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The Effects of Digital Distraction in Student's Academic Performance in Northern Samar Colleges, Inc.

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Abstract: This research aims to examine the effects of digital distraction on the academic performance of students enrolled at Northern Samar Colleges, Inc. In today's digital age, students are increasingly exposed to various digital platforms such as social media, video games and messaging applications, which may interfere with their concentration, study habits, and overall academic outcomes. This study seeks to identify the correlation of digital distraction among students and assess how these distractions impact their academic performance, including grades, time management, and class engagement.

In this study, Its discovered that there is no significance and correlation between academic performance and digital distraction.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

People now interact with their environment through digital technology which has transformed their communication methods and their access to information. The digital era provides numerous benefits to users including enhanced communication and expanded social networks and educational resources yet it creates specific challenges for young people. Digital distraction stands as a major educational challenge because students frequently use their cellphones and social media and video games and other online content instead of focusing on their schoolwork.

The academic performance and mental well-being of students have become major concerns for teachers and parents and students themselves because of digital distractions. Digital technology brought numerous benefits to society but it created additional academic challenges for students. Students who follow social media and entertainment content and notifications experience procrastination which leads to decreased productivity and inferior academic performance. Students experience elevated stress levels because of academic work and this type of distraction.

The problem of digital distraction stands as a critical issue because experiences an accelerated process of technological adoption. The college student population faces two opposing challenges because they lack reliable internet access and educational materials yet they spend most of their time using social media and digital entertainment. Students face an intricate situation because they need to manage the educational benefits of digital technology against its possible negative effects.

The knowledge about digital distractions that affect academic results enables educators to create improved educational standards and classroom technology plans and student success programs for digital learning environments. The human ability to perform multiple independent tasks at once is known as multitasking which involves task switching according to multitasking process research. The human brain faces information processing limitations while performing multiple tasks which leads to different theoretical models about multitasking behavior. Students who attempt multitasking with

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digital devices will experience better task performance through continuous task switching instead of true simultaneous work. Students who read textbooks while using their phones experience decreased learning success because their brains need to constantly switch between different tasks.

In an environment where there are a lot of information sources vying for our attention, may have established the habit of preventing what the actual cause do taking frequent breaks, and looking for content that provides immediate gratification. If we don't have access to ICT devices, definitely likely come up with non-digital distractions. This would imply that eliminating media multitasking capabilities once does not entirely address the issue focused.

Addressing digital distraction often involves implementing strategies to minimize interruptions, establish boundaries around device usage, and cultivate mindfulness practices to promote focus and concentration (Dontre, 2020). Additionally, encouraging digital literacy and increasing awareness of the negative consequences of excessive digital engagement can enable people to make thoughtful decisions about their technology use and lessen the detrimental effects of digital distractions on their mental health and productivity. Students often justify their use of mobile phones or laptops during lectures with course-related searches. However, older studies have already shown that non-course-related, “distractive” multitasking is highly prevalent in such conditions, and students significantly underestimate the time distractions take up (Kraushaar, 2010).

This study seeks to investigate the effects of digital distraction on the academic stress levels of students in Northern Samar colleges, aiming to understand how these distractions impact their academic performance and mental well-being.

B. Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to explore the effects of digital distraction on students' academic performance in Northern Samar Colleges.

Specifically, the study aims to:

- *Determine the profile of the students of Northern Samar Colleges in terms of:*
  - Age
  - Sex
  - Grade Level
- *To examine the extent to which students are exposed to various digital applications, such as social media and gaming during class and study time.*
- *To identify the factors that contribute to digital distractions, such as personal habits, social influences, and institutional environments that affect the academic performance.*
- *Investigate the strategies students employ to manage or minimize these distractions, such as time management techniques or self-regulation practices.*
- *Provide recommendations to educational institutions in on how to reduce digital distractions and enhance students' academic performance, fostering a more focused and productive learning environment.*

C. Significance of the Study

The study on how digital distraction affects Northern Samar college students' academic performance is extremely relevant since it attempts to address a growing concern among educators, parents, and policymakers regarding the impact of digital technology on students' learning outcomes. Given the increasing prevalence of digital platforms such as social media, online gaming, and messaging applications, it is critical to understand how these tools impact students' ability to concentrate, retain information, and ultimately succeed in class.

- *Students*

For students, this study highlights the importance of managing digital distractions and adopting effective study habits in an increasingly digital world. By recognizing the ways in which social media, gaming, and other digital activities can detract from their academic focus, students can become more aware of their habits and take steps to enhance their concentration, time management, and productivity. Moreover, the study will provide practical tips and strategies for minimizing distractions, which could directly improve their academic outcomes.

- *Teachers*

Teachers will better understand the challenges their students have concentrating and managing their schoolwork amidst online distractions. This information can help teachers develop more supportive learning environments, enhance their pedagogy, and implement interventions to mitigate the negative effects of digital distractions. Through this information, teachers can serve students better in finding a balance between academic goals and technology use, allowing them to achieve their full potential in the classroom.

- *Parents*

Through this research, parents will have a better understanding of how digital distractions affect their children's academic performance. With this knowledge, parents will be able to intervene and help their kids manage their digital activity and screen time in a more beneficial and healthy way. This research will provide parents with the information and skills necessary to assist their children in balancing homework and online activities, and this will enhance their academic concentration and accomplishment at home.

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➢ *Educational Institutions*

This study offers guidance for schools in Northern Samar seeking to understand how tech affects student focus - helping them build fitting rules or support systems. Further education institutions might leverage these findings when crafting classrooms, creating lessons about smart tech habits, or fostering responsible digital behavior that boosts involvement instead of hindering it. For teachers designing lesson plans, the work suggests optimizing tech integration so it enhances, not undermines, educational success.

D. Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is limited to the students of Northern Samar College, and the findings may not be generalized to other institutions or populations with different technological engagement patterns. It will concentrate on academic performance as measured by grades, attendance, and perceived learning outcomes, excluding other factors such as personal or socio-economic issues. Additionally, the study will focus on current trends and the immediate effects of digital distractions, rather than long-term impacts or the use of digital tools for academic enhancement. The research will rely on self-reported data and may be subject to biases such as over-reporting or under-reporting of digital distraction behaviors.

A significant limitation with this study is that it is conducted based on students' reports of themselves, and those reports could be biased from social desirability or faulty recollection of any use of digital devices, and would not consider anything outside the student that may influence academic achievement, including, but not limited to, personal issues, family issues, or quality of instruction which may further skew results. Furthermore, the study is limited to one educational setting, which limits the results' generalizability to other education institutions.

E. Theoretical Framework

Digital distractions have become a necessary element of our daily life and particularly the academic community. Due to the rapid growth of digital devices like smartphones, tablets and laptops, students are increasingly presented with various distractions. The theoretical framework utilizes a model that will clarify the area in which digital distractions are exhibited and affect academic performance of students in Northern Samar Colleges, Incorporated.

Robert Barron’s Distraction-conflict theory in psychology refers to the idea that attentional distractions can lead to a conflict within an individual. This conflict arises when there is a competition for cognitive resources between the distracting stimulus and the primary task at hand. The theory suggests that this conflict can result in decreased performance on the primary task as a result of divided attention (Barron, 1986). Additionally, attentional conflict refers to the situation where the individual feels the tendency, desire or obligation to allocate attention to these two or more exclusive inputs. This type of conflict leads to a cognitive overload, which in turn can elevate stress, arousal and drive in the individual(Nicholson D. B., 2005) may lead to the correlated nature in which both the distraction and the focus of the students.

Self-regulation can be an issue for students who may find it difficult to resist digital distractions. This self-regulation issue can look like: Unfinished study sessions, Assignments completed last minute, Lower achieving students. According to self-regulation theory, the student’s ability to manage their behavior and emotions - especially as it relates to time management, goal setting, and effort - is an important aspect of academic success. Digital distractions can undermine students' self-regulation abilities. The temptation to engage with digital media may result in procrastination, lack of focus, and diminished study time, ultimately affecting academic outcomes.(Zimmerman, 2000)

F. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for studying how digital distractions affect Northern Samar Colleges students' academic performance focuses on the connection between digital distractions and academic success while accounting for a number of influencing factors. When students use digital devices for non-academic purposes, such social media, gaming, and entertainment apps, when they are supposed to be studying or attending classes, this is referred to as "digital distraction." Students who are distracted may find it more difficult to focus, which could result in poorer academic performance as measured by grades, test scores, assignment completion, and general involvement in class activities.

The framework supports the idea that separating students' cognitive abilities when it comes to academic activities and non-academic, informational tasks suggests that the degree of digital distractions has a negative impact on academic performance. The relationship, however, is not linear. The degree to which students are hindered by behaviors and cognitive distractions may be moderated by the effects of self-regulation, digital literacy, and time management skills. A student who demonstrates strong time management skills and is more skilled at digital literacy may be able to eliminate distractions and lessen the negative effects of distractions on their performance. Similarly, students who possess superior abilities to regulate themselves are more likely to manage their computer usage, helping them to maintain attention and efficiency in their studies.

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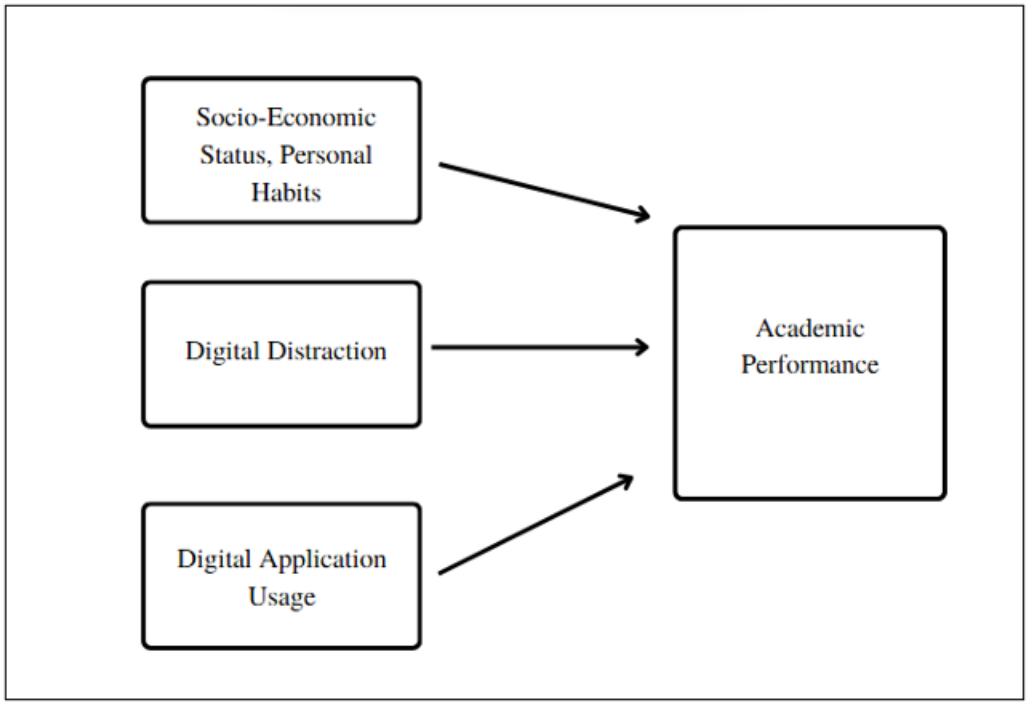

Fig 1 Conceptual Framework

G. Null Hypothesis

The null hypotheses to assess whether digital distractions have any measurable effects on students' academic performance at Northern Samar Colleges Incorporated, By examining the relationship between digital distractions and academic outcomes, this study aims to provide insights that can help educators, administrators, and students themselves understand the potential consequences of digital device usage on academic success:

- *Null Hypothesis (H_0):*

There is no significant difference in the academic performance of students who experience digital distractions and those who do not at Northern Samar Colleges Incorporated.

- *Null Hypothesis (H_0):*

Digital distraction does not significantly affect the Grades of students at Northern Samar Colleges Incorporated.

- *Null Hypothesis (H_0):*

There is no significant relationship between the amount of time students spend on digital devices and their academic performance at Northern Samar Colleges Incorporated.

H. Definition of Terms

Terminologies to be made use of in this study are those terms which are correlated in the field of education and psychology:

- *Academic Performance*

The measurement of student achievement across various academic subjects[1]

- *Academic Obligation*

Responsibilities and commitments related to educational pursuits, often including attendance at classes, completion of assignments, participation in discussions, and adherence to institutional policies and standards[2].

- *Cognitive Capabilities*

Skills your brain uses to complete essential day-to-day tasks like thinking, learning, reading, remembering, speaking, listening and paying attention.

- *Digital Distraction*

Digital distraction refers to the intrusion of digital devices into our lives, leading to reduced productivity, negative impacts on our mental and emotional health, and even physical consequences[3]

- *Digital Literacy*

The ability to effectively and responsibly use technology to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information. It encompasses not only technical skills but also cognitive abilities like critical thinking and problem-solving in a digital context.

[1] Ballotpedia “Academic Performance”2022
[2] Yack Tack “Academic Obligations” 2023
[3] Research Gate “Understanding Determinants of Digital Distraction” 2023

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- *Immediate Gratification*

The desire for pleasure, satisfaction, or rewards to be experienced right away, without waiting or working hard. It involves prioritizing short-term pleasure over long-term benefits.

- *Multitasking*

The ability to pay attention to several pieces of information at the same time or the process of performing more than one task at the same time.

- *Procrastination*

The voluntary act of delaying or postponing a task, even when one knows that it would be better to do it sooner rather than later. This delay often leads to negative consequences, such as increased stress, reduced performance, or missed deadlines.

- *Perceived Learning Outcome*

A learner's subjective evaluation of their own learning progress and knowledge gain, as opposed to objective measures like test scores.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Digital distraction has become a significant concern in educational settings, particularly in higher education institutions. Research indicates that the prevalence of digital devices among students has led to increased distractions, (Junco, 2012) which can adversely affect academic performance. For instance, found that students who frequently use social media during class tend to have lower grades compared to their peers who limit such activities. This is supported by a study conducted by (Larry Rosen, 2013), which revealed that multitasking with digital devices can impair cognitive processing and retention of information, ultimately hindering learning outcomes.

In the context of Northern Samar Colleges, Incorporated, the impact of digital distraction may be particularly pronounced due to the increasing reliance on technology for educational purposes. According to a survey by the Philippine Commission on Higher Education (CHED, 2020), a significant percentage of students in the region reported using their smartphones for non-academic activities during lectures, which correlates with decreased focus and engagement in academic tasks.

Moreover, a study by (Lepp, 2015) highlighted that excessive smartphone use is linked to lower academic performance, as students often struggle to balance their online and offline responsibilities. This phenomenon is further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has shifted many educational activities online, leading to an increase in digital distractions (Kumar & Kumar, 2021).

A study by Kuznekoff and Titsworth (2013) demonstrated that students who are distracted by digital devices during lectures not only retain less information but also perform worse on assessments. The cognitive load theory suggests that multitasking with digital devices can overwhelm students' working memory, leading to poorer learning outcomes.

The broader implications of digital distractions on future educational policies and practices point towards a need for institutions to actively address this issue and equip students with effective management strategies. Educational institutions should foster awareness among students regarding the detrimental effects of excessive digital distractions and impart skills to prioritize academic tasks

In contrast, some researchers argue that technology can enhance learning when used appropriately. For example, a study by (Kay & Lauricella, 2011)found that students who used educational apps and online resources effectively showed improved engagement and understanding of the material. However, the key lies in the balance and management of technology use in educational contexts.

The literature suggests that digital distractions significantly impact students' academic performance, particularly in institutions like Northern Samar Colleges, Incorporated. Addressing these distractions through educational interventions and promoting digital literacy may be essential for enhancing student outcomes.

III. METHODOLOGY

- *Locale of the Study*

This study was conducted in Catarman, Northern Samar, a province located in the Eastern Visayas region of the Philippines. Catarman is known for its growing educational sector, hosting several public and private colleges and universities that cater to students from both urban and rural areas. Specifically, the study focused on students of Northern Samar Colleges. A private higher education institution in Catarman, which provides programs in arts, sciences, education, and business, among others.

The province’s increasing internet connectivity and smartphone penetration have made digital distractions a relevant concern, particularly among the youth. This makes Northern Samar colleges a suitable and timely locale for exploring the academic implications of digital distraction among students.

- *Research Design*

A descriptive-correlational research approach is used in this study to investigate the connection between Northern Samar college students' academic performance and digital distractions. Finding and characterizing the many kinds, prevalence, and causes of digital distractions is the goal of the descriptive component. The degree to which digital distractions are linked to modifications in academic performance is determined by the correlational component.

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➢ *Variables of the study*

The variables in the study are divided into three categories: independent and dependent. Each is important in determining the type and degree of the connection between students' academic performance and digital distractions.

The independent variable in this study is digital distractions, which refer to the use of digital technologies that interfere with students' focus and learning processes. These distractions can occur during lectures, study sessions, or even while completing academic tasks. Examples include frequent use of social media platforms (such as Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram), playing mobile or computer games, streaming videos, browsing unrelated websites, or constantly checking notifications.

The dependent variable in this study is academic performance, which refers to the level of academic achievement demonstrated by students.

➢ *Population and Sampling*

Simple random sampling was used as a sampling technique. The researchers invited potential respondents individually and privately via online communication platforms and requested their voluntary participation in the study.

➢ *Respondents of the Study*

A total of 198 respondents opened the link to the survey. The researcher limited the respondents to 223 based on the sample size of 223 participants using Yamane's formula on the census of enrolled Junior High School and Senior High School students of Northern Samar Colleges, the population size is 508.

➢ *Research Instruments*

Academic Performance Scale (APS) to assess a student's academic performance. The APS consists of 8 questions to be answered on a 5-point scale regarding study habits, class participation, effort, and problem-solving. Scores are calculated by adding up points for each response, with higher scores indicating better academic performance. The APS has been found to have good reliability and validity in measuring a student's academic performance. It was authored by Carson Birchmeier, Emily Grattan, Sarah Hornbacher, and Christopher McGregory. It was published in 2015.

The Media Multitasking – Revised Scale (MMT-R) measures proactive behaviors of compulsive or inappropriate phone use like feeling the urge to check your phone for messages while talking to someone else as well as more passive behaviors like media-related distractions that interferes. The scale itself has 18 questions indicating the range of how multitasking affects the individual in terms of the usage of digital devices while working. There are 18 questions each item is answered on a 1-5 scale, with the following response choices/labels: 1-Never, 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4-Often, 5-Always for "how often" items, and 1-Not at all, 2, 3-Somewhat, 4, 5-Very much for all other items. It was authored by Richard B. Lopez and Todd F. Heatherton. It was published in 2018.

➢ *Scoring and Interpretation*

The study adopted and used two likert scales: the academic performance scale and the media multitasking-revised scale, as it fit in gathering the data for the study. With the use of Microsoft Excel, the total range from the Academic Performance Scale is 33, while in the Media Multitasking Revised-Scale, it is 88. This indicates that the data has a wider spread. The mean from the Academic Performance Scale is 24, while the Media Multitasking Revised Scale is 47, which indicates the average scores in the questionnaires given to the respondents.

➢ *Data Gathering Procedure*

The researcher invited potential respondents via online platforms and request their voluntary participation in the study. They are provided with a link to the questionnaire that the researchers made, which contains an overview of the study, informed consent, and the research instruments of the survey (Appendix F). The first page shows the full details of the research's informed consent.

If the participant clicks the "I consent" button, the person has read and understood the consent form and has agreed to partake in the survey. Otherwise, the person can freely decline the invitation. Following will be two sets of questionnaire The first research instrument to be answered is The Academic Perfomance Scale, that includes 8 question to which participants chooses sets of choices from Strongly Agree to Disagree.

The second instrument is The Media Multitasking – Revised Scale answered through a Likert scale format. The participant will rate 18 statements with options ranging from 1(Not at all) to 5(Very Much). The last page is the text end of the survey, where participants see the submit button. The data gathering will have duration of three weeks, and it will be organized and analyzed with the use of Microsoft Excel software and Jamovi.

➢ *Statistical Treatment of the Data*

In order to measure the relationship between variables, the Pearson Correlation Coefficient will be utilized. An r indicates the correlation coefficient, which measures the linearity of a relation between two variables. While the absolute r shows the level of correlation, the sign r signifies the direction of the relation. The researchers utilized Microsoft Excel and Google Spreadsheet to run the descriptive statistics (i.e., distribution, central tendency, and variability), summarized, visualized, and analyzed the data through pivot tables and graphs, while inferential statistics for the Pearson Correlation Coefficient and for testing the hypothesis.

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IV. RESULTS

This section presents the summary and analysis of the data collected through Google forms survey link distributed via email to the basic education students of Northern Samar Colleges Inc. The study's objective was to know if there is a significant relationship between Academic Performance and Digital Distraction. The data obtained from the online survey underwent validation of responses and were limited to the sample size of 223 (n=223) with the age range of 12 to 18 years old and above, however only 208 responses was analyzed. Using the Microsoft Excel Data Analysis tool pack, the results were differentiated into two sections descriptive and inferential statistics.

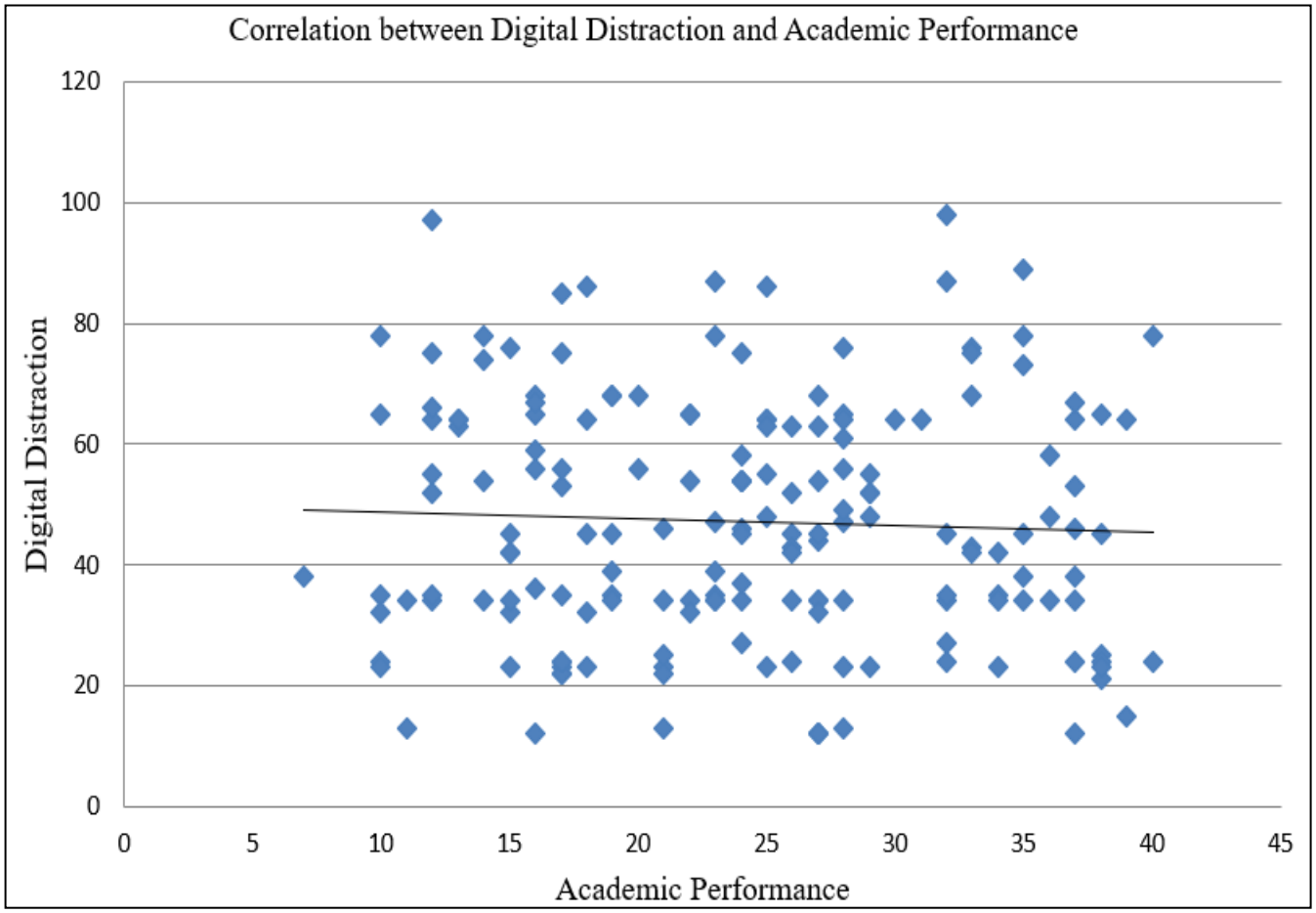

Fig 1. Scatter-Plot of Correlation Between Digital Distraction and Academic Performance using Pearson Correlation Coefficient

The plot supports the interpretation of the computation as there is a relationship between the two variables. As shown in the scatter plot, there is a negative correlation between the two variables as indicated by the close proximities of each score in the tread line.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Academic Performance and Digital Distractions

	n	Mean	Median	Mode	Sum	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Academic Performance	223	24.21	24.00	27.00	4213	8.35	7.00	40.00
Digital Distraction	223	47.18	45.00	34.00	8210	20.00	12.00	98.00

This table presents the descriptive statistics of variables academic performance (X) and digital distraction (Y) from 223 respondents who opened the link survey out of the 320 sample size from the basic education department of Northern Samar Colleges.

In the Academic Performance row, it has a total raw score of 4213 in performance, with a mean of 24.21, SD = 8.5 between ranges of 7 (min) and 40 (max), a median of 24, and the most frequent score of 27.00 in the dataset. As for the other variable, Digital Distraction, it garnered 8210 as the total raw score, with a mean of 47.18, SD = 20.00 between ranges of 12.00 (min) to 98.00 max), a median of 45.00, and 34.00 as the most frequent score.

Table 2. Correlation Between Academic Performance and Digital Distraction Using Pearson Correlation Coefficient

Coefficient (r)	-0.048
n	223
T- Statistics	-0.635
P Value	0.5261

Based on the data shown on Table 2, the variables have resulted to r = -0.048 (-0.05) stating a correlation between the two variables because Pearson correlation coefficient interpretation indicate, $0.6 < r < 0.79$ is High Correlation. The P value scored $p < .001$ in Microsoft Excel. The null hypothesis of this research, the There is no significant difference in the academic performance of students who experience digital distractions and those who do not at Northern Samar Colleges Incorporated. Then there is no correlation between academic performance and digital distraction. The researcher did not reject the null hypothesis since the p value is more than 0.005. Therefore, there is no correlation between academic performance and digital distraction.

V. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This chapter examines the primary findings that expand on the results from the previous chapter concerning the research problems that aim to identify a descriptive data analysis. A lot of the disruptions that students encounter are brought on by their electronic gadgets. Many researchers actually note that many classroom situations can be distracting. For a number of reasons, including better learning outcomes, healthier habits, better time management, decreased cyber-bullying and misuse, and enhanced concentration, it is crucial to monitor and manage distractions when using technology. Distractions can make it difficult for a student to concentrate on their studies, particularly those brought on by technology.

The researcher would like to recommend more variables in a similar research study because having fewer variables might affect what we are aiming to measure. However, it does not explore the understanding of other factors that come into play. The researcher would also recommend conducting this study on a wider scale, such as in other educational institutions and at different year levels. It would also be best to have more participants for the sample size of a group or community, as this might affect the result of the study because a small sample size may not justify the result of a large group that may yield better results.

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