

First-Year English Majors' Perceptions of Social Media for English Language Learning



Percepciones de estudiantes de primer año de Inglés sobre el uso de las redes sociales para aprender inglés

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Keywords

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Abstract: Social media has become an important complementary resource for English language learning in higher education. However, there is very little empirical evidence from Panama. The purpose of this research was to examine the perceptions of first-year English major students on the influence of social media on English language learning. A quantitative descriptive cross-sectional design was used. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 54 first-year English major students at Universidad de Panamá. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data, while thematic analysis was conducted on the qualitative responses. Students perceived social media as a useful complementary resource for English language learning. Vocabulary showed the greatest improvement, followed by listening, pronunciation, and daily expressions, while grammar improved the least. Distractions were identified as the main constraint associated with social media use. The use of a small convenience sample and a cross-sectional design limited the study. In conclusion, social media may complement formal English courses by supporting vocabulary learning, communicative skills, and autonomous learning when accompanied by appropriate pedagogical guidance.

Palabras clave

Redes sociales
Aprendizaje del inglés
Educación superior
Percepciones estudiantiles
Aprendizaje autónomo

Resumen: Las redes sociales se han convertido en un recurso complementario relevante para el aprendizaje del inglés en la educación superior, aunque en Panamá existe poca evidencia empírica. Este estudio analizó las percepciones de estudiantes de primer año de la Licenciatura en Inglés sobre la influencia de las redes sociales en su aprendizaje del idioma. Se empleó un diseño cuantitativo descriptivo de corte transversal y se aplicó un cuestionario estructurado a 54 estudiantes de la Universidad de Panamá. Los datos cuantitativos se examinaron mediante estadística descriptiva e inferencial, y las respuestas cualitativas se analizaron temáticamente. Los estudiantes consideraron las redes sociales como un apoyo útil para aprender inglés. El vocabulario fue el aspecto con mayor mejora, seguido de la comprensión auditiva, la pronunciación y las expresiones cotidianas; la gramática mostró el menor avance. Las distracciones fueron el obstáculo identificado. El uso de una muestra pequeña y un diseño transversal limitó el estudio. En conclusión, las redes sociales pueden complementar los cursos formales al fortalecer el vocabulario, las habilidades comunicativas y el aprendizaje autónomo cuando se integran con una orientación pedagógica adecuada.

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INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an important aspect of higher education and is increasingly recognized as a viable learning resource (Perez et al., 2023; Sengupta y Vaish, 2024). Universities have integrated social media into teaching and learning due to its ability to facilitate communication, collaboration and information exchange between the lecturer and the student (Aldahdoh et al., 2020; Trinova et al., 2022). According to Machado et al. (2024) and Trinova et al. (2022), these technologies also offer opportunities for students to communicate, share ideas, and learn outside the classroom setting. Recent studies indicate that the correct use of social media can produce a more engaging, co-operative and student-centred learning experience in higher education (Machado et al., 2024; Perez et al., 2023).

According to the latest empirical research, social media can facilitate English learning in different ways. Prior studies have reported positive results regarding vocabulary development, listening and pronunciation practice, learner motivation and engagement, and authentic language use. Different studies also described benefits for speaking performance, writing skills, autonomous learning, interaction and collaboration, although these results differ according to educational contexts (Benitez & Gonzalez, 2025; Dashti & Abdulsalam, 2025; Dinsa & Taddese, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2026; Rajayi & Maleki, 2023).

Beyond the language-learning benefits reported in previous studies, social media is also related to several educational advantages that may contribute to English language learning. Previous research has reported that these tools can promote engagement and motivation through active participation and self-paced learning (Alkamel, 2024; Benitez-Correa & Gonzalez-Torres, 2025). The literature also suggests that social media facilitates collaboration, interaction, and authentic communication. Besides, it helps learners to exchange ideas, receive feedback, and practice English in meaningful contexts outside the classroom (Alkamel, 2024; Dinsa & Taddese, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2026). In addition, social media provides learners with access to educational resources anytime and anywhere, supporting learner autonomy and continuous language practice outside formal instruction (Dashti & Abdulsalam, 2025; Rajayi & Maleki, 2023). Overall, earlier research suggests that these benefits can create a more engaging, learner-centered, and authentic setting for English language learning.

While social media could assist in English language learning, there are also some issues. Previous studies indicate that inappropriate or excessive use of social media may distract students from studying, diminish efficiency in study, and lead to procrastination, which limits learning (Irianna et al., 2026). Besides, high levels of engagement with social media have been associated with lower self-esteem, reduced course learning, and poorer academic performance among EFL students (Khoso et al., 2024). Learners may also experience digital fatigue, social pressure, and difficulties with self-regulation. In addition, frequent exposure to informal language on social media may affect the development of academic writing skills if students do not receive proper guidance from their instructors (Alkamel, 2024; Irianna et al., 2026). Overall, research shows social media can help people to learn English. However, these benefits rely on how students utilize the tools and how teachers use them for teaching.

Although there are many studies on social media and English language learning, most empirical studies have been conducted in Asian and Middle Eastern countries. Evidence from Latin America, on the other hand, remains comparatively limited (Nguyen et al., 2026). Moreover, there is little research on university students in Panama regarding their perceptions of social media for learning English. This represents an important research gap because educational, cultural, and technological contexts may influence the ways in which students use social media to support language learning. As a result, this study intends to analyze the perceptions of first-year students from two regional campuses of the Universidad de Panama majoring in English about the use of social media for learning English.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a quantitative descriptive cross-sectional research design. Its purpose was to examine first-year English major students' perceptions regarding the influence of social media on English language learning at two regional campuses of the Universidad de Panama. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data at a point in time. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were conducted to describe participants' responses and examine possible differences among the variables of the study.

Participants

Due to the availability and accessibility of participants during data collection, a non-probability convenience sampling method was used to select the participants. The participants were 54 first-year students enrolled in the Bachelor's Degree in English at the Universidad de Panama, including students from the Regional University Centers of Azuero ($n = 28$) and Coclé ($n = 26$). Most students were between 18 and 22 years old, and both genders were represented. Participants also reported their English proficiency level as basic, intermediate, or advanced.

Instrument

The instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire composed of 24 questions organized into four sections: (a) demographic information, (b) social media use, (c) an eight-item Likert scale measuring students' perceptions of the influence of social media on English language learning, and (d) complementary multiple-choice and two open-ended questions. The five-point response format used on the Likert scale ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

For this study, students' perceptions of the influence of social media on English language learning were measured using the eight Likert-scale items included in the questionnaire. Each item was scored from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The mean of the eight items was calculated to obtain an Overall Perception Score for each participant. Higher scores indicated more positive perceptions of the influence of social media on English language learning. Besides, social media use was measured according to the participants' reported frequency of social media use and frequency of consuming English content. Gender and self-reported English proficiency level were also considered in the inferential analyses.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections to measure the main study variables. The first section collected demographic information. The second examined how social media is used. The third section included the eight-item Likert scale measuring students' perceptions, while the fourth comprised complementary multiple-choice and open-ended questions. This organization allowed each section to collect information on a specific aspect of the study.

As evidence of the instrument's internal consistency, the perception scale was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The analysis produced a coefficient of $\alpha = .974$, which indicates excellent reliability. Besides, the corrected item-total correlations ranged from .764 to .945, and deleting any item did not substantially improve the reliability coefficient. Thus, all eight items were retained for further statistical analysis (Taber, 2018).

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected using an online questionnaire created with Google Forms during the first academic semester of 2026. The questionnaire was administered to first-year English major students from the Azuero and Coclé Regional University Centers. Before completing the questionnaire, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the voluntary nature of their participation. Participants were also told that the information collected would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. Completion of the questionnaire was considered an indication of consent.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the quantitative data. Frequencies and percentages described participants' demographic characteristics and social media use. Besides, the means and standard deviations were calculated to investigate learners' habits and participants' perceptions of the role of social media in English language learning. In addition, the internal consistency of the perception scale was examined using Cronbach's alpha to determine the reliability of the instrument. In this phase, inferential analyses were also conducted to compare the Overall Perception Score. Differences by gender were examined using the Mann–Whitney U test. Differences among English proficiency levels were analyzed using the Kruskal–Wallis test. Besides, Spearman's rank-order correlation was also performed to examine the relationship between the Overall Perception Score and selected variables related to social media use. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level.

Open-ended questions were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis. First, all responses were read several times to become familiar with the data. Researchers identified and coded meaningful units. Similar codes were categorized into wider themes based on patterns across participants. The quotations were selected to illustrate each theme and enhance the quantitative findings. Finally, individual responses could be assigned to more than one theme, since individual responses often contained more than one idea.

RESULTS

Reliability Analysis

Table 1

Reliability Analysis of the Perception Scale

Statistic	Value
Number of items	8
Cronbach's Alpha	.974
Corrected Item–Total Correlation	.764 – .945
Items retained	8

The perception scale was highly consistent (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .974$). All corrected item-total correlations were above the recommended threshold. Besides, deleting any item did not substantially improve the reliability coefficient. Thus, all eight items were retained for the following analyses.

Descriptive Statistics of the Participants

Table 2

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N = 54)

Variable	Category	n	%
Gender	Female	36	66.7
	Male	18	33.3
Age	18–22 years	37	68.5
	23–28 years	10	18.5
	29–33 years	3	5.6
	34 years or older	4	7.4
Academic Year	First year	54	100.0
English Proficiency Level	Basic	25	46.3
	Intermediate	25	46.3
	Advanced	4	7.4
Campus	CRU Azuero	28	51.9
	CRU Coclé	26	48.1

Table 2 presents the demographic characteristics of the participants in the study. The study included 54 first-year undergraduate students enrolled in the Bachelor's Degree in English at the Universidad de Panama. Of the participants, 66.7% were female, and 33.3% were male. Most participants (68.5%) were between 18 and 22 years old, followed by 18.5% between 23 and 28 years old. With regard to English proficiency, the participants were almost equally distributed between basic (46.3%) and intermediate (46.3%) while only 7.4% were at the advanced level. The sample was also geographically proportionate, that is, 51.9% of participants were from CRU Azuero; 48.1% from CRU Coclé.

Overall Perception Score

Table 3

Overall Perception Score toward the Influence of Social Media on English Language Learning (N = 54)

Statistic	Value
Mean	3.59

Standard Deviation	1.24
Minimum	1.00
Maximum	5.00
Interpretation	High

Note: The overall perception score was calculated as the mean of the eight Likert-scale items. Higher scores indicate a more positive perception of the influence of social media on English language learning.

To get a comprehensive measure of students’ perceptions, the average response to the eight Likert-scale items was obtained as a composite score. In this sense, Table 3 shows that the mean overall perception score was 3.59 (*SD* = 1.24). These findings suggest that students generally viewed social media as a valuable resource for learning English. Students' scores ranged from 1.00 to 5.00, reflecting different opinions. Even so, most participants gave social media a favorable evaluation as a learning resource.

English Skills Improved through Social Media

Table 4

English Language Skills Perceived as Improved through Social Media (N = 54)

English language skill	n	%
Vocabulary	40	74.1
Listening comprehension	36	66.7
Pronunciation	36	66.7
Everyday expressions	28	51.9
Grammar	16	29.6

Note: Participants could select more than one response; therefore, percentages do not total 100%.

Table 4 shows the English language skills that students believed had improved through the use of social media. Vocabulary was the skill mentioned most often, with 40 participants (74.1%) reporting improvement. Listening comprehension and pronunciation were also frequently mentioned in the study, with 36 participants (66.7%) indicating improvement in both skills. More than half of the participants (51.9%) reported improvements in their knowledge and use of everyday English expressions. Grammar was the least frequently reported skill. Only 16 participants (29.6%) indicated improvement in this language skill. Generally, students perceived social media to be more helpful in developing practical communication skills such as vocabulary, listening, and pronunciation.

Difficulties Encountered

Table 5

Difficulties Encountered When Learning English through Social Media (N = 54)

Difficulty	n	%
Distractions	36	66.7
Use of informal language	16	29.6
Lack of clear explanations	14	25.9
Unreliable information	7	13.0
None	4	7.4
Other	3	5.6

Note: Participants could select more than one option; therefore, percentages do not total 100%.

Table 5 summarizes the main difficulties that participants reported when using social media to learn English. Most participants (36, 66.7%) reported that distractions were the most common problem. Thus, entertainment-related content may interfere with learning. The informal language (29.6%) and unclear explanations (25.9%) were found to be common difficulties as well. This suggests that some content on social media may not offer sufficient linguistic accuracy, or the instructional support students need. A low percentage of responses showed concerns about misinformation (13.0%). Only

four respondents (7.4%) indicated that they had experienced no difficulties, while three participants (5.6%) selected other challenges. The findings show that students see social media as a valuable tool, although they think it has limitations, which diminish its learning potential.

Learning Habits

Table 6

Frequency of Learning New Words or Expressions through Social Media (N = 54)

Frequency	n	%
Always	3	5.6
Frequently	21	38.9
Sometimes	28	51.9
Rarely	2	3.7

According to Table 6, most of the respondents stated that they regularly learned new words or expressions through social media. More than half of the respondents (51.9%) of the respondents said this happened sometimes, while 38.9% of the sample reported often learning new words. 5.6% stated that they always learned new words through social media. On the other hand, 3.7% said that this rarely happened. Besides, the results indicate that vocabulary learning through social media was a common experience among the participants, although its frequency varied among students.

Use of Learned Vocabulary in English Classes

Table 7

Use of Words or Expressions Learned through Social Media in English Classes (N = 54)

Response	n	%
Yes	52	96.3
No	2	3.7

Table 7 shows that nearly all participants (96.3%) used words or expressions learned from social media in their English class. Only two (3.7%) participants reported that they had never used such vocabulary in classroom activities. Thus, these results suggest that vocabulary learned on social media is often used in English classes.

Following English Learning Accounts

Table 8

Following English Language Learning Accounts or Content Creators (N = 54)

Response	n	%
Yes	34	63.0
No	20	37.0

As indicated in Table 8, 34 of the participants (63.0%) follow social media accounts or content creators that teach English, while 20 of the participants (37.0%) stated that they do not. These results suggest that many students intentionally use social media to access English language learning content.

Types of English Content Consumed

Table 9

Types of English Content Consumed on Social Media (N = 54)

Content type	n	%
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Music	42	77.8
Educational videos	33	61.1
TV series or movies	32	59.3
Humor	24	44.4
Video games	18	33.3
News	9	16.7
Other	5	9.3

Note: Participants could select more than one option.

Table 9 summarizes the types of English content that participants consume on social media. Music was the most frequently reported type of content (77.8%), followed by educational videos (61.1%) and TV series or movies (59.3%). Humor was reported by 44.4% of the participants, while 33.3% reported consuming video game content. In contrast, news was reported by only 16.7% of the participants, while 9.3% selected other types of content. The participants reported that they engaged with different types of audiovisual and entertainment content in English. The most reported forms of content were music and educational videos.

Qualitative Results

In addition to the quantitative findings, the participants were asked to explain briefly how social media contributed (or not) to their English learning. Thematic analysis of the 54 responses showed five themes – vocabulary development, listening and pronunciation improvement, increased motivation/exposure to English, learning from authentic audiovisual content, and distractions. Besides, because some participants mentioned more than one idea in the same response, each response could be assigned to more than one theme.

Table 10
Main Themes Identified in the Open-Ended Responses

Theme	Frequency of Mentions	Description
Vocabulary development	34	Learning new vocabulary, expressions, and everyday language.
Listening and pronunciation improvement	22	Better listening comprehension and pronunciation through exposure to spoken English.
Increased motivation and exposure	19	Greater motivation to practice English and more frequent exposure to the language.
Authentic audiovisual content	9	Learning through videos, movies, music, and other multimedia resources.
Distractions	2	Social media may interfere with learning because of entertainment content.

Note: Because one response could be coded into more than one theme, frequencies do not total the number of participants.

Vocabulary development was the most common theme reported by participants. They said that social media helped them learn new words, expressions, and everyday language. Besides, participants explained that they later used what they learned in both academic and everyday contexts. For example, one participant said:

“Las redes sociales han contribuido a mi aprendizaje del inglés porque me permiten ver videos, publicaciones y escuchar a personas que hablan el idioma. Esto me ha ayudado a aprender nuevas palabras, mejorar mi pronunciación y familiarizarme con expresiones que se usan en la vida cotidiana.”

The second most common theme was perceived improvement in listening comprehension and pronunciation. Participants reported that videos and conversations in English helped them better understand authentic speech and improve their pronunciation. For instance, one participant said “Me han ayudado bastante en algunas cosas de cómo eran en inglés y cómo se escribe y se dice.”

Increased motivation and exposure to English was another theme reported by the participants. Many participants stated that social media could motivate them to practice English more frequently. Social media also helped them stay in touch with the

language outside class. One of the responses stated that “En querer mucho más entender y aprender a hablar con mayor frecuencia el idioma.”

Besides, participants highlighted the importance of real-life audiovisual materials such as videos, movies, and music as learning resources. In this sense, one student noted: “Gracias a las series y películas en inglés he aprendido nuevo vocabulario dependiendo del contexto.”

Lastly, a few participants noted distractions as a limitation of social media for language learning. One participant observed “Algunas veces me ayuda y otra no, porque las redes sociales también me distraen y eso retrasa el aprendizaje del inglés.”

In conclusion, the qualitative results were in line with the quantitative findings. According to the participants, social media was useful for vocabulary development, listening comprehension, pronunciation, and exposure to authentic English. However, they also reported that distractions could sometimes limit its usefulness for language learning.

Inferential Analysis

Test of Normality

Table 11

Shapiro–Wilk Test of Normality for the Overall Perception Score

Variable	<i>W</i>	<i>p</i>	Decision
Overall Perception Score	0.774	< .001	Not normally distributed

Note: The analysis was conducted using 53 valid responses as one respondent had missing data for the composite score.

Before conducting inferential analyses, the Overall Perception Score was checked for normality using the Shapiro–Wilk test. Table 11 shows that the distribution differed significantly from normality ($W = .774, p < .001$). Hence, the assumption of normality was not met. Therefore, nonparametric statistical tests were employed in the subsequent analyses, including the Mann–Whitney U test, the Kruskal–Wallis test, and Spearman's rank-order correlation.

Gender Differences

Table 12

Mann–Whitney U Test Comparing Overall Perception Scores by Gender

Variable	<i>U</i>	<i>p</i>	Decision
Overall Perception Score by Gender	303.50	.969	No significant difference

A Mann–Whitney *U* test was performed to compare the Overall Perception Score of male and female students. The results showed no statistically significant difference between the two groups ($U = 303.50, p = .969$). Consequently, there was no significant difference in students' perceptions of the contribution of social media to English language learning based on gender.

Differences According to English Proficiency

Table 13

Kruskal–Wallis Test Comparing Overall Perception Scores by English Proficiency

Variable	<i>H</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Decision
Overall Perception Score	0.351	2	.839	No significant difference

A Kruskal–Wallis test was conducted to assess whether students' perceptions differed according to their self-reported level of English proficiency. The analysis found no statistically significant differences among students with basic, intermediate, and advanced English proficiency ($H = 0.351, df = 2, p = .839$). Thus, students' perceptions of the educational value of social media did not differ significantly according to their self-reported English proficiency level.

Correlation Analysis

Table 14

Spearman Correlations Between Overall Perception and Social Media Variables

Variables	Spearman's ρ	p	Interpretation
Overall Perception $\times$ Frequency of social media use	-.125	.373	Not significant
Overall Perception $\times$ Frequency of English content consumption	.267	.053	Positive but not statistically significant

Spearman's rank-order correlation was utilized to investigate the connection between students' Overall Perception Score and selected variables of social media use. The study revealed a weak negative correlation between social media usage frequency and the Overall Perception Score, but it was not statistically significant ($\rho = -.125, p = .373$). Similarly, a low positive correlation was found between the frequency of consuming English content on social media and the Overall Perception Score ($\rho = .267, p = .053$). However, this correlation was not statistically significant at the .05 level.

Summary of Inferential Findings

There were no statistically significant differences in perceptions based on gender or self-reported level of English. In addition, there were no statistically significant correlations between frequency of social media usage or frequency of exposure to English-language content and the Overall Perception Score. According to the results, students generally have a positive perception of social media as a learning resource, regardless of their gender, English proficiency level, and social media use.

DISCUSSION

The research findings show that first-year English major students have a positive perception of social media as an additional resource for learning English. The average perception score was high, and all Likert-scale items had a mean score above the midpoint of the scale. This shows that students generally perceive social media as having educational value. The findings are in line with earlier studies that report the flexible learning opportunities provided by social media, increased learner engagement, and promotion of independent language learning involving the use of authentic and meaningful interactive content (Karim et al., 2022; Muftah, 2024).

According to the findings of this study, vocabulary was the area in which students most frequently perceived improvement through social media. Almost three-quarters of the participants reported vocabulary as an area of improvement. This finding is consistent with previous studies suggesting that exposure to English-language media can support vocabulary learning outside the classroom (Peters, 2018; Zainal & Rahmat, 2020). However, the current findings should be interpreted as students' perceptions rather than objective evidence of vocabulary gains. An explanation for this could be that students are frequently exposed to words and expressions in context due to social media and hence can recognize and use vocabulary in various situations. Thus, the results support the possible value of social media as a complementary resource for vocabulary learning, while objective measures would be necessary to determine actual vocabulary improvement.

The results also show that students perceived social media as particularly helpful for communicative language skills. The areas with the most reported improvement include listening comprehension, pronunciation, and everyday expressions. A possible reason could be constant exposure to audiovisual content on TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and similar sites. These tools expose learners to models of pronunciation, natural conversations, and contextualized language use. Muftah (2024) reported similar findings, suggesting that social media could support listening, speaking performance, and overall language performance. However, the current study reflects students' perceptions of these benefits rather than actual improvement in these skills.

In contrast, grammar was the least frequently reported area of improvement. Only 29.6% of the participants perceived improvement in grammar through social media. This finding suggests that students may perceive social media as more useful for incidental and communicative learning than for learning grammatical structures. One explanation might be that the social media content does not provide the instruction or guided practice with corrective feedback that students usually need to learn grammar. This finding is consistent with previous research suggesting that social media can support communicative language learning but may work better when combined with formal classroom instruction (Al Mubarak,

2016; Muftah, 2024). Accordingly, the present findings support the idea of using social media as a complement, not a substitute, for formal grammar instruction.

The report also suggests that informal and formal learning contexts are closely related. Almost all participants (96.3%) indicated using words or expressions learned through social media in their English classes. Besides, this study suggests that students may bring vocabulary they encounter in informal digital environments into the classroom. Thus, social media may provide additional opportunities for students to encounter new vocabulary outside the classroom and later use it in their English classes. The research, however, did not test whether the vocabulary was used accurately and effectively.

The results indicate that many students use social media intentionally for learning. About 63% of the respondents said they follow accounts/content creators related to English learning. Music, educational videos, and movies or TV series were the types of English content most frequently used by students. The results also show that students do not only encounter English by chance. They often choose content that can help them learn the language. This use of English content may also explain the positive perceptions reported by the students. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies, which highlight the role of social media in supporting autonomous language learning (Karim et al., 2022; Nama, 2024).

Even though the participants had a positive perception of social media, they also recognized the drawbacks of using social media for learning English. The most reported difficulty was distractions, followed by concerns about informal language, limited grammatical explanations and unreliable information. These findings suggest that social media presents an important learning opportunity. However, students also need greater control over their use of social media platforms and greater digital literacy. These skills can help students maximize the educational benefits while minimizing the drawbacks. Similar findings have been reported in previous studies, which show that the educational value of social media largely depends on how students evaluate and manage online content (Muftah, 2024).

The qualitative results were consistent with the quantitative results. Many students highlighted vocabulary development, pronunciation improvement, listening, and motivation as the main benefits of learning English by using social media. Besides, many students mentioned distractions and too much entertainment as barriers to learning. Thus, the consistency between the quantitative and qualitative results offers a more comprehensive overview of the students' perceptions and experiences.

Lastly, the inferential data analyses did not indicate any statistically significant differences in students' perceptions based on either gender or English proficiency level. The analysis showed that perception scores had little connection with the frequency of social media use or the frequency of consuming English content. Overall, students' perceptions of social media were relatively consistent across different groups of learners. Thus, the results suggest that students' perceptions of the educational value of social media are not necessarily related to the amount of time they spend using these platforms.

Based on the overall findings, students perceive social media as a useful complementary resource for learning English, especially for vocabulary and communicative skills. However, appropriate pedagogical guidance is essential to ensure its responsible use. Besides, pedagogical guidance should also promote the critical examination of information available on the internet. Finally, pedagogical guidance should promote the integration of informal digital learning with formal classroom instruction.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined the perceptions of first-year English major students towards the use of social media for learning English. The findings revealed that the majority of participants found social media to be an additional aid for learning. In general, they had positive perceptions of its educational use. They also believed it could help with English learning at home.

The results of this report show that learners perceive social media as a useful tool for developing communicative linguistic skills. According to the results, the aspects most frequently identified as improved through social media are vocabulary, listening comprehension, and pronunciation. On the other hand, grammar was the least frequently reported area of improvement. These results suggest that social media may be more useful as a supplementary resource, while classroom instruction is still important for learning grammar.

The research also revealed that most students reported using vocabulary learned through social media in their English classes. Further, they intentionally follow different channels related to learning English. Besides, the findings suggest that

social media may complement formal language teaching by supporting autonomous learning and providing additional opportunities for language practice beyond the classroom.

While the participants perceived several educational benefits, they highlighted distractions as the primary limitation of using social media for English language learning. Therefore, the educational potential of social media depends not only on their availability but also on students' ability to use it effectively. Teachers should help students develop responsible digital learning practices and identify quality educational content.

Ultimately, the inferential analyses showed that students' perceptions did not differ significantly based on their gender and level of English. Also, students' overall perceptions were not significantly related to the frequency of social media use or the frequency of consuming English content. The results indicate that learners from different groups have similar educational perceptions regarding the use of social media. Thus, the findings suggest that students' perceptions of social media as a learning resource are not necessarily related to the frequency of their social media use.

In conclusion, social media could be a useful complementary resource for English language learning when properly integrated into the educational context. According to students' perceptions, its greatest contribution seems to be the development of vocabulary and communicative skills. Besides, formal instruction continues to play a fundamental role in areas that require structured instruction, such as grammar.

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