

THE INFLUENCE OF DISTRACTING FACTORS ON EFFECTIVE STUDIES AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS

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Abstract

This paper focuses on The Influence of distracting factors on effective studies among Business Education students. The population of this study was 400 NCE and degree students of the Department of Business Education, College of Education, AfahaNsit. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 students from the Department of Business Education, College of Education, AfahaNsit for the study. The data used in this study was gathered through private investigation approach, observations and oral interviews. The data was gathered from May, 2019 to September, 2022. The data was analysed using simple descriptive statistics from SPSS and structural equation modelling analysis using Amos graphics vision 24. The study identified four groups of distracting factors. These include personal / internal factors, technology factors, environmental / external factors and school factors. Recommendations were made to include the control measures that can be adopted to control each of the identified distracting factors in order to ensure effective studies among Business Education students. The recommendations include the fact that the use of technology devices should be controlled. It is hoped that the recommended control measures will reduce distracting factors and ensure functional education.

Keywords: Distracting factors, effective studies, Business Education.

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, (Aligolbandi, 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. Students are expected to start studying for their test, quiz or examination some days before the actual date. Failure to do this can result in some points that were already learned being forgotten. 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. The findings of such studies are not merged with the possible control measures that can remove the distracting factors. This particular study is aimed at identifying the factors that can cause distraction to students during studies. It is also aimed at identifying and suggesting possible control measures that can be applied to reduce or remove the distracting variables and ensure effective studies among Business Education students.

There are many factors that can distract students and prevent them from studying effectively. Distraction can be external such as noise, internal such as fatigue, technological such as ringing sound of a phone, and school based such as overcrowded classroom (Attia, Baig, Marouk& Khan, 2017). In addition, over enrolment in class, inadequate campus accommodation, poor sanitation facilities, congestion in lecture theatres, lack of up-to-date

books in the library, seductive dress code of female students, self-catering, also constitute to some extent, distraction to students while studying (Nchungo, 2013). Study habit is also an identified factor that can influence effective study and consequently, academic performance (Cerma&Pavliushchenko, 2015). Facebook addiction disorder was identified as another factor that affects effective study and academic performance negatively (Vashishta, Ahuju& Sharma, 2017).

Sometimes, students are found doing the wrong things at a time that they are suppose to concentrate in their studies. Time management is very important, students mismanage their time and consequently have problems in their studies (Dehie, Osman & Mohammed, 2015). Attention control is found to be moderated by mediation effect of cognitive emotional pre-occupation in association with mobile phone distraction. This affects the psychological well-being of the students while studying. (Chu, Qaisa, Shah & Jalil, 2021).

There are several theories that has tried to explain how and why there are distractions in human beings. The theory of mental self-government refers to an inventory of different thinking styles that gives an indication of people's preferences of thinking patterns. It refers to the different thinking abilities and styles which constitutes preferences in the use of abilities. This implies that what constitutes distraction to one person may not necessarily be a distraction to another person. A student may listen to soft music while studying, but the music may constitute noise factor that can distract another student. This is due to individual differences.

The Triarchic Theory focuses on the ability itself. The theory states that three kinds of intellectual abilities exist. These are analytical, creative and practical abilities students analyse situations and their environment differently. Distraction can be internal, external habitual, surprising, annoying or pleasurable. The growth of distraction is as fast as the growth of technology and urbanization (Rothman, 2015). Based on the theory of distraction conflict, being aware of another object creates a conflict between attending to what is at hand and Attending to the new object which may be technology (Al-Rahmi& Musa, 2015).

There are several suggestions on how to overcome distraction during studies. These include:

- ❖ Get organized with a list of what to do for everyday.
- ❖ Minimize open internet tabs
- ❖ Silence alerts
- ❖ Breakdown the works for the day into small batches with time frame allocated to each batch of work.
- ❖ Minimize external noise with soft music using head phone or ear piece.
- ❖ Choose a suitable reading habit (Oriogu&Subair, 2017).

Good study materials accommodation, conducive learning environment good lecture theatres good water and sanitation facilities will enhance students' potential abilities of being analytical, creative and practical as described in Triarchic Theory. The students will be noticed to be distracted if they lost the ability to focus their attention concerning comprehension and internalization of what they listen, read or see during classes or reading time. This occurs when internal and external factors impede students' ability to apply their knowledge into their academic work. If the determinants affecting academic distractions are removed students will study effectively (Abbas, 2020, Green, 2019).

Existing empirical studies

There are several studies on variables that constitute distractions on students study habit. Among such studies is the study of May, (2018) on the topic, "Efficient, helpful, or distracting? A literature review of media" who opined that multitasking interferes with attention and working memory, negatively affecting GPA, test performance and recall. Mendozaalan&McDonougha (2018), in their study on "The effect of cell phones on attention

and learning: The influences of time, distraction and nomophobia”found out that distraction by text messages reduces learning, self-reported nomophobia reduces learning. While studying on the topic “Distracted learning: Big problem and golden opportunity”, Schmidt, (2020) suggested that in order to keep students engaged with the course content, and be less inclined to turn to their smartphones for stimulation, teachers should promote active learning in the classroom.

Gupta &Maksy, (2020) while studying on the topic, “Motivation, effort and distraction factors associated with student performance in an undergraduate financial management course: An empirical study at a US public residential university”, found positive relationship between distracting factors and academic performance. Among the distracting factors identified in their study are, study hours, job type, course load, credit load, math ability, writing ability, reading ability and listening ability. These factors were seen to significantly affect students’ performance. In their recommendation, they suggested that advisors should encourage students to take less job hours because students who carried less hours performed better than those who carried more job hours.

In the study on “The influence of study attitudes and study habits on the academic performance of the students”, Tus, (2020) sees study habits as part of a student’s everyday life that contributes significantly to the development of knowledge and perceptual capacities. The study also noted that there are several distracting factors that affects the students study habit and attitude.

Goundar, (2014), in a study on the topic “The distraction of technology in the classroom” identified technology as one of the distracting factors in the classroom. Such technology include laptops, cell phone computer games etc. This was also corroborated by Schmidt, (2020), and Mendozaalam&McDonougha, (2018). These studies also concluded that excessive use of cell phone impair learning and can divert students’ attention. The effect of distraction on recognition of learning material and the ability to recall such learning materials in a test or examination was discovered by Beaman, Hanczakowski, & Jones, (2014). Their study indicated that distraction has effect on metacognition.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

1. To determine the distracting factors that influences effective studies among Business Education students.
2. To suggest the measures that can be adopted to control distracting factors that influences effective studies among Business Education students.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the distracting factors that influences effective studies among Business Education students?
2. What are the possible measures that can be adopted to control the distracting factors that influences effective studies among Business Education students?

Methodology

This study used private investigation approach, observations and oral interviews. The data was gathered from May, 2019 to September, 2022. The data was analysed using simple descriptive statistics from SPSS and structural equation modeling analysis using Amos Graphics version 24. An initial exploratory factor analysis was conducted to identify 24 factors as distracting factors that influences effective studies among Business Education Students in College of Education AfahaNsit. The identified factors were grouped into four

main groups. These are Personal/Internal factors, Technology factors, Environmental/External factors as well as School factors.

Findings

The researcher identified four main groups of distracting factors based on the data gathered and analysed. These include personal / internal factors, technology factors, environmental / external factors and school factors. Table 1 shows the various groups of distracting factors and the variables that constitute each group. It also shows the frequencies, percentage responses, mean, standard deviation and the decision on the variables in each group.

Table 1: Frequencies, percentage responses, mean, standard deviation and the decision

S/N	Distracting Factors	Frequencies	Percentage Responses	Mean	SD	Decision
A	Personal / Internal Factors					
1.	Family Pressure	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
2.	Hunger	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
3.	Illness	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
4.	Worrying	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
5.	Fatigue	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
6.	School Fees	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
7.	Performance level	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
8.	Gender	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
9.	Learning speed	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
10	Culture	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
B	Technology Factors					
11	Phone calls	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
12	Text Messages	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
13	Television	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
14	Laptops	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
15	Social Media	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
16	Handheld games	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
C	Environmental / External Factors					
17	Noise	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
18	Visual triggers	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
19	Social interactions / friends	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
20	Music	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
D.	School Factors					
21	Class size	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
22	Classroom Setting	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
23	Classroom Management	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
24	Classroom Lighting	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed

The researcher identified four main groups of control measures that can be adopted to control the various groups of distracting factors based on the data gathered and analysed. These

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include personal / internal factors, technology factors, environmental / external factors and school factors. Table 2 shows the various groups of control measures that can be adopted to control the various groups of distracting factors. It also shows the frequencies and percentage responses in each group.

To further make the analysis meaningful, the researcher merged the identified four main groups of control measures that can be adopted to control the various groups of distracting factors with the various identified distracting factors. These include personal / internal factors, technology factors, environmental / external factors and school factors. Table 2 shows the various groups of distracting factors with the corresponding groups of control measures that can be adopted to control the various groups of distracting factors. It also shows the frequencies and percentage responses in each group.

Table 2: Frequencies and percentage responses on control measures

S/ N	Distracting Factors	Control Measures	Frequencies	Percentage Responses	Mean	SD	Decision
A	Personal / Internal Factors	Personal / Internal Factors					
1.	Family Pressure	Stay in the hostel	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
2.	Hunger	More money should be provided	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
3.	Illness	Prompt medical services should be provided	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
4.	Worrying	Relax and concentrate on studies	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
5.	Fatigue	Rest well	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
6.	School Fees	Money should be provided for the students' school fees on time.	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
7.	Performance level	Put more effort in studies	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
8.	Gender	Ignore gender biases	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
9.	Learning speed	Keep your speed and improve	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
10	Culture	Ignore cultural biases	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
B	Technology Factors	Technology Factors					
11	Phone calls	Switch off phones while studying	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
12	Text Messages	Switch off phones while studying	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
13	Television	Switch off television while studying	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed

14	Laptops	Switch off laptops while studying	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
15	Social Media	Go offline while studying	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
16	Handheld games	Do not play games while studying	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
C	Environmental / External Factors	Environmental / External Factors					
17	Noise	Stay in a quiet place while studying	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
18	Visual triggers	Stay in a place where there are no visual triggers while studying	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
19	Social interactions / friends	Stay away from distracting friends while studying	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
20	Music	Switch off music while studying	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
D.	School Factors	School Factors					
21	Class size	Classes should not be too large	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
22	Classroom Setting	Classroom setting should be spacious	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
23	Classroom Management	Classes should be properly managed	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed
24	Classroom Lighting	There should be proper lighting in the classes.	100	100%	4.16	0.75	Agreed

Based on the result of the analysis generated through structural equation modeling analysis using Amos Version 24, the relationship between each of the identified 24 distracting factors and effective studies was positive. This means that each of the identified variables can affect effective studies negatively. It was equally observed through the analysis that each of the identified control measures can affect effective studies positively. This was indicated by the confirmation fit index (CFI) of the structural equation model being (>) greater than 0.90

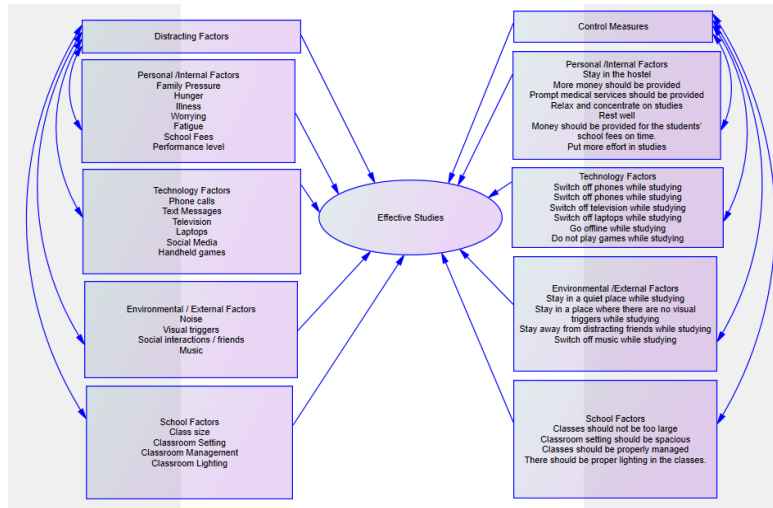


Figure 1: Result of Structural Equation Modeling Analysis

Discussion of findings

Based on the findings of the study, personal / internal factors include family pressure, hunger, illness, worrying, fatigue, school fees, performance level, gender, learning speed and culture. These factors were rated by all the participants as factors that constitute 100% distraction to students while studying. Food insecurity was identified by some of the students interviewed as a distracting factor. 100% of the students also confirmed that lack of or limited access to sufficient food can distract the students in their studies. Hunger which is the result of food insecurity distracts attention away from the desired area of focus. In an attempt to satisfy their hunger, some of the students travel home to get provision and food stuff. This distracts them from their studies. The cause of worrying include the workload in the form of the number of test, assignments etc. This was identified to be another personal / internal factor that can cause distraction to students. This is in line with the Load Theory and Selective Attention Theory which states that the level of perceptual load in a task (ie the amount of information involved in processing task – relevant stimuli) determines the efficiency of selective attention. Based on this, some students sometimes select which task to concentrate on at the expense of other task. It was suggested by 100% of the students that in order to control such personal / internal factors, students should stay in the hostel; more money should be provided for the students; prompt medical services should be provided; students should relax and concentrate on their studies, students should rest well; money should be provided for the students’ school fees on time; students should put more effort in their studies; students should ignore gender and cultural biases and keep their speed and improve their studying habit.

Technology factors identified in the study include phone calls, text messages, television, laptop, social media and handheld games. These factors constitute auditory or visual distraction. Auditory distracting factors are those that constitute sound / hearing distraction like the sound of a ringing phone. Visual distracting factors are those that affects the sight. Excessive use of cell phone can be very distracting to students while studying. 100% of the students agreed to this. The habit of carrying a cell phone all the time can affect study habit. Tus, (2020) identified study attitude and habit as one of the factors that affects students’ academic performance. Watching television, answering text messages, using laptop, social media and handheld games are also identified as factors that can distract students from studying. Beaman, Hanczakowski& Jones (2014) see such distractions as factors that can affect recognition and memory. Ukpong& George (2013) also see such distractions as factors

that can reduce the length of study time in their study on the topic, “Length of study time behaviour and academic achievement of social studies education students in the University of Uyo”. It was suggested by 100% of the students that in order to control such technology factors, students should switch off their phones during classes and during private studies.

Environmental / external factors identified in the study include noise, visual triggers, social interactions / friends as well as music. The control measures suggested for the environmental / external distracting factors include staying in a quiet place while studying; staying in a place where there are no visual triggers while studying; staying away from distracting friends while studying; and switching off music while studying. 100% of the students used in the study agreed to these control measures as remedy for environmental / external distracting factors.

Distracting factors identified as school factors were class size, classroom setting, classroom management and classroom lighting. 100 % of the students used for the study agreed that these factors distracts them from studies. The identified control measures for these distracting factors from school include the fact that classes should not be too large, classroom setting should be spacious, classes should be properly managed, and there should be proper lighting in the classes.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that all the control measures identified by this study be adopted by the appropriate persons in order to control the factors that constitute distraction to students’ effective studies. These measures can be adopted in any field of study. This is because such distracting factors are not limited to Business Education students. The College Management must reconsider the policy on campus accommodation and make necessary arrangements for students who wish to stay on campus to come back.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that there are distracting factors that influences effective studies among Business Education students. Four groups of distracting factors were identified to include personal / internal factors, technology factors, environmental / external factors and school factors. It was also concluded that there are measures that can be adopted as control measures to eliminate or control the influence of the identified group of distracting factors on effective studies. The measures are merged with their corresponding distracting factors and presented in Table 2.

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