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Driving Transformative Impact Across Disciplines

Peer-Review Report Form

Manuscript Title:	Scrolling Minds, Struggling Grades: The Impact of Digital Distraction on Students' Focus and Academic Performance
Type of Article:	Original Article

FIRST ROUND

Editor

General Comments and Recommendations
The reviewers acknowledge the significance of your manuscript and recommend several revisions to further improve its clarity, coherence, organization, and overall scholarly quality. In addition, you are advised to thoroughly review and validate all references included in the manuscript. Please ensure that all cited sources are accurate, accessible, and retrievable through Google Scholar to uphold the credibility and reliability of the study. Additionally, make sure to include the DOI or website link for every reference to facilitate verification and accessibility of sources. Furthermore, only sources that are cited within the manuscript should appear in the References section, and all entries listed in the References section must also be cited in the text. For example, if 20 unique sources are cited in the manuscript, then only those 20 sources should be included in the References section. Please note that repeated citations of the same source within the text are counted as a single reference entry; therefore, the total number of references may be lower than the total number of in-text citations.

Reviewer 1

General Comments and Recommendations
The manuscript discusses a relevant issue because digital distraction is now common among young learners. However, the paper still has major weaknesses in the consistency of results, interpretation of data, and strength of the methodology. The topic has value, but the present version needs clearer analysis before the findings can be trusted.

Specific Comments and Recommendations
There are serious inconsistencies between the abstract, results, and conclusion. The abstract says students had low focus and average academic performance, but the results show high focus and outstanding academic performance. This weakens the credibility of the study because the reader cannot clearly know what the actual findings are.
The interpretation of student focus in Table 2 needs to be reviewed. The items are negatively worded, such as difficulty concentrating and being distracted by notifications, but the interpretation shifts between "High," "Low Focus," "Very Low Focus," and "High Focus." This

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suggests a possible scoring or reverse-coding problem. This is important because the main conclusion of the paper depends on how focus was measured.
The positive correlation between digital distraction and student focus is not well explained. The paper says that as digital distraction increases, student focus also increases, which is opposite to the usual assumption of the study. The authors should examine whether this result came from incorrect coding, unclear item direction, or a real finding. Without this clarification, the interpretation may be misleading.
The academic performance result also needs stronger treatment. More than half of the respondents had outstanding grades, yet the study argues that digital distraction affects academic performance. The authors should explain how grades were obtained, whether they were official records, and whether grade inflation or school-level differences may have affected the result.
The methodology needs more detail on sampling and ethical procedures. The study involved Grade 6 pupils, so parental consent, assent, confidentiality, and approval from school authorities should be clearly discussed. The sample size of 51 is also small, so the authors should be careful in making broad claims.
The discussion often explains the findings by saying students may have self-regulation, discipline, or coping strategies. However, these variables were not measured in the study. These explanations should be presented only as possible interpretations, not as strong claims.
The conclusion should be revised to match the actual statistical findings and limitations. The current conclusion is too direct and does not reflect the problems in measurement, small sample size, and possible scoring issues. A more careful conclusion would make the paper more balanced and credible.

Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

	Decision
	Accept the manuscript for publication.
/	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

Reviewer 2

General Comments and Recommendations
The structure of the paper generally follows a standard academic format, which is good. My biggest worry is the severe contradiction between your abstract, your literature review, and your actual statistical findings. In your abstract, you clearly stated that digital distractions adversely affect concentration. But in your results section, you claim that as digital distractions increase, students' focus also increases. This makes no logical sense and goes against the very core of your theoretical background. I strongly suspect there is a fundamental error in how you computed your statistical data, specifically a failure to reverse-code your Likert scale items. I will explain this more below, but this entire data analysis might need to be redone.The formatting of your citations and references is very messy and inconsistent.

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Specific Comments and Recommendations
Abstract and Introduction Please check the very first sentence of your abstract. It reads, The study titled Scrolling Minds Struggling Grades: The Impact of Digital Distraction on Students' Focus and Academic Performance.. This is an incomplete, floating sentence. It lacks a verb and a concluding thought. The introduction is nicely written and sets up the problem well. Linking the problem to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 is a very smart touch. You built a strong argument in the introduction that multitasking and digital interruptions weaken working memory and reduce comprehension. This makes the strange findings in your results even more confusing.
Methodology You mentioned using Slovin's Formula with a 4% margin of error to select your 51 respondents. This is acceptable, but you should explicitly state the total population size so the reader can verify the math. Your reliability test yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.963. This is an excellent score, showing your 25 questionnaire items are highly consistent. However, you missed a very critical detail: you did not explain the scoring of your 5-point Likert scale. What does a 1 mean? What does a 5 mean? Without this, the reader cannot understand your mean scores.
Results and Discussion Table 1: The finding that messaging apps and notifications are the top distractors (Mean = 3.75) is believable and well-supported by your cited literature. Table 2: I am having a very big confusion here. You stated that the item regarding focus decreasing with devices nearby got a mean of 2.27, which you interpreted as Low Focus. But then, you state the overall section mean is 2.00, and you interpret this lower number as High Focus. How does the scale work? If a higher number means lower focus, you must state that clearly. Table 4: You found a strong positive correlation (r = 0.80) between digital distraction and student focus. You interpreted this to mean that when distraction goes up, focus also goes up. Dear authors, please think critically here. The statements in Table 2 are phrased negatively, such as I get easily distracted by notifications. If a student answers 5 (Strongly Agree) to high distraction, and 5 (Strongly Agree) to easily losing focus, the Pearson r software will see two high numbers and call it a positive correlation. But practically, agreeing to losing focus means they have LOW focus. You must reverse-code the focus scores before running the Pearson correlation! Because of this missing step, your interpretation that students adapted to distractions is likely totally false. Table 5: You claim a positive correlation (r = 0.338) between distraction and academic performance, meaning more distraction equals better grades. Again, while you try to justify this by saying students use platforms for collaboration, this is highly suspicious. Please re-run your numbers after checking your data coding.
Conclusion and References Your conclusion section is just a list of bullet points. In formal academic writing, conclusions should be written in synthesizing paragraphs, not fragmented lists. Please rewrite this to summarize the core meaning of your study. Your in-text citations do not match your reference list at all! In the discussion, you mentioned several researchers: Adrian F. Ward et al. 2018, Reynol Junco and Shelia R. Cotten 2020, Barry J. Zimmerman 2019, Chen and Yan 2016, and Michael Henderson, Neil Selwyn, and Rachel Aston 2017. I checked your References section, and not a single one of these authors is listed there. This is a major academic oversight. You must add every cited author to the reference list.

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Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

Decision	
	Accept the manuscript for publication.
/	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

SECOND ROUND

Decision	**Editor**	**Reviewer 1**	**Reviewer 2**
Accept the manuscript for publication.	/	/	/
Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.			
Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.			