

# The influence of social media on students of second-cycle institutions in Tamale and its implications

Taufic Yabang Mohammed<sup>1\*</sup>, Kukura Yirinibe Philip<sup>2</sup>, Kanita Labaran<sup>3</sup>

University for Development Studies, Tamale, Ghana<sup>1-3</sup>

[mohammedtaufico12@gmail.com](mailto:mohammedtaufico12@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [yirinibephilip3@gmail.com](mailto:yirinibephilip3@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup>, [Khanita.ib@gmail.com](mailto:Khanita.ib@gmail.com)<sup>3</sup>



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## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study investigated the influence of social media on students in second-cycle institutions in Tamale. It concentrates on its relationship with academic performance, learning ability, writing skills, and gender disparities in usage patterns.

**Methodology/approach:** A purposive sample method was employed to select 150 students from secondary schools in Tamale. Data were collected through surveys and interviews using both qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore how social media affects students' academic experiences.

**Results/Findings:** Findings from this study indicate that the use of social media has a significant impact on students' learning abilities, writing skills, and academic performance. A significant number of learners reported becoming distracted with reduced concentration because they spent excessive time on the sites, leading to possible health challenges and a sedentary lifestyle. The results also indicated that gender differences exist in social media usage patterns, among others, which affect school performance.

**Limitations:** One limitation of this research is that it had a small sample size and may not represent all students found within second-cycle institutions. This further implies that this research is constrained to a particular geographical area, limiting its generalizability.

**Contribution:** This study contributes to the understanding of how social media influences students in second-cycle institutions, highlighting the need for educators and policymakers to establish guidelines for responsible social media use to enhance academic success and mitigate its negative impacts.

**Keywords:** *social media, academic performance, learning ability, writing skills, gender difference*

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## 1. Introduction

Social media, which was born in the early 2000s, has developed into a critical component of present-day interpersonal communication. The inception and development of social media have transformed the world into a global village like a neighborhood that links people through the transfer of information without stage-managing actual physical contact. It allows the quick sharing of information over the Internet in the form of short text messages and videos where an Internet connection is present.

Social media include Internet platforms, services, and tools that are used to support collaboration, community building, participation, and content sharing (Chen & Wang, 2021). McGowan et al. (2012) defined social media as an online space where users can create, share, and consume content primarily generated by other users. This digital platform allows individuals to communicate with each other via

Internet applications, regardless of location, using computers, tablets, and smartphones. While social media has gained widespread popularity, it is recognized as a double-edged phenomenon due to its associated impacts (Fiadzawoo, Mahama, & Attati, 2022).

The impact of social media on education, health, and business development has gained much attention in the literature. It is a powerful tool that can enhance learning and promote quality education globally, as is evident during the Covid 19 pandemic (Hossain & Yasmin, 2022; Nasir & Neger, 2022). According to Ting et al. (2023), communication and information technologies such as social media can enhance education. A popular development is the internet, with which people can access information anyhow they want it. Despite the transformative impact of social media in this era, it also has a myriad of challenges and implications in students' lives concerning how it has been put to use.

While the number of social media users has increased greatly, with an estimated users of 4.9 billion. It is further projected to increase by 5.85 billion users by 2027 (Mason, Narcum, & Mason, 2021). This incidence of highly growing users has beneficial and far-reaching consequences, particularly in developing countries. Social media has become a major concern in Ghana, affecting students' academic performance, learning abilities, writing skills, and usage patterns. Fiadzawoo, Ismail, and Yegblemenawo (2021) point out that the influence of social media extends beyond mere statistics of users but can propel individuals into the roles of heroes, heroines, or villains. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of social media platforms, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok, on the academic performance, social relationships, psychological well-being, and overall quality of life of high school students in the Northern Region of Ghana.

### **1.2 Research Objectives**

*General Objective:* To investigate the impact of social media on second-cycle institution students in Tamale and its implications.

*Specific Objectives:*

- 1) Explore how social media adversely influence students' academic performance.
- 2) Investigate how social media affects students' learning abilities.
- 3) Assess the influence of social media on students' writing skills.
- 4) Determine whether there is gender-based variation in students' social media usage

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What adverse effects does social media have on students' academic performance?
2. How does social media impact students' learning abilities?
3. How do social media influence students' writing skills?
4. Are there gender-based variations in the use of social media among students?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Impact of Social Media on Academic Performance**

Academic performance is a complex and nuanced concept encompassing a wide range of factors that contribute to an individual's ability to learn, understand, and apply knowledge. According to Loo and Choy (2013), academic performance is a multidimensional construct that involves three key components: student characteristics, teacher/lecturer qualifications, and academic environment. Social media also plays a critical role in students' academic performance.

Many studies have recognized the impact of social media on students' academic performance. The findings of some of these studies suggest that social media usage has a positive causality on student performance (Adamu, Olayinka, & Usman, 2024; Sivakumar, 2020; Talaue, AlSaad, AlRushaidan, AlHugail, & AlFahhad, 2018). This body of evidence argues that social media offers students the opportunity to interact with peers and engage in education. However, evidence also suggests that social media have a far-reaching consequence on students' academic excellence (Habes, Alghizzawi, Khalaf, Salloum, & Ghani, 2018; Kolan & Dzandza, 2018; Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2015). While these studies acknowledge the negative influence of social media on student grades, they also highlight social

media as a powerful tool for enhancing learning and performance. Therefore, it can be concluded that social media has both positive and negative effects on students' academic performance.

### **2.3 Social Media Usage on Students' Writing Skills**

Social media has been identified as a double-edge" tool for development. Double-edge because it has both positive and negative impacts. For example, Belal (2014); Nkhi (2023) highlighted the negative impact of social media usage on students writing skills, and found that social media has led to casual writing styles and poor grammatical competence. Surkyn, Sandra, and Vandekerckhove (2023) examined several factors that play a role in the writing style of students and found consistent evidence. Social media platforms promote the idea that users are free to disregard spelling norms and are not required to rectify typographical errors, especially among students, and as a result, spell words incorrectly. A study by (Nutakor & Israel, 2022) identified certain perceptions regarding the use of English words on social media platforms. Respondents tend to use abbreviated spellings of words, such as "bos/bcos" for "because," "4rm/from" for "from," "tym" for "time," "pic" for "picture," "dey" for "they," and "gud" for "good." Additionally, they often mix letters and numbers in words, such as "gr8t" for "great," "9c" for "nice," "2gether" for "together," and "4reva/4eva" for "forever. Social media also negatively impacts students' focus and attention span, (Harikrishna, Ramesh, Sait, Emad, & Somani, 2023). The author shows that a constant barrage of updates, messages, and notifications can be distracting and lower concentration levels while writing. The inability of students to focus on writing assignments for an extended period may result in subpar work.

### **2.4 Social media and Learning Ability.**

The emergence of social media has had a profound impact on many aspects of our lives, including its impact on the educational system in Ghana. Research has identified that social media offers numerous advantages, opportunities, and several challenges that can adversely affect the Ghanaian education sector. This section explores the significant issues related to social media and their implications for education in Ghana.

As indicated by Bawa, Odame, Kwarteng, Ayim, and Kolugu (2021); Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2015) the majority of Ghanaian students use social media platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook for various purposes including academic ones. A public opinion survey conducted by Sinanan and Gomes (2020) revealed that students in Ghana highly favor social media networking sites to stay in touch with friends and informed. S. Khan, Sultan, and Alsamarai (2019) found that social media poses a substantial distraction and time waste for students, diverting their attention from their studies due to constant access to smartphones and other devices. The authors revealed that instead of focusing on their academic work, students often developed an interest in checking social media notifications and online interactions. This distraction impairs their ability to focus on and absorb information, thereby hampering learning and overall productivity (Agarwal, Bishesh, Bansal, and Kumari (2021). Additionally, social networking sites have been identified as platforms for cyberbullying and harassment, leading to adverse effects on students' well-being and academic experience (Fakir, 2023; O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011).

The anonymity and ease of social media interactions can encourage destructive behavior towards peers, causing mental distress, low self-esteem, and even depression among students, as observed BENTLEY (2021); Rahman and Al Amin (2023). These negative psychological consequences can significantly affect students' ability to actively engage in their educational environment. Furthermore, extensive engagement with social media, as noted Nwazor and Godwin-Maduike (2015), has led students to spend substantial amounts of time online. This constant online presence, including during class sessions in classrooms and dormitories, often results in distractions, such as messaging and social networking activities, diverting valuable time away from learning, research, and innovation. Consequently, many students in Ghana face academic challenges owing to the disruptive influence of social media. In addition, excessive time spent on social media and online activities can lead to physical health issues and development of unhealthy habits (Raut & Patil, 2016). The authors pointed out that this may result in problems such as obesity, eyesight problems, and other health issues, directly affecting students' ability to attend school regularly, stay focused, and maintain optimal learning performance.

### ***2.5 Gender Usage Dynamics of Social Media among Students***

Social media has been a heavily dependent source of progress in the modern world, regardless of gender usage in second-cycle institutions (D. Khan, Banerjee, & Gupta, 2020). Evidence from researchers pinned that, in weighing the difference in gender usage, females spend more time on social media on WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook to extend and maintain social relations compared to their counterparts (Case, King, & Case, 2019). Many studies have demonstrated a fairly even usage pattern between males and females on social media platforms for communication (Bonds-Raacke & Raacke, 2010). They revealed that both young men and women engage in social networking to flirt and strengthen their current relationships globally. More credence emphasized the use of social media by gender in terms of their negative aspects. Herring and Kapidzic (2015) found that females are more likely to share sexually explicit images of themselves, engage in discussions about sexuality in public forums, and tend to share more about their daily lives (Williams & Merten, 2009). On the other hand, males may create accounts to find a partner or because of an existing relationship.

Based on these research findings, young people use social media to maintain friendships and seek support during difficult times, with boys benefiting more from these platforms, particularly because of challenges in expressing their emotions (Smith & Langer, 2023). The initial days of social networking allowed for more online conversations, which appealed to both males and females who had difficulty with face-to-face communication. The increasing popularity of social networking sites has contributed to the growing societal impact of the issues associated with their use (Smith & Langer, 2023).

### ***2.6 Theoretical framework***

The theoretical framework identifies and describes the essential features, components, or variables that construct academic work (Orkin et al., 2021). It helps to assess and understand the connections between the variables of impact and describes the outcomes. This study employed two prominent theories, Katz's Use and Gratification Theory and Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory (SLT), to address two central questions: academic achievement (which relates to learning outcomes) and the impact of social media on academic work (examining the conflict between social media use and academic performance). According to Bandura and Walters (1977), Social Learning Theory (SLT) is influenced by three key variables: the environment, the individual, and the models that are present in the immediate surroundings.

This study incorporated the satisfaction hypothesis, which asserts that individuals choose specific media to meet their needs. This media competes with other sources of information to satisfy viewers, and the conflict between academic work and engagement on social media networks has repercussions for students' academic performance. Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT) is a framework designed to understand why and how individuals vigorously pursue particular media to fulfill their specific wants. In light of this, media consumers are urged to think about the advantages of interacting with the media to address their needs and solve problems (Chan-Olmsted, Wolter, & Wang, 2017).

These theories of uses and gratification emerge from research that emphasizes the interplay between media institutions, broader social organization, and media audiences. Together, these concepts propose that individuals rely on social media to fulfill specific needs and wants and, in doing so, develop a certain dependency on specific media. The more someone relies on a particular medium to meet their needs, the more important the medium becomes to that person.

### ***2.7 Gaps in Literature Review***

Limited research has been conducted on the long-term impact of social media use on students in second-cycle institutions. More comprehensive research is needed to determine their effects on well-being and social relationships. A notable gap is the lack of consideration of contextual factors such as cultural, gender, and socioeconomic disparities, which can influence how social media affects students. Future studies should delve into the relationship between these contextual factors and the use of social media to gain a deeper understanding of how they shape students' experiences in secondary institutions (Parlak Sert & Başkale, 2023). (Wang, McKee, Torbica, & Stuckler, 2019) found that Chinese students who frequently use social media reported lower well-being and happiness compared to non-users, while

American students did not show this difference. This finding suggests that cultural factors should be considered when evaluating the impact of social media on mental health.

Moreover, it is imperative to address the lack of recognition of the helpful consequences of social media on students' academic and social lives in academic literature. While most studies predominantly focus on undesirable aspects such as addiction and cyberbullying, it is crucial to explore how social media can enrich students' lives. Social media platforms can facilitate collaboration, communication, and learning, enabling students to connect with peers who share similar interests, fostering social support, and reducing feelings of loneliness.

Karpinski et al. Karpinski, Kirschner, Ozer, Mellott, and Ochwo (2013) demonstrated the positive impact of social interactions through social media on academic performance. Students who used social media platforms to communicate with colleagues excelled more than those who did not. This suggests that social media sites can enhance educational results, highlighting the need for further research in this domain. Effective interventions must be developed to mitigate the adverse effects of social media use on students. Future studies should assess the effectiveness of various interventions, such as social media literacy training, educational programs, and dealing with drug abuse or behavior, to encourage responsible social media usage. Digital detox programs that temporarily restrict technology use can encourage healthy habits and reduce social media addiction. When students are educated on responsible social media use, they improve their critical thinking skills and develop safe and healthy practices (Hou, Xiong, Jiang, Song, & Wang, 2019).

Seabrook et al. Seabrook, Kern, and Rickard (2016) indicated that social media literacy education can assist teenagers in reducing cyberbullying. School students who usually gain social media educational training have less knowledge and experience of cyberbullying at a minor degree than those without such education. This underscores the value of teaching social media literacy to promote social responsibility among students.

The use of social media in research raises ethical concerns, particularly regarding confidentiality. Future studies must prioritize these problems to guarantee that moral standards remain upheld during data gathering and analysis involving students. Participants should provide informed consent and researchers must guarantee the protection of their privacy (Hanlon & Jones, 2023).

In conclusion, there is an urgent need for additional research on the impact of social media on students in secondary schools. Areas that necessitate further investigation include the long-standing consequences of social media use, contextual factors influencing student practices, positive impacts of social media, effective strategies for promoting responsible social media use, and ethical considerations in utilizing social media information in research. By addressing these gaps, a more comprehensive understanding of how social media affects students can be achieved, ultimately leading to the development of effective programs that encourage responsible social media use.

### **3. Methodology**

#### ***3.1 Study area and sampling techniques***

This study was conducted in Tamale, the capital city of the Northern Region of Ghana. It shares borders with the Savannah region to the west, the Northeast region to the north, the Bono East the Volta Region to the south, and the Republic of Togo to the east. Geographically, Tamale is located between 0.30 °N and 10.30 °N North latitudes and between 0.31 °West and 0.30 °West longitudes (Northernrc, 2022). The study employed a purposive sampling method to choose schools, which led to the exclusion of first-year students due to their absence from school and lack of academic performance records, which were the focus of the study. According to Kothari (2004), purposive sampling is a technique used in research to select participants for analysis.

#### ***3.2 Sample size determination***

The sample size of our study was 150 students out of 1,259 from secondary schools. This was due to limited time and resources. In an attempt to increase the validity and reliability of the research, 16% of

the total population was determined based on Babbie (2005), who confirmed that for a population of 1000 and above, a sample size of 10-20% is acceptable.

### ***3.3 Data collection method***

This study used both surveys and interviews to collect qualitative and quantitative data from the students. Both methods involved open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires, with Section A focusing on demographics and Section B on the impact of social media on academic performance, learning abilities, and gender usage (Dzwigol, 2020). Primary and secondary data were used in this study. Primary data were obtained from students through closed-ended questionnaires, and secondary data from other research materials, newspapers, articles, journals, documents, the Internet, and headmasters of various senior high schools.

### ***3.4 Research designs***

As described by Jones and Donmoyer (2021), a research design is a structured research plan aimed at minimizing the factors that could influence the reliability of research outcomes. Additionally, Alam (2021) defined it as a plan outlining how, when, and where data are analyzed. The primary objective was to investigate the influence of social media on secondary schools. Therefore, it is an important guide to help generate data for this study.

This research design enables an investigation of the effects of social media on academic performance among students in secondary schools in the Northern Region. It involves using a research method to gather information regarding students' attitudes, behaviors, and various aspects of education and social media, as explained by Owan, Owan, and Eneje (2020). A descriptive cross-sectional method was used to collect data through interviews and questionnaires administered to a group of individuals. The research methodology for this study was a mixed-method approach encompassing both qualitative and quantitative data analyses. This comprehensive approach enhances the understanding of the chosen research topic and allows for triangulation of the findings.

### ***3.5 Data analysis***

Microsoft Excel and ordinal logistic regression were used to analyze the relationship between male and female social media usage and study time.

## **4. Results and Discussions**

### ***4.1 Demographic features of the students***

The study found that 49.3% of the respondents were male, while 50.7% were female. The age groups ranged from 16 to 30 years, with 15% in the 16-20 age group, 65% in the 21-25 age group, and 20% in the 26-30 age group. The majority of respondents fell within the 21-25 age range, highlighting their expertise and engagement with social media, as shown in the pie chart.

Figure (1) below shows the gender of students from the study

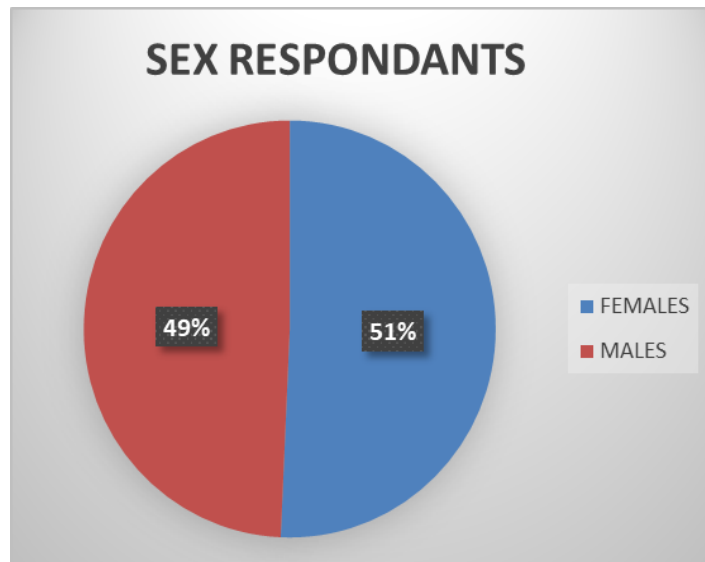


Figure 1. Sex of Respondents  
Source: Field Survey, 2023.

From Figure 1, it is revealed that the majority (51%) of students were female and 49% were male.

#### 4.2 Age of respondents

Table 1. Age of Respondents

The Table (1) below contains the age range of students from the study

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
16-20	22	15
21-25	98	65
26 – 30	30	20
Total	150	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The findings in Table 1 reveal that a greater proportion of 98 (65%) students were within the age range of 21-25, 30(20%) were within 26-30 years and the least 22(15%) were within the age range of 16-20 years.

#### 4.3 How social media adversely influences students' academic performance

Table 2. Distribution of social media influence on students' academic performance

Table (2) below contains students' responses to the negative influence of social media on their academic performance

The following are the negative influence of social media on students' academic performance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
It increased the spread of distorted information and false news	70	47.2
It amplified cyber-bullying among students	54	35.7
It amplified mental well-being consequences	26	17.1

Source: field survey, 2023

From Table (2) above, it can be seen that the majority 70(47.2%) believed that social media increased the spread of misinformation and fake news, whereas 54(35.7%) indicated that it led to more cyberbullying among students. Additionally, 26 students (17.1%) mentioned an increase in mental health implications due to social media usage.

The results findings of this study are in support of the study conducted by Alnjadat, Hmaidi, Samha, Kilani, and Hasswan (2019) where a high frequency of social media practice among students in second-cycle institutions was revealed. The survey revealed that most students used social media daily, often spending more than five hours a day. This emphasizes the fundamental role of social media in the lives of students and its possible effect on educational achievement. Furthermore, the results suggested that the spread of distorted information, cyber-bullying, and mental health issues was detrimental to academic performance. Many students reported lower grades due to excessive social media use, consistent with previous research that highlighted distractions and reduced study time caused by social media. This reinforces the idea that the excessive use of social media hinders academic success.

The study also confirmed the findings of BENTLEY (2021), which revealed the psychological impacts of social media usage by students in second-cycle institutions. The excessive use of social media has been linked to negative implications and reduced self-esteem. Constantly comparing themselves to others and fear of missing out were identified as significant psychological factors affecting academic performance. This underlines the importance of students being aware of the psychological effects of social media and of developing approaches to alleviate their negative influence.

#### 4.3.1 Range of Social Media Sites Used

Table 3. Distribution of Most Used Social Media Sites

The study investigated social media sites that students use frequently, and the results are presented in Table 3.

Most used social media sites	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	57	37.3
WhatsApp	121	79.1
Instagram	49	32
Youtube	51	33.3
Twitter	39	25.5
Snapchat	6	3.9
Tiktok	8	5.2

Source: field survey, 2023

Social media sites are most commonly used by students. The results in Table 3 above revealed that a significant number 121 (79.1%) students indicated WhatsApp as the social media site they used frequently, followed by Facebook 57(37.3%), YouTube 51(33.3%), Instagram 49 (32%), Twitter 39 (25.5%), Snapchat 6 (3.9%), and Tiktok 8 (5.2%).

These findings are in contrast with the study of Owusu-Acheaw and Larson (2015), where a greater number of participants affirmed that the most used social media site is WhatsApp, an interesting number using Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and Tiktok.

#### 4.5 Explore the impacts of social media on students' learning ability

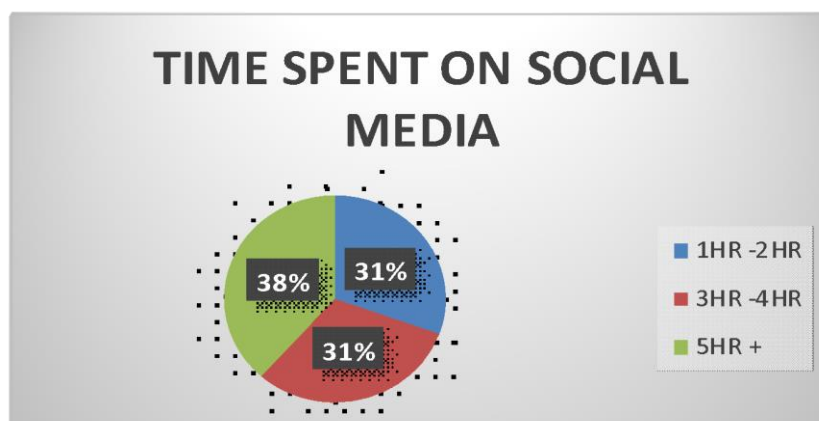




Figure 2: Time spent on social media  
Source: Field Survey, 2023.

As shown in Figure (2), the majority 57(38.4% ) disclosed that they spent 5 hours or more on social media, 47(31.1%) reported dedicating 3 to 4 hours to social media activities, and 46(30.5%) admitted to spending 1 to 2 hours on social media.

This finding is by the study of Astatke, Weng, and Chen (2023). To explore the influence of social media on the learning abilities of students in secondary schools, a survey was conducted in which respondents were presented with questions on the impact of social media, and their answers revealed various effects on their learning abilities. Notably, a significant portion of the respondents strongly agreed with a statement highlighting the specific influence on their learning abilities, providing reasons to support their perspectives.

The survey findings underscored the role of social media as a massive source of distraction for students. It was evident that students' focus on their academic pursuits could easily be swayed away by the pervasive accessibility of social media sites on smartphones and other electronic devices. This observation aligns with those reported by Astatke et al. (Astatke et al., 2023) emphasized that excessive social media use can lead to deficiencies in time management skills, diminished attention spans, and lower academic performance.

When the data from Figure 2 were analyzed, it became clear that most students spent 5 hours or more on social media, representing 38%, while 62% of the few students spent 1 – 2 hours and 3–4 hours on social media.

The survey explored the influence of social media on students' learning ability. Students who use social media excessively develop health issues and live a sedentary lifestyle. Reading social media feeds and other online activities for extended periods can result in a lack of physical activity and unhealthy habits. Students' attention can be derived from their academics because of the constant usage of social media on smartphones and other gadgets. This result is in line with BENTLEY (2021), who stated that the capacity of a student to regularly attend classes, focus, and perform academically well can all be directly impacted by such difficulties.

#### 4.6 Does social media influence students' writing skills?

Table 4. Response to the influence of social media on students' writing skills

The study investigated students' responses to social media, which influenced their writing skills, and the results are presented in Table 4.

Does social media influence students' writing skills	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	94	63
No	26	17
Maybe	30	20

Source: field survey, 2023

Excessive social media use led to a decline in writing skills for both male and female students.

The results from Table (4) revealed that the majority 94(63%) of the students answered "YES" social media influences their writing skills, 30(20%) answered "MAYBE" social media influences their writing skills and 26(17%) answered "NO" and social media did not influence their writing skills.

This suggests that social media may have some influence on students' writing skills, but it is not the only factor that contributes to poor writing skills. The effect of social media on students' writing skills

is the prominence of informal communication. Constant exposure to informal language, abbreviations, and shortcuts used on social media platforms can lead to students' academic writing. They may struggle to differentiate between formal and informal languages, leading to a decline in the quality of their academic achievements.

Based on the research survey, out of the 150 respondents, 94 (63%) indicated that they struggle with grammar and punctuation. This suggests that many students are not adequately equipped with the writing skills necessary to produce grammatically correct sentences. Additionally, 26 (17%) of the respondents admitted having difficulty with sentence structure and coherence, indicating that a considerable number of students struggle to organize their thoughts and express them coherently in writing. In addition, 30 (20%) respondents stated that they lacked proper vocabulary usage, which implies that many students may not have a wide range of words to choose from when writing. These findings suggest that there is a need to improve students writing skills in second-cycle institutions in Tamale.

The survey results indicated that an extensive percentage of students reported a decrease in their writing abilities due to the frequent time spent on social media. This finding is consistent with previous research highlighting the negative effects of social media on various aspects of writing skills. This finding reinforces the notion that excessive social media usage can hinder students' ability to write effectively. The survey results indicate that social media negatively affects students' writing habits, with a majority of respondents reporting that they often use informal language and shortcuts are normally used on social media platforms, so they transfer it in their writing of tests or assignments. This behavior leads to a lack of proper grammar, punctuation, and coherence in their writing, ultimately affecting their overall writing skills (Rahmat & Haron, 2021). This finding emphasizes the need for students to develop more formal and effective writing habits and to minimize the influence of social media on their writing style.

#### 4.7 Ascertain the difference in students' usage of social media by gender

Table 5. Difference in students' usage of social media by gender

Table (5) below contains students' responses to the differences in the usage of social media by gender.

Difference in students' usage of social media by gender	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	43	28.8
Agree	42	28.1
Disagree	47	31.3
Strongly disagree	18	11.8

Source: field survey, 2023

This shed light on the student's perspective on how gender may influence social media usage patterns

Table (5) above examines the differences in students' usage of social media by gender in second-cycle institutions. The students were asked to express their opinions on the idea of gender usage regarding social media; the majority 47(31.4%) of the students disagreed with the usage of social media. In contrast, 43 (28.8%) students strongly agreed with the notion that there is a difference in students' usage of social media by gender, 42(28.1%) agreed, and 18(11.8%) strongly disagreed with the usage of social media. This finding suggests that social media plays a more prominent role in the lives of both genders, potentially influencing their academic performance, writing skills, and learning abilities to a greater extent. A large number of both male and female students reported a failure in their writing skills due to the excessive time spent on social media.

## 5. Conclusion

In summary, social media has both positive and negative effects on students in secondary schools. Educators and policymakers should establish ethical and beneficial guidelines for social media usage. This involves finding a middle ground between social media and academic success, emphasizing the importance of formal writing skills, promoting educational engagement, and addressing gender disparities in social media use, all of which can mitigate their adverse effects on students' academic

experiences. Therefore, this study recommends that educational organizations ensure that the incorporation of new technology and online learning in the educational process includes measures to prevent excessive social media use among students.

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