engagement, motivation and academic success (Akpadaka & Akpadaka, 2026; van der Zanden et al., 2025).

Distractions in public senior secondary schools refer to activities, interactions, decisions and behaviours amongst others that deviate the employees' attention and commitment from on-task behaviour to off-task behaviour. Distractions can be defined as any internal or external stimuli that divert a student's attention away from learning tasks. Management of distractions refers to the strategies and techniques employed to minimize or eliminate interruptions that can impede cognitive performance and task completion. This concept is particularly relevant in environments where focus and attention are

Environmental distractions include noise pollution, overcrowding, poor lighting and inadequate classroom ventilation, all of which negatively affect students' concentration and academic performance. Managing these distractions requires school administrators to improve classroom infrastructure, ensure optimal seating arrangements and implement noise control measures. Therefore, students in well-structured and properly ventilated classrooms perform significantly better in cognitive tasks than those in poorly managed learning environments (Ololube, 2017). Additionally, maintaining discipline among students by controlling unnecessary movements and noise during lessons enhances focus and learning outcomes.

Social distractions refer to interruptions that arise from interpersonal interactions, peer influence, and social engagements that divert students' attention from academic tasks. In classroom settings, such distractions may include excessive chatting, peer pressure, gossiping, or engagement with social media platforms during lessons. These behaviors can hinder concentration, reduce participation, and negatively affect academic performance. While social

interaction is important for the emotional and psychological development of students, it becomes a distraction when it interferes with classroom discipline and academic focus (Wentzel, 2017).

Effective distraction management strategies involve preventive and corrective measures such as noise control, digital device regulations, student discipline enforcement, and psychological support. Schools that implement structured approaches to distraction management often witness higher student engagement, improved comprehension, and better performance in assessments. Effective management of these distractions involves creating a structured learning environment, enforcing school policies on digital device usage, implementing psychological support systems, and engaging students with interactive teaching strategies (Ololube, 2017). Therefore, schools that adopt classroom management techniques such as effective lesson planning, student participation strategies, and teacher supervision often report better academic outcomes.

Economic distractions stem from financial challenges that affect students' focus, attendance, and academic engagement. Students from low-income families may experience stress due to lack of school supplies, poor nutrition, inadequate clothing, or the need to engage in part-time work to support their families. These factors can create emotional and psychological burdens, leading to absenteeism, low motivation, and reduced academic performance (Adepoju & Fabiyi, 2007). To manage economic distractions, schools and governments can implement support systems such as scholarships, feeding programs, and provision of free learning materials. When distractions whether social, technological, environmental, or economic are minimized or properly managed, students are better able to focus, retain information, and perform academically. Therefore, implementing strategic measures to identify and control distractions within and outside the classroom is essential for fostering an atmosphere that promotes academic excellence and overall student success. It is therefore on this note that the present study examined management of distractions for improved students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Statement of the Problem

Students are frequently exposed to various forms of distractions, including technological distractions such as the misuse of mobile phones and social media during school hours, environmental distractions like noise, poor seating arrangements, and inadequate classroom facilities, as well as social distractions resulting from peer influence, gossiping, and off-task conversations. In addition, economic challenges faced by many families compel some students to engage in income-generating activities, thereby reducing their commitment to academic tasks. These distractions hinder students' ability to stay focused, retain knowledge, and perform effectively in their studies. Yet, there appears to be limited empirical research and structured intervention targeted at managing these distractions to enhance academic performance. It is against these pitfalls that this study investigated how management of distractions can improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State. Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study was to examine management of learning distractions as a catalyst for improved academic performance among public senior secondary school students in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- Determine the ways managing technological distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Examine the ways managing environmental distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.
- Ascertain the ways managing social distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- To what extent do managing technological distractions improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria?
- To what extent do managing environmental distractions improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria?
- To what extent do managing social distractions improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance:

- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent managing technological distractions enhance academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.
- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent managing environmental distractions enhance academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.
- There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the extent managing social distractions enhance students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Management of Distraction

Distractions in academic settings refer to any internal or external factors that interrupt a student's attention, reduce concentration, and hinder active engagement with learning tasks. Rosen, Carrier, and Cheever (2013) defined distraction as any internal or external stimulus that diverts attention from the task at hand, interfering with one's ability to maintain focus and complete academic or cognitive activities. According to Junco (2012), distractions are competing stimuli that interrupt a student's cognitive process, particularly during academic tasks, thereby lowering engagement and academic performance. In the view of Ololube (2017), distractions are stimuli that compete with goal-directed attention, reducing the efficiency of learning and task execution by pulling mental focus away from relevant tasks. These distractions can significantly affect academic performance, especially in secondary schools where students are still developing self-regulation skills. In classroom environments, distractions limit students' ability to absorb, retain, and apply knowledge, thereby undermining educational goals.

Environmental distractions also pose significant challenges in academic settings. Factors such as classroom noise, poor lighting, overcrowding, uncomfortable seating, and inadequate ventilation contribute to cognitive fatigue and hinder students' ability to remain focused. For instance, Shield and Dockrell (2008) emphasized how background noise in classrooms can impair children's reading comprehension and listening skills. In many public schools, especially in resource-constrained areas, poor infrastructure and large class sizes intensify these environmental distractions, making effective teaching and learning difficult.

Social and psychological distractions further complicate the learning process. Social distractions include peer pressure, unnecessary conversations, gossiping, and behavioral disruptions during lessons. These distractions divert attention from academic content and can spread quickly within a group. Additionally, emotional or psychological distractions such as anxiety, stress, or low self-esteem can affect a student's mental state, reducing their ability to concentrate and perform well academically. Without proper guidance, counseling, and classroom management, these distractions persist and contribute to the growing gap in academic achievement. Addressing these distractions requires a coordinated effort involving teachers, parents, school administrators, and policymakers to create a focused and supportive academic environment.

Managing distraction involves identifying the sources of distraction and implementing appropriate control measures such as structured classroom management, promoting digital discipline, improving the learning environment, and encouraging self-regulation among students (Wentzel, 2017). Teachers play a pivotal role by maintaining classroom order, applying reinforcement techniques, and using engaging instructional methods to retain student focus. Schools can also enforce policies on mobile device usage, redesign seating arrangements, and provide support services for students facing socio-economic challenges.

In essence, effective distraction management is not only about eliminating disruptions but also about equipping students with cognitive and behavioral tools to manage their attention. This is particularly relevant in today's fast-paced, digitally driven world where distractions are pervasive.

Factors that Enhance the Management of Distractions in Public Senior Secondary Schools

Effectively managing distractions in public senior secondary schools requires a multi-dimensional approach. Several factors contribute to the successful identification, control, and reduction of distractions, thereby promoting a more focused and productive learning environment. These factors include:

Clear School Policies and Enforcement

Well-defined rules and regulations regarding student behavior, digital device usage, classroom etiquette, and disciplinary procedures are crucial. When these policies are consistently enforced, they help minimize distractions and promote order (Osuji & Okwara, 2021). Consistency in implementation ensures students understand the consequences of off-task behavior and are more likely to comply with expected conduct.

Effective Classroom Management Skills

Teachers play a central role in distraction control. Teachers who apply proactive strategies such as active supervision, student engagement techniques, and positive reinforcement are more likely to maintain students' focus (Odogwe & Madu, 2021). Effective classroom management reduces off-task behaviors like chatting, phone use, and inattentiveness.

Structured Timetable and Lesson Scheduling

A well-organized school timetable that balances academic and non-academic periods helps in managing mental fatigue and reduces idle time that often leads to distractions. Strategic placement of core subjects during periods of high alertness improves attention and learning (Ololube, 2017).

Students' Academic Performance

Students' academic performance refers to the level of achievement or proficiency that a student demonstrates in their educational activities, usually measured through grades, test scores, assessments, and overall classroom engagement. According to Okon and Etuk (2020), academic performance encompasses not only the outcome of students' academic efforts but also the learning processes and skills that contribute to those outcomes. It reflects how well students meet learning objectives set by educational institutions and serves as a primary indicator of educational effectiveness. It is often used to evaluate students' intellectual capabilities and readiness for future academic or career pursuits.

Scholars often view academic performance as a multidimensional construct. For instance, Olatunji and Owoeye (2019) defined students' academic performance as the degree to which learners accomplish the set educational goals within a specific time frame, commonly assessed through continuous assessments, examinations, and assignments. These measures provide quantitative data that educators and policymakers use to determine students' progress and identify areas that require intervention. Furthermore, academic performance is influenced by

both intrinsic factors, such as motivation and cognitive abilities, and extrinsic factors, such as teaching quality, school environment, and parental involvement.

Factors that Improve Students' Academic Performance

Quality Teaching and Teacher Competence

One of the most influential factors in improving students' academic performance is the quality of instruction provided by teachers. Competent, well-trained, and motivated teachers are better equipped to deliver effective lessons, manage classrooms efficiently, and engage students in meaningful learning. According to Okebukola (2015), teacher quality significantly influences learning outcomes, especially in core subjects like mathematics and science. Teachers who apply learner-centered approaches and differentiate instruction to meet diverse learning needs tend to raise student achievement levels across all grades.

Conducive Learning Environment

A well-structured and supportive school environment is essential for academic success. Features such as proper ventilation, adequate lighting, low noise levels, safe facilities, and availability of instructional materials contribute to enhanced concentration and active participation. Shield and Dockrell (2008) emphasized that a distraction-free and well-maintained classroom significantly boosts comprehension and retention of knowledge. In contrast, students in overcrowded or dilapidated classrooms may struggle with attention and motivation, even with capable teachers.

Parental Involvement and Support

Parental involvement in a child's education through supervision of homework, regular communication with teachers, and emotional encouragement has been shown to improve academic performance. Epstein (2001) argued that children whose parents participate actively in their academic journey tend to perform better, show more interest in school, and have higher self-esteem. Involvement doesn't necessarily mean financial support alone; even consistent encouragement and home-based learning routines can make a considerable difference in a child's academic trajectory.

Access to Learning Resources and Technology

The availability and accessibility of educational resources such as textbooks, digital learning tools, reference materials, and internet connectivity significantly improve learning outcomes. Students who have access to current textbooks, e-learning platforms, and functional libraries are more likely to supplement classroom learning, conduct independent research, and improve their academic abilities. According to Adepoju and Akinwale (2020), lack of access to instructional materials is a major cause of underachievement in many Nigerian public schools, indicating the critical need for adequate educational support facilities.

Student Motivation and Self-Efficacy

Internal factors such as student motivation, interest, and belief in their own academic abilities (self-efficacy) greatly impact academic performance. Students who are goal-oriented, self-disciplined, and confident in their capacity to succeed are more likely to excel. Robbins et al. (2004) concluded that academic self-efficacy is a strong predictor of GPA, persistence, and college retention. Schools that encourage a growth mindset and recognize individual achievements help foster positive attitudes toward learning.

Effective School Leadership and Administration

The role of school leaders such as principals, vice-principals, and head teachers is critical in setting academic priorities, supervising teachers, and maintaining discipline. Strong school leadership ensures that instructional time is used effectively, resources are allocated fairly, and both students and teachers are held to high standards of performance. Leithwood et al. (2004) found that effective leadership in schools indirectly contributes to student achievement by creating a culture of high expectations and professional collaboration.

Positive Peer Influence and Classroom Culture

The attitudes and behaviors of peers can significantly affect students' academic engagement and performance. When students are surrounded by peers who value education, exhibit positive learning habits, and collaborate respectfully, they are more likely to adopt similar behaviors. A positive classroom culture where mutual respect, encouragement and healthy competition are promoted boosts student morale and learning. Wentzel (2017) asserted that peer relationships play a crucial role in shaping student motivation, behavior, and academic success.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate the management of learning distractions for improved students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State. The population comprised 199 teachers drawn from sixteen (16) public senior secondary schools in the area. The population consisted of 129 male teachers and 70 female teachers (Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board, 2025).

Given the manageable size of the population, the census sampling technique was employed, whereby the entire population of 199 teachers was used as the sample for the study. Consequently, all teachers in the sixteen public senior secondary schools participated in the research.

Data were collected using a self-developed instrument titled "Management of Distractions for Improved Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (MDISAPQ)". The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts from the field of educational management. Their observations, suggestions and corrections were incorporated into the final version of the instrument before administration.

To establish the reliability of the instrument, the test-retest method was adopted. Twenty teachers from schools outside the study area participated in the pilot test. The instrument was

administered to the respondents on two occasions separated by an interval of two weeks. The responses obtained were analyzed, and a reliability coefficient of .791 was obtained using Cronbach's Alpha, which indicates that the instrument was sufficiently reliable for the study.

A total of 199 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents with the assistance of two trained research assistants. All completed copies were retrieved and used for data analysis. Mean and standard deviation were employed to answer the research questions, while the hypotheses were tested using the t-test statistical technique at the .05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the ways managing technological distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean ratings and standard deviation of the respondents on managing technological distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.

S/N	Item Description	Male		Female		Mean set	Decision
		Mean	SD_1	Mean	SD_2		
1.	Limiting non-academic use of mobile phones during school hours improves students' concentration on lessons	3.60	0.55	3.69	.56	3.55	High Extent
2.	Restricting access to social media during school hours helps students' to complete assignments on time	3.40	0.60	3.82	.86	3.35	High Extent
3.	Using technology only for academic purposes reduces students' tendencies to get distracted in class	3.20	0.58	3.75	.66	3.15	High Extent
4.	Guidance from teachers on the use of technology for learning increases students' academic performance	3.70	0.50	3.46	.75	3.65	High Extent
5.	Reducing constant gaming during classroom improves students' study habits	3.50	0.63	3.51	.64	3.45	High Extent
	Grand Mean	**3.48**	**0.57**	**3.38**	**0.57**	**3.43**	**High Extent**

The results presented in Table 1 indicated that the respondents agreed, to a high extent, that managing technological distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. This is evidenced by the grand mean of 3.43, which is above the criterion mean, indicating overall positive agreement among both male and female respondents. The relatively low grand standard deviation of 0.57 further suggested that the respondents' opinions were fairly consistent.

Precisely, respondents rated guidance from teachers on the use of technology for learning increases students' academic performance as the highest strategy for improving academic performance, with a mean score of 3.65. This finding implies that teacher support and proper guidance in the educational use of technology play a significant role in helping students focus on learning activities and achieve better academic outcomes.

Similarly, respondents agreed to a high extent that limiting non-academic use of mobile phones during school hours improves students' concentration on lessons (Mean = 3.55). This suggests that minimizing unnecessary mobile phone usage in schools enhances students' attention during classroom instruction, thereby fostering improved learning.

The respondents also indicated that reducing constant gaming during classroom activities improves students' study habits (Mean = 3.45), demonstrating that controlling gaming-related distractions can positively influence students' commitment to academic tasks and study routines. Furthermore, the respondents agreed that restricting access to social media during school hours helps students complete assignments on time (Mean = 3.35). This finding indicates that limiting students' exposure to social media during instructional periods reduces procrastination and enables them to devote more time to academic responsibilities.

Although ranked lowest among the five items, respondents still agreed to a high extent that using technology only for academic purposes reduces students' tendencies to become distracted in class (Mean = 3.15). This suggests that purposeful and educational use of technology encourages greater classroom engagement and minimizes off-task behaviour.

Inclusively, the findings revealed that effective management of technological distractions, which includes regulating mobile phone use, restricting social media access, reducing classroom gaming, promoting academic use of technology and providing teacher guidance can substantially enhance students' concentration, study habits, assignment completion, classroom engagement, and ultimately their academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What are the ways managing environmental distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean ratings and standard deviation of the respondents on managing environmental distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria

S/N	Item Description	Male		Female		Mean set	Decision
		Mean	SD_1	Mean	SD_2		
6.	Reducing noise pollution into the classroom improves students' ability to focus on lessons.	3.25	0.65	3.40	0.70	3.33	High Extent
7.	Minimizing interruptions during lessons improves students' academic performance	3.45	0.55	3.60	0.60	3.53	High Extent
8.	Well-organized classroom environment helps the students' improve students' academic performance	3.15	0.75	3.10	0.80	3.13	High Extent
9.	Reducing visual distractions in the classroom improves students' concentration	3.55	0.50	3.50	0.55	3.53	High Extent
10.	Proper lighting in the classroom enhances students' study environment for academic success	3.00	0.85	2.90	0.80	2.95	High Extent
	Grand mean	**3.28**	**0.66**	**3.30**	**0.69**	**3.29**	**High Extent**

The results presented in Table 2 revealed that the respondents agreed, to a high extent, that managing environmental distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. This is

evidenced by the grand mean of 3.29, which exceeds the criterion mean, indicating an overall positive perception of the influence of environmental management on students' academic performance. The grand standard deviations of 0.66 for male respondents and 0.69 for female respondents indicate that respondents' opinions were relatively homogeneous, reflecting a reasonable level of agreement.

Among the items, respondents rated minimizing interruptions during lessons improves students' academic performance (Mean = 3.53) and reducing visual distractions in the classroom improves students' concentration (Mean = 3.53) as the highest-rated strategies. These findings suggest that maintaining uninterrupted instructional periods and ensuring that classrooms are free from unnecessary visual distractions enable students to concentrate more effectively on learning activities, thereby enhancing their academic performance.

The respondents also agreed to a high extent that reducing noise pollution in the classroom improves students' ability to focus on lessons (Mean = 3.33). This indicates that a quieter learning environment enhances students' attention span, comprehension, and overall participation during classroom instruction.

Furthermore, respondents agreed that a well-organized classroom environment helps improve students' academic performance (Mean = 3.13). This finding implies that orderly classroom arrangements create a conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning by promoting discipline, comfort, and effective classroom interaction.

Although it recorded the lowest mean score, respondents still agreed to a high extent that proper lighting in the classroom enhances students' study environment for academic success (Mean = 2.95). This suggests that adequate classroom lighting contributes to students' comfort, reduces eye strain, and supports effective reading, writing, and other learning activities.

Overall, the findings indicate that effective management of environmental distractions, including minimizing lesson interruptions, reducing visual and noise distractions, maintaining organized classrooms, and providing adequate lighting can significantly improve students' concentration, engagement, and learning experiences, thereby enhancing their academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Question 3: What are the ways managing social distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean ratings and standard deviation of the respondents on the extent managing social distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria

S/N	Item Description	Male		Female		Mean set	Decision
		Mean	SD_1	Mean	SD_2		
11.	Avoiding excessive group gatherings during class hours increases students' attention to learning.	3.81	1.80	3.58	0.88	3.60	High Extent
12.	Avoiding gossips and irrelevant discussions during school time increases students' learning productivity	3.73	1.66	3.38	0.85	3.42	High Extent
13.	Limiting social visits during study hours	3.76	1.74	3.25	0.80	3.28	High Extent

	helps students' to be focused on academics						
14.	Avoiding unnecessary conversations during lessons helps students' improved students' academic performance	3.51	1.47	3.60	0.86	3.58	High Extent
15.	Reducing peer pressure to engage in non-academic activities improves my school performance	3.66	1.63	3.36	0.83	3.39	High Extent
	Grand mean	**3.40**	**1.30**	3.43	0.84	**3.45**	**High Extent**

The results presented in Table 3 indicated that the respondents agreed, to a high extent, that managing social distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. This is supported by the grand mean of 3.45, which is above the criterion mean, indicating a generally positive perception among the respondents. The grand standard deviations of 1.30 for male respondents and 0.84 for female respondents suggest that although there was greater variation in the responses of male respondents than female respondents, there was still an overall consensus regarding the importance of managing social distractions to enhance academic performance.

Specifically, respondents rated avoiding excessive group gatherings during class hours increases students' attention to learning as the highest-ranked strategy, with a mean score of 3.60. This finding suggests that minimizing unnecessary gatherings during instructional periods enables students to devote greater attention to classroom activities, thereby improving their learning outcomes.

Closely following this, respondents agreed to a high extent that avoiding unnecessary conversations during lessons helps improve students' academic performance (Mean = 3.58). This implies that reducing classroom chatter enhances students' concentration, active participation, and understanding of lessons.

The respondents also agreed that avoiding gossip and irrelevant discussions during school time increases students' learning productivity (Mean = 3.42). This finding indicates that limiting non-academic interactions during school hours allows students to allocate more time and mental energy to meaningful academic activities.

Furthermore, respondents indicated that reducing peer pressure to engage in non-academic activities improves school performance (Mean = 3.39). This suggests that discouraging negative peer influence encourages students to remain committed to their academic responsibilities and make better educational decisions.

Although it received the lowest mean score among the items, respondents still agreed to a high extent that limiting social visits during study hours helps students remain focused on academics (Mean = 3.28). This finding implies that minimizing unnecessary social interactions during study periods enables students to maintain concentration and devote sufficient time to learning tasks.

Generally, the findings reveal that effective management of social distractions, including avoiding excessive group gatherings, minimizing unnecessary conversations, discouraging gossip, reducing negative peer pressure, and limiting social visits during study hours can significantly improve students' attention, concentration, learning productivity, and commitment to academic activities. Consequently, managing social distractions is an important strategy for enhancing students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho_1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the ways managing technological distractions could improve academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Independent t-test analysis on the difference in the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the ways managing technological distractions could improve academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria

Groups	N	Mean	S.D	Df	P-value	t-cal	Sig.	Decision
Male teachers	129	3.48	0.57	197	0.05	3.36	.119	Accepted
Female teachers	70	3.38	0.57					
Total No.	199							

The results presented in Table 4 showed the independent t-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the ways managing technological distractions could improve academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings reveal that male teachers had a mean rating of 3.48 (SD = 0.57), while female teachers had a mean rating of 3.38 (SD = 0.57). Although male teachers reported a slightly higher mean score than female teachers, both groups generally agreed that managing technological distractions could improve students' academic performance.

The independent t-test further showed a t-calculated value of 3.36 with 197 degrees of freedom (df = 197) and a significance value (p = .119). Since the p-value (.119) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance (p > .05), thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Ho_2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the ways managing environmental distractions could improve academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 5: Independent t-test analysis on the significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the ways managing environmental distractions could improve academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Df	P-value	t-cal	Sig.	Decision
Male teachers	129	3.28	0.66	197	.05	5.11	.212	Accepted
Female teachers	70	3.30	0.67					
Total No.	199							

The results presented in Table 5 presented the independent t-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the ways managing environmental distractions could improve academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings indicate that male teachers had a mean rating of 3.28 (SD = 0.66), while female teachers had a mean rating of 3.30 (SD = 0.67).

The mean scores are very close, indicating that both male and female teachers similarly agreed that managing environmental distractions could improve students' academic performance.

The independent t-test further revealed a t-calculated value of 5.11 with 197 degrees of freedom (df = 197) and a significance value (p = .212). Since the p-value (.212) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance (p > .05), thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Ho_3: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the ways managing social distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 6: Independent t-test analysis on the significant difference between the mean rating of male and female teachers on the ways managing social distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria

Groups	N	Mean	SD	Df	P-value	t-cal	Sig.	Decision
Male teachers	129	3.40	1.30	197	0.05	3.26	.221	Accepted
Female teachers	70	3.43	0.84					
Total No.	199							

The results presented in Table 6 show the independent t-test analysis of the difference between the mean ratings of male and female teachers on the ways managing social distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. The findings reveal that male teachers had a mean rating of 3.40 (SD = 1.30), while female teachers had a mean rating of 3.43 (SD = 0.84). The mean ratings are very similar, indicating that both male and female teachers agreed to a high extent that managing social distractions could improve students' academic performance.

The independent t-test further revealed a t-calculated value of 3.26 with 197 degrees of freedom (df = 197) and a significance value (p = .221). Since the p-value (.221) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance (p > .05), thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Managing Technological Distractions and Improve Students' Academic Performance

The finding of this study revealed ways managing technological distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. The table showed that to a high extent managing technological distractions improved students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. The finding of the study is in line with the findings of Hadlington (2015) who posited that effective management of technological distraction enables students to regulate their attention, prioritize academic tasks, and optimize their study time, which in turn leads to improved academic performance. Similarly, Kuznekoff et al., (2015) found that students in classrooms with controlled mobile phone use performed significantly better on tests and retained more information than those in distraction-rich settings.

Managing Environmental Distractions and improve Students' Academic Performance

The finding of this study revealed ways managing environmental distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. The table showed that to a high extent managing environmental distractions improved students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. The finding is supported by Puteh et al. (2022) who found that classrooms with well-managed environmental settings (e.g., designated learning zones, clutter-free layouts, and temperature control) significantly improved students' attentiveness and reduced behavioral issues. Managing distractions also promotes a sense of safety and comfort, which is vital for learning readiness.

Managing Social Distractions and Improve Students' Academic Performance

The finding of this study revealed ways managing social distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria**.** The table showed that to a high extent managing social distractions could improve students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria**.** This findings is in line with the finding of Taiwo and Igwe (2023) who found that when students feel secure and less distracted by peer disruptions, they are more likely to participate actively, collaborate meaningfully, and invest effort in academic activities. This positive academic environment becomes a reinforcing cycle where increased focus leads to higher performance, which in turn boosts student motivation and reduces disruptive behaviors.

CONCLUSION

The study examined management of distractions for improved students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State. Effective management of distractions is vital for improving students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State. Distractions whether technological, environmental, social, or economic significantly hinder students' focus, motivation, and engagement in learning activities. When these distractions are properly managed through structured policies, supportive learning environments, and stakeholder collaboration, students are better able to concentrate, retain information, and achieve academic excellence. The study concluded that to a high extent management of distractions improved students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Ahoada East Local Government Area, Rivers State.

Recommendations

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

- School administrators and teachers should create clear rules for responsible use of digital devices, restrict phones during lessons, and teach students digital discipline to reduce social media and online entertainment distractions.

- Government and school authorities should provide good classroom infrastructure, proper seating, noise control, and adequate lighting to create a conducive learning environment that supports students' concentration and participation.
- Teachers, guidance counselors, and parents should work together to guide students toward positive peer relationships, promote self-discipline, and encourage activities that help them stay focused on academics and avoid peer pressure.
- The government and stakeholders should support students from low-income families through scholarships, school feeding, and provision of free learning materials to reduce financial stress and improve school attendance and performance.
- The Ministry of Education should create a strong policy framework and organize regular training for teachers, parents, and administrators to collectively manage distractions and improve students' academic performance in public schools.

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