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Influence of Social Media on Students' Academic Performance: A Case Study of Ekiti State University Students

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of social media on students' academic performance at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. It investigated students' usage patterns, preferred platforms, academic benefits, learning opportunities, and challenges associated with social media engagement. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and a purposive sampling technique was used to select 200 students from different faculties. A structured questionnaire was administered, and 194 completed questionnaires were returned, representing a 97% response rate. Data were analysed using frequencies and percentages. The findings revealed that all respondents had access to internet-enabled mobile phones, while 91.24% reported daily social media communication. WhatsApp (98.45%) and Facebook (97.42%) were the most frequently used platforms. Regarding usage duration, 42.78% spent 1–4 hours daily, while 31.44% spent 5–10 hours. Furthermore, 58.25% reported spending more time on social media than reading. Nevertheless, 68.04% indicated that they acquired new knowledge through social media outside the classroom, while 61.34% reported that such learning contributed positively to their academic activities. Social media was also used to obtain information (96.39%), monitor lecture schedules (98.45%), and participate in academic discussions (89.18%). However, 76.80% reported exposure to sexual material online. The study concludes that social media provides opportunities for academic engagement and learning, although excessive use and exposure to inappropriate content remain concerns. It recommends responsible usage, effective time management, and digital safety education. The findings on academic performance are based on students' self-reported experiences and opinions rather than objectively measured academic grades.

KEYWORDS: *Social Media, Perceived Academic Performance, University Students, Digital Learning, Ekiti State University.*

How to Cite

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1.0 Introduction

Social media has become an essential component of contemporary university education, transforming students' communication, information-seeking behaviour, learning experiences, and academic engagement. Digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and X provide opportunities for educational collaboration, knowledge sharing, and social interaction. The increasing accessibility of these platforms has generated considerable scholarly interest in their implications for students' academic performance. Ansari and Khan (2020) established that social media promotes collaborative learning through improved communication, interaction, and knowledge exchange among students. Similarly, Chiedozie (2025) reported that students at the University of Lagos perceived social networking platforms as beneficial to academic performance when appropriately utilised for assignments

and educational discussions.

The educational benefits of social media extend beyond communication to include access to academic resources, peer-assisted learning, virtual discussions, and the dissemination of educational information. Oluwagbemi *et al*. (2024) examined social media and academic performance among entrepreneurial undergraduates in Rivers State, highlighting its relevance to students' learning and communication activities. Similarly, Owo (2025) found that social media serves both academic and social purposes among science education students in Rivers State, although inappropriate usage and poor time management may undermine educational productivity. Koki and Gambo (2025) also identified significant relationships between the use of Facebook, WhatsApp, and academic performance among undergraduates in Jigawa State, suggesting that the academic implications of social media may differ across platforms.

Despite these benefits, excessive social media engagement has raised concerns regarding academic distraction, procrastination, reduced concentration, and ineffective study habits. Ciroma *et al*. (2025) reported that although tertiary institution students in Yobe State recognised the educational benefits of social media, recreational usage was associated with poor time management and reduced academic productivity. Conversely, James *et al*. (2026) found that social media addiction did not significantly predict academic performance among undergraduates in Kwara State, demonstrating that its academic consequences may vary across student populations. Similarly, Zerrouk *et al*. (2026), in a systematic review and meta-analysis, identified considerable variation in the relationship between problematic social media use and academic performance, indicating that the association cannot be generalised across educational settings.

Recent Nigerian evidence further demonstrates the importance of examining students' digital engagement within specific institutional contexts. Adetifa and Ajibare (2026) reported a significant positive relationship between social media usage and perceived academic performance among Library and Information Science undergraduates in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State. In contrast, Bolu-Steve *et al*. (2026) emphasised that although digital media provides educational opportunities, unregulated consumption may interfere with academic engagement. These contrasting findings suggest that the relationship between social media and academic performance depends on students' usage patterns, educational motivations, and ability to regulate online activities.

Although previous studies have examined social media usage across Nigerian tertiary institutions, further investigation is needed to understand its relationship with students' academic performance at Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. Therefore, this study examines students' patterns and purposes of social media usage, its academic benefits and learning opportunities, its relationship with academic performance, and the associated risks and challenges. The findings are expected to inform institutional policies and promote responsible social media use for improved academic outcomes.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Concept of Social Media

Social media refers to internet-based platforms that enable users to create, share and exchange information, communicate and participate in online communities. Common platforms among university students include WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and X. These platforms support social interaction and provide opportunities for educational collaboration, information sharing and access to learning resources. Chiedozie (2025), in a study of students at the University of Lagos, found that social networking sites were used for both communication and educational activities, with respondents recognising their potential contribution to assignments and academic discussions. This suggests that social media can serve educational purposes in addition to entertainment and interpersonal communication.

2.1.2 Social Media and Academic Performance

Academic performance refers to students' achievement of educational objectives, commonly assessed through examination scores, grade point averages, assignments and continuous assessment. Social media may contribute to academic performance by facilitating peer learning, collaborative discussions and access to educational information. However, excessive recreational use may reduce study time and interfere with concentration. Mathias *et al*. (2025), in their study of students at Adamawa State College of Education,

examined the relationship between social media use and academic performance within a Nigerian tertiary education setting. Similarly, Onodugo *et al*. (2025) investigated social media use among university students in southeastern Nigeria and reported that students predominantly used the platforms for social communication and general information. These findings demonstrate the importance of examining students' purposes of use rather than treating all social media activities as educational.

2.1.3 Benefits and Challenges of Social Media Use

Social media offers several educational benefits, including rapid communication, sharing of lecture materials, academic group discussions and opportunities for collaborative learning. Nevertheless, frequent notifications, prolonged browsing and non-academic conversations may distract students from their studies. Alshuwaiyer *et al*. (2025), in a systematic review of research involving college students, examined how screen time and social media usage relate to academic outcomes. Their review indicated that the consequences depend partly on the extent and manner of use. Similarly, Tekin (2024) investigated academic self-discipline as a mediating factor in the relationship between social media addiction and academic achievement among university students. This highlights the importance of self-regulation in understanding how social media habits may relate to educational outcomes.

2.1.4 Social Media Use among Nigerian University Students

In Nigeria, social media has become an important channel through which university students communicate, maintain relationships and exchange information. However, its influence on academic performance may differ according to students' usage patterns and the time devoted to educational and recreational activities. Akindele and Martins-Adediran (2025) examined social media addiction, sleep deprivation and academic performance among University of Ibadan undergraduates, drawing attention to the possible relationship between digital habits, sleep and academic outcomes. Michael-Olomu and Uzobo (2023) also investigated social media use, changes in reading and writing culture, and academic performance among undergraduates at Niger Delta University in Bayelsa State.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Diffusion of Innovation Theory was popularised and systematically developed by Everett M. Rogers, whose foundational book, *Diffusion of Innovations*, was published in 1962. The theory explains how new ideas, technologies and practices spread through communication channels over time among members of a social system. It proposes that individuals adopt innovations at different rates depending on their circumstances, perceptions and willingness to embrace change. Rogers identified five categories of adopters: innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards. The theory also describes five stages in the innovation-decision process: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation. These stages explain how individuals become aware of an innovation, form attitudes towards it, decide whether to adopt it, begin using it and subsequently evaluate their experience.

2.2.2 Application of the Theory to the Study

Diffusion of Innovation Theory provides a useful framework for examining the adoption and use of social media among students of Ekiti State University. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube have become integrated into students' communication and information-sharing activities. Their adoption and continued use may be influenced by peer relationships, accessibility, perceived usefulness and the availability of internet-enabled devices. The theory is relevant because students may adopt the same platforms for different purposes. Some may use them to share lecture materials, discuss assignments and access educational resources, whereas others may prioritise entertainment and social interaction. Tafesse (2022), in a study using automated mobile application usage data, found an inverted U-shaped relationship between social networking site use and college students' academic performance. The findings suggested that moderate use was positively associated with academic performance, whereas heavier use was negatively associated with it. This illustrates why the intensity of social media engagement should be considered when examining its academic implications. Furthermore, Al Mosharrafa *et al*. (2024) examined the relationship between social media usage and university students' academic performance, considering mental health as a mediating factor. Their work demonstrates that the relationship between digital engagement and academic outcomes may involve additional factors rather than a simple direct effect.

2.3 Empirical Review

Tafesse (2022), in Social Networking Sites Use and College Students' Academic Performance: Testing for an Inverted U-Shaped Relationship Using Automated Mobile App Usage Data, analysed mobile application usage data to determine how social networking related to college students' academic outcomes. The findings indicated an inverted U-shaped relationship, suggesting that moderate use could be beneficial, whereas excessive engagement was associated with poorer performance. This finding highlights the importance of distinguishing purposeful social media use from excessive use when assessing its academic implications.

In Nigeria, Michael-Olomu and Uzobo (2023) investigated social media use alongside changes in reading and writing culture among undergraduates at Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. Their work drew attention to the relationship between online engagement and students' literacy practices, which are important components of academic development. Similarly, Atomatofa *et al*. (2024) explored social media use, academic achievement and behaviour among 180 Junior Secondary School Three students in Delta State. Although their participants were younger than university students, the research provides useful Nigerian evidence concerning the possible educational implications of students' online activities.

Al Mosharrafa *et al*. (2024) extended the discussion by investigating social media use, mental health and academic performance among university students in Bangladesh. Using a cross-sectional quantitative design and structural equation modelling, the researchers considered mental health as a mediating factor. Their approach demonstrates why the relationship between social media and academic performance should be considered alongside students' psychological well-being rather than through usage frequency alone.

Evidence from Nigerian universities also suggests that the purpose of social media engagement matters. Chiedozie (2025) surveyed 300 students from six faculties at the University of Lagos using questionnaires and interviews. The findings showed that students used social networking platforms for both social interaction and educational activities. Respondents generally recognised their potential to support assignments and academic discussions when used appropriately. In southeastern Nigeria, Onodugo *et al*. (2025) found that students from four tertiary institutions mainly used social media for non-academic activities, with Facebook and WhatsApp among the commonly used platforms. Together, these findings suggest that social media can facilitate learning, but its educational value depends partly on how students use it.

Owo (2025) surveyed 1,026 undergraduate science education students at two universities in Rivers State. Communication was the leading purpose of social media use, while Facebook was the most frequently used platform for academic activities. The findings also identified poor time management and unregulated engagement as concerns for academic performance. In Yobe State, Ciroma *et al*. (2025) explored tertiary students' usage patterns and perceptions of social media's academic implications, adding evidence that students' experiences need to be understood within their particular educational settings. Internationally, Pyhältö *et al*. (2025) reviewed 34 studies involving children and adolescents aged 7–18 years and found that most reported a negative relationship between academic achievement and off-task social media or smartphone use. Although the review did not focus on university students, it reinforces concerns about digital activities that compete with learning.

Other recent research has explored the role of excessive use and individual differences. Ma *et al*. (2025) investigated different dimensions of excessive social media engagement in relation to learning burnout and academic performance, also considering mindfulness as a moderating factor. Jaff and Ciftci (2025), working with university students in Cameroon, examined social media dependence alongside perceived academic performance, psychological well-being and social anxiety. These studies broaden the discussion by showing the relevance of students' psychological experiences and patterns of engagement when interpreting academic outcomes.

Recent publications from 2026 provide further evidence of mixed outcomes. Adetifa and Ajibare (2026) surveyed 290 Library and Information Science undergraduates across four tertiary institutions in Ekiti State. Their findings showed high social media use and a significant positive relationship between use and perceived academic performance. They suggested that constructive engagement could support information

sharing, academic confidence and collaboration. However, the study focused on a specific discipline and included institutions beyond Ekiti State University, so its findings may not represent the experiences of all students at the university.

By contrast, James *et al*. (2026) investigated social media addiction among 371 undergraduates from three universities in Kwara State. Their regression analysis showed a weak relationship between addiction and academic performance, with the model explaining only 0.5% of the variation in performance. The measured factors, including procrastination, time management and sleep disruption or stress, did not individually reach statistical significance. These findings caution against assuming that social media addiction necessarily predicts academic performance in every student population.

Further Nigerian evidence comes from Esiagu *et al*. (2026), whose research examined social media addiction and academic behaviours among 394 students from selected tertiary institutions in Imo State. The authors reported associations between problematic social media engagement, study behaviours, assignment completion and academic engagement. Their findings draw attention to the possible consequences of compulsive use for students' academic routines, although the reported correlations should not automatically be interpreted as proof of causation.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to examine the relationship between social media usage and students' perceived academic performance at Ekiti State University, Nigeria. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising 21 questions divided into two sections. Section A obtained respondents' demographic information, including age, gender, marital status, department and current programme of study. Section B examined students' access to social media, frequency and duration of use, preferred social media platforms, academic benefits, learning opportunities and risks associated with social media use.

Population and Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was used to select 200 students from different departments of the university. The participants were selected from among currently registered students who had access to or experience using social media platforms, as they were considered suitable for providing relevant information on the subject under investigation. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate because the study focused specifically on students whose experiences and perceptions could provide useful insights into the relationship between social media usage and academic performance. Students were approached through their respective departments and invited to participate voluntarily. The selection considered representation from different academic departments and levels of study to obtain a range of student experiences.

The inclusion criteria consisted of students who were currently registered at Ekiti State University, had access to social media platforms and were willing to participate in the study**.** Of the 200 questionnaires distributed, 194 were completed and returned, representing a response rate of 97%. The completed questionnaires provided information on respondents' social media usage patterns and perceptions of its relationship with academic performance.

Research Instrument

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire comprising 21 questions divided into two sections. Section A elicited demographic information, including age, gender, marital status, department and current programme of study. Section B contained questions relating to social media access, frequency and duration of usage, preferred platforms, academic benefits, learning opportunities and potential risks associated with social media use.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The face and content validity of the questionnaire were assessed through expert evaluation to ensure that the questions were clear, relevant and adequately covered the objectives of the study. The instrument was reviewed for appropriate wording, comprehensibility and suitability for the target population, and necessary

corrections were made before its administration. The questionnaire was pretested among a small group of students with characteristics similar to those of the study population to identify ambiguous questions and assess the clarity and appropriateness of the items. Feedback from the pretest was used to improve the instrument before the main data collection. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to determine the internal consistency of the relevant scale items.

Data Collection Procedure

A total of 200 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to selected students across different departments of Ekiti State University. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents before the questionnaires were administered. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were given adequate time to complete the questionnaires. Of the 200 questionnaires distributed, 194 were properly completed and retrieved, representing a response rate of 97%. The retrieved questionnaires were checked for completeness before coding and statistical analysis.

Ethical Considerations and Participant Safeguarding

Informed consent was obtained from participants after explaining the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation and their right to withdraw from the study without any penalty. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. No personally identifiable information was required on the questionnaires, and the collected data were used strictly for academic and research purposes. Completed questionnaires and electronic data were handled securely and made accessible only for research purposes.

Since the questionnaire included sensitive issues relating to exposure to sexual materials and threats, appropriate participant safeguarding measures were considered. Respondents were informed that they could decline to answer any question that caused discomfort or withdraw from participation at any stage. They were also provided with information about appropriate university counselling services and other relevant support channels where they could seek assistance if they experienced discomfort or distress arising from the issues addressed in the questionnaire.

Method of Data Analysis

Data were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarise respondents' demographic characteristics and responses to the questionnaire items. The results were presented in frequency distribution tables and percentages to facilitate clear interpretation of the findings.

Results

The analysis covers respondents' demographic characteristics, social media usage patterns, academic benefits, learning opportunities and risks associated with social media use. Of the 200 questionnaires distributed, 194 were completed and returned, representing a response rate of 97%. The findings are presented using frequencies and percentages.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–25 years	172	88.66
	26–35 years	22	11.34
	36–45 years	0	0.00
	46 years and above	0	0.00
	Total	194	100.00
Gender	Male	101	52.06
	Female	93	47.94
	Total	194	100.00
Marital status	Single	192	98.97
	Married	2	1.03

	Divorced	0	0.00
	Widowed	0	0.00
	Widower	0	0.00
	Total	194	100.00
Faculty	Arts	55	28.35
	Social Sciences	33	17.01
	Sciences	41	21.13
	Engineering	22	11.34
	Agricultural Sciences	19	9.79
	Management Sciences	24	12.37
	Total	194	100.00
Current programme	Pre-degree	4	2.06
	Diploma	18	9.28
	Bachelor's degree	163	84.02
	Master's degree	9	4.64
	PhD	0	0.00
	Total	194	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The demographic findings show that most respondents were aged 18–25 years (88.66%), while 11.34% were aged 26–35 years. Male respondents constituted 52.06% of the sample, compared with 47.94% females, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution. Regarding marital status, 98.97% were single and 1.03% were married. Respondents came from six faculties, with Arts contributing the largest proportion (28.35%), followed by Sciences (21.13%) and Social Sciences (17.01%). In terms of programme of study, the majority were bachelor's degree students (84.02%), while 9.28% were diploma students, 4.64% were master's students and 2.06% were pre-degree students. No PhD students participated.

Table 2: Internet Access, Social Media Availability and Frequency of Use

Questionnaire item	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Access to an internet-enabled mobile phone	Yes	194	100.00
	No	0	0.00
	Total	194	100.00
Availability of social media applications	Yes	192	98.97
	No	2	1.03
	Total	194	100.00
Communication through social media	Yes	191	98.45
	No	3	1.55
	Total	194	100.00
Frequency of social media communication	Daily	177	91.24
	Weekly	0	0.00
	Monthly	0	0.00
	Yearly	0	0.00
	Not sure	17	8.76
	Total	194	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 2 shows that all respondents (100%) had access to an internet-enabled mobile phone. Furthermore, 98.97% had at least one social media application, while 98.45% reported communicating through social media. Most respondents (91.24%) communicated through social media daily. These findings indicate widespread access to and frequent use of social media among the surveyed students at Ekiti State University.

Table 3: Daily Duration of Social Media Use and Frequently Used Platforms

Table 3A: Daily Duration of Social Media Use

Duration	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less than 1 hour	7	3.61
1–4 hours	83	42.78
5–10 hours	61	31.44
11 hours and above	0	0.00
Not sure	43	22.16
Total	194	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 3B: Frequently Used Social Media Platforms

Social media platform	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Facebook	189	97.42
WhatsApp	191	98.45
Twitter	93	47.94
Snapchat	104	53.61
YouTube	65	33.51
Instagram	112	57.73
Others	13	6.70

Source: Field Survey, 2026. Multiple responses were permitted; percentages do not sum to 100%.

Table 3 indicates that 42.78% of respondents spent between one and four hours daily on social media, while 31.44% reported spending between five and ten hours. Only 3.61% spent less than one hour, and 22.16% were unsure of their daily usage duration. WhatsApp was the most frequently reported platform (98.45%), followed closely by Facebook (97.42%). Instagram (57.73%) and Snapchat (53.61%) were also commonly used, while YouTube had the lowest reported usage among the six named platforms (33.51%). These findings suggest that social media occupies a substantial proportion of respondents' daily activities.

Table 4: Social Media Use, Reading Habits, Social Connections and Academic Performance

Questionnaire item	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Spending more time on social media than reading	Yes	113	58.25
	No	67	34.54
	Undecided	14	7.22
	Total	194	100.00
Social media brings friends and family closer	Strongly agree	169	87.11
	Agree	25	12.89
	Disagree	0	0.00
	Strongly disagree	0	0.00
	Total	194	100.00
Social media aids academic performance	Yes	54	27.84
	No	23	11.86

	Undecided	117	60.31
	Total	194	100.00
Social media is a waste of time if it does not improve academic performance	Yes	79	40.72
	No	42	21.65
	Undecided	73	37.63
	Total	194	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 4 reveals that 58.25% of respondents spent more time on social media than reading, suggesting that social media may compete with their study time. Nevertheless, all respondents agreed that social media helps bring friends and family closer, with 87.11% strongly agreeing and 12.89% agreeing. Regarding academic performance, only 27.84% believed that social media aided their academic performance, while 60.31% were undecided and 11.86% disagreed. Furthermore, 40.72% considered social media a waste of time if it did not contribute to academic performance, whereas 37.63% were undecided. These results demonstrate positive attribute of social connectivity but considerable uncertainty about academic benefits.

Table 5: Learning Opportunities and Academic Uses of Social Media

Table 5A: Learning Opportunities

Questionnaire item	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Learning new things through social media outside the classroom	Yes	132	68.04
	No	17	8.76
	Undecided	45	23.20
	Total	194	100.00
Social media learning improves academic performance	Yes	119	61.34
	No	5	2.58
	Undecided	70	36.08
	Total	194	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 5B: Areas in Which Social Media Supports Academic Activities

Academic activity	Reported frequency	Percentage of respondents (%)
Research	127	65.46
Assignments	102	52.58
Keeping up with lecture times	191	98.45
Obtaining information	187	96.39
Communicating with lecturers	121	62.37
Academic forum discussions	173	89.18
Others	Not reported	Not available

Source: Field Survey, 2026. Percentages are based on N = 194; the supplied counts for 'Others' were not reported.

Table 5 shows that 68.04% of respondents learned new things through social media outside the classroom, while 61.34% reported that this learning improved their academic performance. However, 36.08% were

undecided about whether such learning improved their academic performance. For Question 18, the supplied counts suggest that social media was commonly used to keep track of lecture times (98.45%) and obtain information (96.39%). Academic forum discussions were also frequently reported (89.18%). Research, communication with lecturers and assignments were reported by 65.46%, 62.37% and 52.58%, respectively. These findings suggest that students use social media for several academic purposes, although the data do not establish whether these activities improve actual grades.

Table 6: Risks Associated with Social Media Use

Questionnaire item	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Awareness of risks associated with social media	Yes	113	58.25
	No	17	8.76
	Undecided	64	32.99
	Total	194	100.00
Previous exposure to sexual material through social media	Yes	149	76.80
	No	2	1.03
	Undecided	43	22.16
	Total	194	100.00
Previous experience of being threatened through social media	Yes	73	37.63
	No	54	27.84
	Not sure	67	34.54
	Total	194	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2026

Table 6 indicates that 58.25% of respondents acknowledged that social media use involves risks, while 32.99% were undecided. A substantial proportion (76.80%) reported having been exposed to sexual material through social media, whereas 1.03% said they had not experienced such exposure and 22.16% were undecided. Regarding threats, 37.63% reported having been threatened through social media, 27.84% reported no such experience, and 34.54% were unsure. These findings highlight potential online safety concerns among the respondents and the importance of digital safety awareness and responsible social media use.

Discussion

The findings suggest that social media has become an important part of university students' academic and social experiences. This agrees with Ajewole *et al.* (2024), who investigated social networking and academic performance in public universities in Ekiti State and highlighted the relevance of social media to students' educational experiences. Similarly, Bankole and Otunla (2020) reported extensive use of social networking sites among undergraduates of Federal University Oye-Ekiti. The popularity of WhatsApp and Facebook in the present study reflects their usefulness for communication, information sharing and maintaining relationships. However, frequent use does not necessarily correspond with positive academic experiences, as the perceived educational value of these platforms depends on how students engage with them.

The findings also suggest that excessive social media engagement may compete with students' reading and study time. This observation is consistent with Michael-Olomu and Uzobo (2023), who examined social media use, changes in reading and writing culture, and academic performance among undergraduates of Niger Delta University. Similarly, Akindele and Martins-Adediran (2025) examined social media addiction, sleep deprivation and academic performance among University of Ibadan undergraduates, highlighting the importance of managing online activities alongside academic responsibilities. Okeya-Olayinka and Martins-Adediran (2025) also investigated the relationship between social media use, sleep deprivation and

academic performance among Nigerian undergraduates. These findings suggest that excessive engagement may be associated with reduced concentration, irregular study habits and inadequate rest. Consequently, students need to establish reasonable limits on recreational social media use to maintain sufficient time for academic activities.

Despite these concerns, the findings demonstrate that social media offers useful opportunities for learning outside the classroom. Students can use online platforms to exchange lecture materials, discuss assignments, communicate with lecturers and access educational information. This agrees with Akinleye and Akinde (2024), who examined the effects of social media use on the study habits of undergraduates in two Nigerian universities. Ajewole *et al.* (2024) similarly highlighted the relevance of social networking to students' academic experiences in Ekiti State. Furthermore, Chiedozie (2025), in a study conducted at the University of Lagos, examined the influence of social networking sites on students' academic performance. Collectively, these studies suggest that social media can support collaborative learning when students use it purposefully. However, the uncertainty expressed by many respondents about its academic benefits indicates that access to information alone may not necessarily translate into positive perceptions of academic performance. Students need to evaluate the credibility of online materials and apply the information obtained to their academic activities.

The findings concerning online risks further demonstrate the need for responsible social media engagement. Exposure to inappropriate content, threats and other harmful online experiences can raise concerns about students' privacy, security and wellbeing. Aminullahi (2021), in a study of Arabic students in southwestern Nigerian universities, identified challenges associated with social media use and its implications for academic activities. Oyegbami and Oni (2023) also investigated the influence of social media on public secondary school students in Ekiti State, highlighting concerns surrounding students' online experiences. Although secondary school students differ from university undergraduates, these findings reinforce the importance of digital safety education. Universities should therefore promote awareness of privacy settings, cyberbullying prevention, responsible online communication and procedures for reporting online harassment.

The findings also indicate that students' perceptions of the academic value of social media vary according to the purposes for which these platforms are used. Umar *et al.* (2022) examined social networking sites as learning platforms among business education students in federal colleges of education in northeastern Nigeria, while Oluwagbemi *et al.* (2024) investigated social media use and academic performance among entrepreneurial undergraduates in Rivers State. These studies demonstrate the relevance of examining social media within specific educational contexts. Recreational browsing and participation in academic groups represent different patterns of engagement, with the latter providing opportunities for information exchange, collaborative discussions and access to learning materials. Therefore, the educational relevance of social media should not be determined by frequency of use alone. Rather, attention should be given to the nature, purpose and quality of students' online engagement.

Overall, the findings indicate that social media serves both academic and social purposes among students of Ekiti State University. Although respondents acknowledged its usefulness for obtaining information, participating in academic discussions and communicating with lecturers, concerns about excessive usage, reduced reading time and exposure to harmful online content were also evident. Furthermore, the considerable proportion of respondents who were undecided about whether social media aided their academic performance suggests that its perceived academic benefits were not universally established among the students. The findings therefore emphasise the importance of purposeful social media engagement, effective time management and digital safety awareness in promoting positive academic experiences among university students.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

The study examined social media usage and students' perceived academic performance at Ekiti State University, Nigeria. The findings revealed that social media was widely used among the respondents, particularly for communication, information sharing, academic discussions and maintaining social relationships. WhatsApp and Facebook were the most frequently reported platforms. Although many

respondents acknowledged the usefulness of social media for accessing educational information and learning outside the classroom, a considerable proportion remained undecided about its contribution to their academic performance. The study also identified concerns relating to excessive social media engagement, reduced reading time and exposure to inappropriate content and online threats.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Students should manage their time effectively by balancing social media activities with reading, assignments and other academic responsibilities.
2. The university should encourage the use of social media for academic discussions, sharing learning materials and communication between lecturers and students.
3. Digital literacy and online safety programmes should be organised to educate students about privacy protection, inappropriate content and cyberbullying.
4. Students should verify information obtained through social media before using it for academic work.
5. Further studies should examine the relationship between social media usage patterns and students' actual academic records to establish their association more objectively.

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