



Volume 7, Issue 2, pp 145-154, December 2025

ACHIEVERS JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH*Open Access Publications of Achievers University, Owa*Available Online at www.achieversjournalofscience.org**Utilization of Social Media Among Undergraduate Students of the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria**Samuel D. O.¹, Olubiya B. F.², Lawal A. S.³, Isaac I.⁴, and Olubiya S.K.¹¹Department of Nursing Sciences, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.²School of Public Health, University of Rwanda, Kigali, Rwanda.³Faculty of Nursing, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.⁴Faculty of Medicine, School of Population and Public Health, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.***Corresponding Author's Email Address:** simeonolubiya@gmail.com**Submitted:** June 21, 2025; **Revised:** Nov 15, 2025; **Accepted:** Dec 5, 2025; **Published:** Dec 31, 2025**Abstract**

This study examined the utilization of social media and its effects on academic performance among undergraduate students at the University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. A descriptive cross-sectional design was employed, and data were collected from 419 students using a structured, self-administered questionnaire. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 25 and summarized with descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings revealed that most respondents (66.7%) were aged between 18 and 23 years, with males (55.6%) slightly more than females. The majority (82.1%) were of Yoruba ethnicity, and most were in their 400-level of study. The majority were active social media users, with 59.7% spending more than seven hours daily and 70.6% accessing platforms primarily through mobile phones. WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram were the most frequently used platforms. Perceptions of social media were largely positive: over 85% reported that social media improved their academic performance, enhanced collaboration, connected them with mentors, and provided access to academic tools and opportunities. However, a similarly high proportion reported distractions and reduced concentration during study and lectures. Chi-square analysis demonstrated a statistically significant association between the number of hours spent on social media and students' perceived academic impact ($\chi^2 = 26.49$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$), with heavier users more likely to report negative outcomes. Although social media supports communication and academic engagement, excessive use may hinder productivity and focus. The study recommends that students regulate their usage of social media channels, prioritize academic use of social platforms, and receive guidance on effective digital habits.

Keywords: Social Media, Utilization, Undergraduate Students, University.

1.0 Introduction

Social media encompasses a diverse range of online platforms and applications that facilitate the creation, sharing, and interaction of content and information. It also enables users to connect and engage with others in virtual communities. The emergence of social networking sites, driven by advancements in information and communication technology, has revolutionized communication and information access, transforming the world into a global village in terms of information transmission and accessibility (Tuhuteru *et al.*, 2023). Today, social media has become an integral part of users' lives, particularly among young adults and students, who have largely replaced other leisure activities with social media engagement (Albrechtslund & Albrechtslund, 2014).

According to DataReportal (2025), there are 5.64 billion internet users worldwide, and 5.31 billion social media user identities globally. People use social media for different purposes, such as staying in touch with family and friends, academic purposes, as a hobby, meeting new people, and for business. Undergraduate students are the most active social media users, spending an average of 1-3 hours daily on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. This daily habit serves as a primary source of entertainment, news updates, and social interaction. (Chandrasena & Ilankoon, 2022). Social media has also been used for academic purposes such as watching teaching videos on YouTube, relating with colleagues to solve assignments (Tartari, 2015), group project completion, individual assignments, online classes, a mode of contact between lecturers, and note sharing by the students (Alalwan, 2022).

While there are many benefits of social media, there are also many downsides to it. Negative effects of social media on education include reduced learning and research capabilities, a reduction in real human contact, time wastage, low grades, and loss of motivation (Akram and Kumar, 2017). Social media addiction impacts the students' academic performance as well as their physical and psychological well-being (Abdullahi *et al.*, 2024). In China, for example, 93% of social media users feel that it affects their ability to focus (33%), manage their time (45%), and get quality sleep (47%). Moreover, 89% of users have actively worked to mitigate this alleged harm, putting limits on their social media usage (54%), disabling notifications (35%), and uninstalling apps (23%), among other actions (Kantar 2020). In Switzerland, one-third of adults say they would prefer to "disconnect," or take a break, from digital media more frequently, while three out of four people say they do so periodically (Comparis 2020). Seeking "digital well-being," that is, striking a balance when using digital media, seems to be a goal that many people in today's digital culture pursue (Vanden 2021).

Research has shown that students who use social media for extended periods of time or multitask have an increased risk of not being able to achieve the educational outcomes of their courses (Abbas *et al.*, 2019). In fact, social media is considered a highly engaging task that can take precedence over academics, cause cognitive overload, and negatively influence academic performance (Muhammad, 2025). According to research conducted by Boahene, Fang, and Sampong (2019) and Kirschner & Karpinski (2010), students who frequently use Facebook perform worse academically. Excessive social media use can decrease study time, disrupt concentration, and increase procrastination, contributing to poor academic outcomes (Kamboj *et al.*, 2025).

2.0 Materials and Methods

2.1 Study Setting

The study was conducted at the University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The University of Ilorin has a large student and staff population of about 60,000. It presently has 16 faculties and over 60 academic departments, a college of health sciences (3 Faculties: Basic Medical Science, Basic Clinical Science, and Clinical Science), two institutes (Education and Sugar Research Institutes), and a school of postgraduate studies.

2.2 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional design to assess the patterns of social media utilization among undergraduate students at the University of Ilorin.

2.3 Study Population, Eligibility Criteria, Sample Size, and Sampling Method

2.3.1 Study Population

The study population comprised undergraduate students, both male and female, from years one to six in various faculties, at the University of Ilorin

2.3.2 Inclusion Criteria

Participants were eligible if they:

- i. were registered students
- ii. willing to participate in the study

2.3.3 Exclusion Criteria

Women were excluded if they:

- i. Students who were not in the selected departments

2.3.4 Sample Size Determination

The sample size for this study was estimated to be 419 and was gotten using the Andrew Fisher sampling technique (Andrew and John 1998).

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

z = Test statistic (1.96) at 95 confidence intervals

p = True Proportion of factor in the population or expected frequency value (0.50)

d = Maximum difference between the sample or value of $x = 0.05$

N = Total population = 60000

$q = 1-p$

The sample size that was used for this study was 381 respondents. To account for an anticipated 10% non-response rate, the final sample size was estimated to be 419 respondents

2.3.5 Sampling Technique

A two-stage sampling technique was utilised as follows:

First stage: From a total of sixteen faculties in the University of Ilorin, three faculties were selected using simple random sampling.

Second stage: Four departments were then randomly selected from the three faculties, and a total of twelve departments were selected. Participants were then randomly selected from these departments.

2.3.6 Data collection and analysis

A researcher developed a self-structured questionnaire printed in English, which was administered and retrieved on the spot. The reliability was determined with a Test-retest method among 30 students, using Cronbach's formula, and a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.8 was obtained, which was considered reliable. All statistical analyses were performed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25, and the results were presented using both descriptive and inferential statistics

3.0 Results

Table 1 reveals that the majority (61.5%) were aged 18–23 years, while 35.8% were aged 24–29 years, and only 2.7% were between 30–35 years. More than half of the respondents were male (55.6%). Christianity (53.5%) was slightly more common than Islam (46.5%). Most respondents were of Yoruba ethnicity (82.1%), followed by Igbo (8.8%) and Hausa (5.7%) ethnic groups. In terms of academic level, most were in 400 level (43.2%) and 300 level (28.6%), with fewer in lower levels of study (See Table 1). Respondents' faculties: Majority of the respondents, 106 (25.3%) were from the clinical science faculty, 79 (18.9%) from the faculty of communication science, 76 (18.1%) from the faculty of law, 61 (14.6%) from the faculty of education while the least of them 6 (1.4%) were from faculty of management sciences.

Table 1. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 419)

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age of the Respondents*		
18 – 23	227	61.5
24 – 29	132	35.8
30 – 35	10	2.7
Gender		
Male	233	55.6
Female	186	44.4
Religion		
Islam	195	46.5
Christianity	224	53.5
Ethnicity		
Asante	6	1.4
Efik	4	1.0
Hausa	24	5.7
Igbo	37	8.8
Tiv	4	1.0
Yoruba	344	82.1
Level of study		
100	21	5.0
200	29	6.9
300	120	28.6
400	181	43.2
500 and above	68	16.2

* Total does not add up to 419 due to missing responses

Table 2 shows that 49.2% often and 27.7% always access the social media platforms. Most of them, 44.4%, often, and 35.3% always use social media for academic purposes. 46.1% of the respondents often participate in social media groups or communities related to their studies, and 35.3% always utilize them. The majority (44.6%), often use social media to stay updated on academic events, and 41.1% always utilize it. 43.7% always and 43.2% often use social media for entertainment purposes.

Also, most of them often (45.3%) and always (42.2%) use social media for general information and news updates.

Table 2: Pattern of social media utilization among undergraduate students at the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State

Variable	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often		Always	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
How frequently do you access social media platforms	5	1.2	8	1.9	84	20.0	206	49.2	116	27.7
How frequently do you use social media for academic purposes	5	1.2	9	2.2	73	17.4	186	44.4	146	34.8
How often do you participate in social media groups or communities related to your studies	8	1.9	11	2.6	59	14.1	193	46.1	148	35.3
How often do you use social media to stay updated on academic events	2	0.5	11	2.6	47	11.2	187	44.6	172	41.1
How frequently do you use social media for entertainment purposes	4	1.0	8	1.9	43	10.3	181	43.2	183	43.7
How often do you use social media for general information and news updates	2	0.5	6	1.4	44	10.5	190	45.3	177	42.2

Table 3 shows that the majority of the respondents (59.7%) spent more than 7 hours a day on social media platforms, 28.2% spent 5 – 6 hours, 9.5% spent 3 – 4 hours, while 2.4% and 0.2% spent 1 – 2 hours and less than one hour on social media per day, respectively. More than half (53.7%) have over 5 social media platforms, 31.5% have 4 social media platforms, while very few, 0.2% have only one social media platform. More than two-thirds of the respondents (70.6%) access social media mostly through their mobile phone. Most of them (61.3%) access social media at night, 23.4% in the evening, and 7.4% in the morning.

Table 3: Level of social media usage

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
How many hours per day do you spend on social media?		
Less than 1 hour	1	0.2
1 - 2 hours	10	2.4
3 - 4 hours	40	9.5
5 - 6 hours	118	28.2
7+ hours	250	59.7
How many social media platform(s) are you currently active on? *		
1	1	0.2
2	18	4.3
3	43	10.3

4	130	31.5
5 or more	225	53.7
Do you access social media mostly through your mobile phone?		
Yes	296	70.6
No	123	29.4
What time of the day do you most frequently access social media?		
Morning	31	7.4
Afternoon	33	7.9
Evening	98	23.4
Night	257	61.3
Midnight	0	0.0

Most respondents expressed positive views about the academic benefits of social media. A large proportion (85.7%) agreed that social media has positively contributed to their academic performance, which, for this study, is a self-reported performance. They also assert that it enables them to complete assignments more effectively through collaboration (88.6%). Similarly, 90% agreed that academic group discussions on social media enhance learning.

However, distractions were also reported as 87.1% agreed that social media often affects their study time, and 85.7% felt it reduces concentration during lectures. On the positive side, most respondents agreed that social media helps them stay informed about academic activities (89.1%), connect with mentors (88.3%), and discover new academic tools (89.5%) and opportunities (90.9%). More than half (90.3%) believed it helps them manage academic schedules, while 90.9% reported that it enhances creativity and critical thinking through exposure to diverse content (see Table 4).

Table 1- Perception of social media use on academic performance

Variables	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
Social media has positively contributed to my academic performance.	166(39.6)	193(46.1)	39 (9.3)	19 (4.5)	2 (0.5)
I am able to complete assignments more effectively due to collaboration on social media.	180(43)	191(45.6)	34 (8.1)	10 (2.4)	4 (1.0)
The use of social media platforms for academic group discussions enhances my learning process.	217(51.8)	160(38.2)	29 (6.9)	11 (2.6)	2 (0.5)
I often get distracted by social media, which negatively affects my study time.	204(48.7)	161(38.4)	38 (9.1)	14 (3.3)	2 (0.5)
Social media improves my ability to stay informed about school activities and academic events.	188(44.9)	185(44.2)	38 (9.1)	8 (1.9)	0 (0.0)
Social media helps me connect with academic mentors or lecturers outside the classroom.	207(49.4)	163(38.9)	36 (8.6)	13 (3.1)	0 (0.0)
Excessive social media usage negatively affects my ability to concentrate during lectures.	220(52.3)	140(33.4)	38(9.1)	15 (3.6)	6 (1.4)
Social media has introduced me to new academic tools and applications that have improved my study habits.	211(50.4)	164(39.1)	30(7.2)	14 (3.3)	0 (0.0)
I have discovered new academic opportunities through social media.*	225(53.7)	156(37.2)	23(6)	11 (2.6)	2 (0.5)
Social media helps me manage my academic schedule by keeping me updated with reminders.	232(55.4)	143(34.1)	36(8.6)	6 (1.4)	2 (0.5)

I believe social media enhances my creativity and critical thinking skills through exposure to diverse content.	247(58.9)	134(32)	24(5.7)	12 (2.9)	2 (0.5)
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*Total does not add up to 419 because of missing responses

The Chi-square analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship between social media usage and academic performance among undergraduate students ($\chi^2 = 26.49$, $df = 4$, $p < 0.001$). Students who spent more hours on social media were more likely to report negative academic outcomes (Table 5).

Table 2- Relationship Between Social Media Usage and Academic Performance (n = 419)

Hours Spent on social media per Day	Academic Impact			X ²	df	p-value
	Positive	Negative	Total			
Less than 1 hour	0	1	1	26.494 ^a	4	<0.001
1–2 hours	5	5	10			
3–4 hours	14	26	40			
5–6 hours	63	55	118			
More than 7 hours	177	73	250			
Total	259	160	419			

4.0 Discussion

The study revealed that the majority of respondents were young adults aged 18–23 years, with a slightly higher proportion of males. Most students reported frequent use of social media for both academic and social purposes, including participation in study-related groups and communities. These findings align with previous research by Apura (2019), which highlighted that students leverage social media platforms to discuss and collaborate on learning activities. In addition, a considerable number of students reported regular use of social media for entertainment, consistent with patterns observed by Abu Backer and Awad (2025)

The data also indicated that students spent substantial amounts of time online, with over half reporting more than seven hours of daily social media use. Many were active on multiple platforms, often five or more, and the majority accessed these platforms primarily via mobile phones. Nighttime usage was particularly prevalent, similar to findings from Lin and Zhou (2022), who noted that students frequently engage with digital platforms during late hours, potentially affecting sleep and daily functioning. Importantly, inferential analysis demonstrated a statistically significant relationship between social media usage and self-reported academic performance, suggesting that both the duration and intensity of engagement may influence learning outcomes.

Most respondents agreed that they primarily use social media to stay connected with family and friends, access news and current events, and most of them strongly agreed that they were influenced by peer pressure to use social media, similar to findings from Akakandelwa and Walubita (2017).

A high proportion of them strongly agreed that they use social media because it allows them to stay informed about their academic activities, and a little over half of them strongly agreed that the ability to follow and interact with their lecturers and classmates on social media is among the factors that influenced their use of social media. This aligns with the findings of Fatokun (2020), which suggests that the majority of students utilize social media tools primarily for educational purposes. However, there is a need for cautious interpretation of findings as the respondents might overemphasize their true uses of social media in a bid to highlight findings that are deemed to be more socially desirable.

In this study, the majority of respondents perceived social media as having a positive effect on their academic performance, *yet also* reported that it reduced their concentration during lectures and study sessions. This co-existence of positive and negative perceptions mirrors findings at Nile University, Egypt, where students' self-reported effects of social media on academics varied substantially depending on usage patterns and discipline (Mowafy, 2018).

Our inferential analysis demonstrated a statistically significant association between hours spent on social media and students' self-reported academic outcomes ($p < 0.001$). Students spending five or more hours daily online were more likely to report negative consequences such as reduced study time, decreased concentration, and increased distractions, alongside some perceived benefits, including access to educational information and collaborative opportunities. Previous studies have shown that social media usage can negatively impact academic performance among both undergraduates and secondary school students. For instance, Omachonu and Akanya (2019) and Mulindi *et al.* (2019) observed that exposure to social media was linked to poor academic outcomes. Overall, these findings, both from this study and other prior studies, suggest that while social media reports have been generally negative, the specific effect on academic performance is context-dependent, varying by duration, purpose of use, and perhaps users' discipline or study habits. This underscores the importance of balanced and purposeful engagement with social media rather than indiscriminate or excessive use (Chandrasena, 2022).

5.0 Implications of the Study

Social media fosters collaboration and knowledge sharing among nursing students. Social media utilization among nursing undergraduates offers both positive and negative implications for academic performance. Educators must guide students in properly managing their social media usage to improve learning outcomes and prevent academic distractions. Students should set specific time limits for social media usage to ensure it does not interfere with their study time. The use of social media platforms should be encouraged for joining academic forums, study groups, and educational communities that promote learning and collaboration. Educators should play a key role in training students to critically evaluate the information and content they encounter on social media, helping them distinguish credible sources from misleading ones. In addition, students need to be informed about the potential negative health impacts of excessive social media use, such as anxiety, stress, and the emotional effects of online comparison or cyberbullying. Lastly, students are encouraged to follow educational influencers, academic institutions, and motivational figures who share study tips, academic resources, and inspiring content to help them stay focused and motivated toward achieving their academic goals.

6.0 Limitations of the Study

Academic performance was measured using self-reported perceptions rather than objective indicators such as CGPA, which may introduce reporting and social desirability bias. Furthermore, the cross-sectional design limits causal inference; therefore, the direction of the relationship between social media use and academic performance cannot be definitively established. Finally, the study was conducted in a single university, which may limit generalizability to other institutions with different academic cultures or digital access patterns.

7.0 Conclusion

The findings highlight the dual role of social media in academic environments. While social media platforms provide valuable opportunities for collaboration, academic networking, access to learning materials, and real-time updates, excessive daily use is significantly associated with negative academic outcomes. Universities should therefore move beyond discouraging social media use and instead promote structured digital literacy and digital well-being programs that emphasize intentional and time-conscious engagement. Academic departments may integrate formal guidelines on productive online engagement, encourage moderated academic discussion groups, and provide training on time management and critical evaluation of online content. Policymakers and student affairs units should also consider incorporating digital wellness education into orientation programs to help students develop balanced usage habits that protect concentration, sleep quality, and academic productivity.

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