



## **IMPACTS DE L'USAGE DES RESEAUX SOCIAUX SUR LA REUSSITE EN LANGUE ANGLAISE AU BENIN : ETUDES DE CAS DE QUATRE ETABLISSEMENTS SECONDAIRES DANS LES DEPARTEMENTS DU MONO ET DU COUFFO**

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**Résumé :** Cette étude examine l'impact des réseaux sociaux sur la réussite des apprenants d'Anglais Langue Etrangère (ALE) dans les établissements secondaires du Bénin. Un échantillon de 250 élèves dont 150 garçons et 100 filles, ainsi que 30 enseignants, a été sélectionné dans quatre établissements pour l'étude. Un Questionnaire sur les Réseaux Sociaux (QRS), a été utilisé pour collecter les données. Les résultats révèlent que les réseaux sociaux ont à la fois des effets positifs et négatifs sur la réussite de ces apprenants. Ils offrent des opportunités de pratique linguistique, d'échanges culturels et d'accès à des ressources d'apprentissage. Cependant, ils favorisent également les distractions, augmentent les erreurs linguistiques et peuvent entraîner une baisse de performance académique. Les résultats de l'étude ont des implications pour les enseignants, les décideurs et les parents qui souhaitent exploiter le potentiel des réseaux sociaux pour améliorer l'apprentissage des langues tout en minimisant leurs effets négatifs.

**Mots-clés :** Réseaux sociaux, apprenants de l'Anglais Langue Étrangère, Bénin, apprentissage des langues, performance académique.

### **IMPACTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT IN BENIN: CASE STUDY OF FOUR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MONO AND COUFFO REGIONS**

**Abstract:** This study investigates the impact of social media on the success of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Beninese secondary schools. A sample of 250 students comprising 150 males and 100 females was selected from four schools for the study. Social Media Questionnaire (SMQ), was used to collect the data. The findings reveal that social media has both positive and negative impacts on EFL students' success, provides opportunities for language practice, cultural exchange, and access to learning resources. It also favors distractions, promotes language errors, and can lead to decreased academic performance. The results of the study have implications for educators, policymakers, and parents seeking to harness the potential of social media to enhance language learning while minimizing its negative effects.

**Keywords:** Social media, EFL students, Benin, language learning, academic performance.

## Introduction

The widespread adoption of social media has transformed the way people communicate, access information, and learn. In the context of language teaching /learning, social media platforms offer new opportunities for language practice, cultural exchange, and access to learning resources. The term "social media" refers to an expansive network of websites and applications that, when combined, make it possible for users to quickly interact, communicate, and share information with the general public. In addition, it makes it possible for users to generate new content, share existing content, discuss available content on the Internet, and share photos, events, opinions, and facts. Through it, every single person is linked to every other person. (Hudson 2020.) In Benin, where English is taught as a Foreign Language, social media can potentially play a significant role in enhancing English language learning outcomes among secondary school students.

Despite the potential benefits of social media for language learning, there is a growing concern about its impact on students' academic performance and language learning outcomes. While some studies suggest that social media can enhance language learning, others argue that it can be a distraction and lead to decreased academic performance. This study aims to investigate the impact of social media on EFL students' academic achievement in Beninese secondary schools in general, and specifically in the Mono and Couffo regions.

The research objectives of this study are: a) to explore the impact of social media on EFL students' language learning outcomes. b) to identify the benefits and challenges of social media use for language learning among EFL students. c) to investigate the relationship between social media use and academic performance.

This study is guided by the following research questions: a) How does social media use affect EFL students' language learning outcomes in Beninese secondary schools? b) What are the benefits and challenges of social media use for language learning among EFL students? c) Is there a relationship between social media use and academic performance among EFL students?

This study has the potential to contribute to our understanding of the impact of social media on language learning outcomes among EFL students in Beninese secondary schools. The findings of this study can inform educators, policymakers, and parents about the benefits and challenges of social media use for language learning and provide insights into how to harness the potential of social media to enhance language learning.

However, this study is limited to four selected public secondary schools in the Mono and Couffo regions of Benin, and the findings may not be generalizable to other contexts. Nevertheless, the study's insights can provide valuable lessons for educators and policymakers seeking to improve language learning outcomes among EFL students in similar contexts.



## 1. Methodology of the Study

### *1.1 Research design, participants, instrument for data collection, and validity and reliability of the instrument*

This study makes use of ex-post facto research design. According to B. G. Nworgu, (2015, p.44) “an ex-post facto research design seeks to establish cause-effect relationships between variables”. This study linked some already existing effects or observations to some variables as causative agents of the influences social media has on the academic achievements of senior secondary students. Therefore, this research design is considered appropriate for this study.

The study participants consist of 250 senior secondary students (150 females and 100 males) who were randomly selected from four selected public secondary schools in the Mono and Couffo regions of Benin. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the schools within the urban area where social media platforms are mostly used.

The instrument used for data collection was Social Media Questionnaire (SMQ). It was validated by two university professors of research measurement and evaluation. They have examined the items of the questionnaire to ensure that the items are clear and in line with the objectives of the study, as well as the appropriateness of the language used. Their valuable observations and corrections were used to design the final versions of the instrument which was used for data collection. The instrument was trial tested on five (5) senior secondary two students which were outside the main study area. The internal consistency reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach Alpha method based on the collected data. The field research was carried out during the academic year 2024-2025.

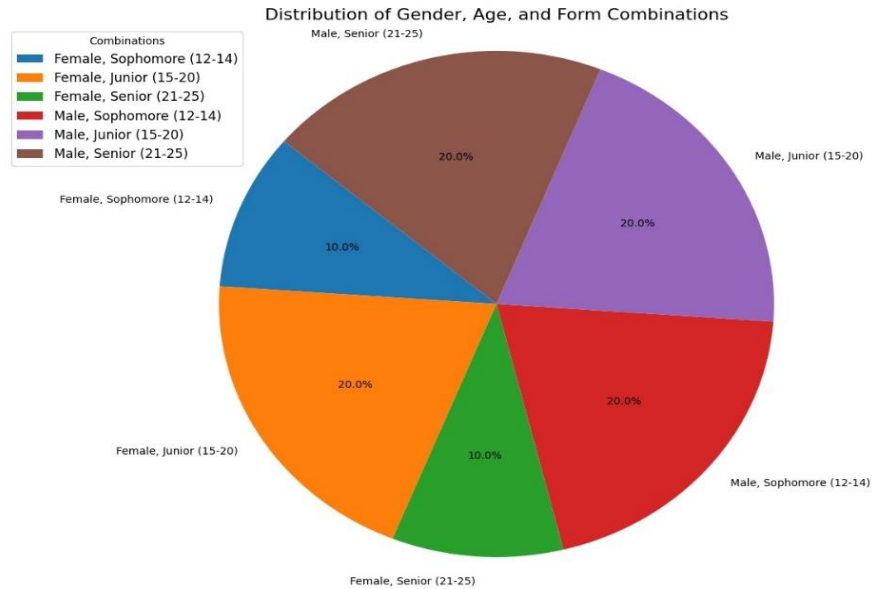
### *1.2 Data Collection Procedures and Method of Data Analysis*

A. Burns (1999 p. 71) stated that there are three principles in the ethical conduct of Action Research: “Negotiation, responsibility and confidentiality”. Therefore, before starting the data collection, we introduced ourselves, requested permission from the school administrators, explained the research objectives to the teachers and students and reassured them that the questionnaire is anonymous. The school administrators allowed us to share the Social Media Questionnaire (SMQ) with the students. 250 SSS have answered the SMQ.

The present study employed a quantitative design using a survey questionnaire to investigate the impact of social media on secondary school students' academic performance in Mono and Couffo, Benin. Both online and physical methods were used for data collection: the online survey was conducted via Google Forms, and physical copies of the questionnaire were distributed during school visits. Tables and figures were designed to present the data and SPSS was used for data analysis.

## 2. Results and Discussion

### 2.1 Results



**Figure 1: Profile of Respondents** (Frequency (N), Percentage (%))

Source: Field work, 2025

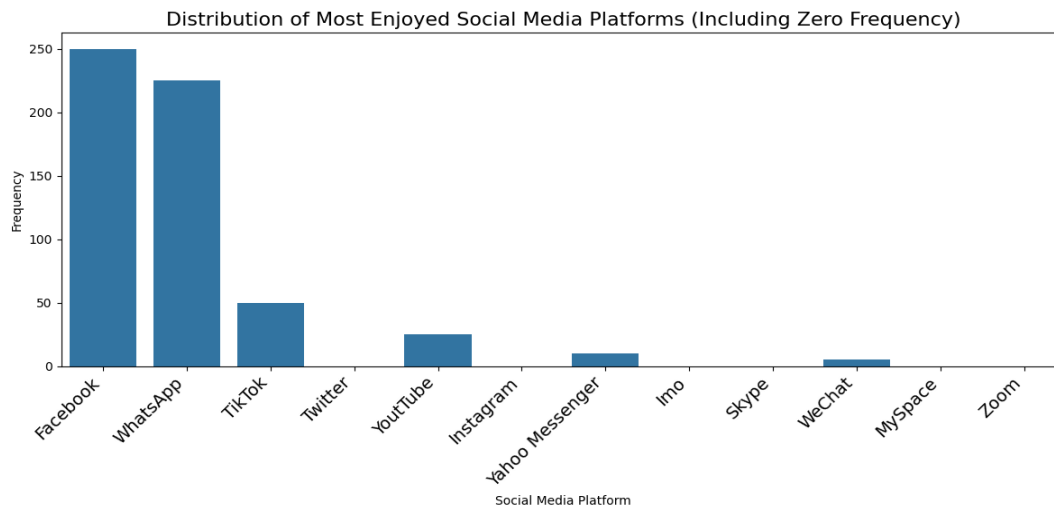
The results in figure 1 show that respondents were fairly balanced across gender and age, but males (60%) outnumber females (40%). The largest groups are male juniors (20%) and male seniors (20%), suggesting that older male students are slightly more represented. Sophomore females are the smallest group (10%). The demographic spread shows that the study involved a diverse age range (15–20 years), capturing perspectives from early teens to young adults. Since males dominate, the results may reflect male experiences and behaviors on social media more strongly than female ones. Age distribution (with more juniors and seniors) implies that most participants are experienced social media users, likely to have been exposed for several years.

**Table I: Awareness of Social Media**

	Do you have mobile phones?	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Q2</b>	Yes	250	100
	No	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Q3</b>	Are you familiar with various forms of social media?		
	Yes	250	100
	No	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Q4</b>	Do you have internet access on your mobile phone?		
	Yes	225	90
	No	25	10
	<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field work, 2025

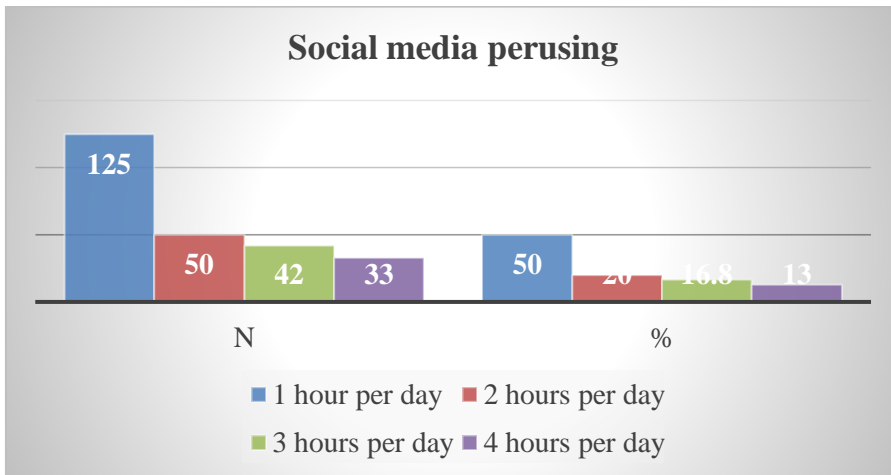
When asked whether they own a mobile phone, the respondents answered in the positive (Table I). 100% of the students own mobile phones and are familiar with social media. 90% have internet access on their phones. Only 10% lack access. This shows that social media exposure is universal among the respondents. The fact that every student owns a phone suggests that mobile technology has become a basic tool for communication and learning. With near-universal internet access, social media use is not a privilege but a mainstream activity, making it a crucial factor in both academic and social life



**Figure 2: Distribution of Most Enjoyed Social Media Platforms**

**Source: Field work, 2025**

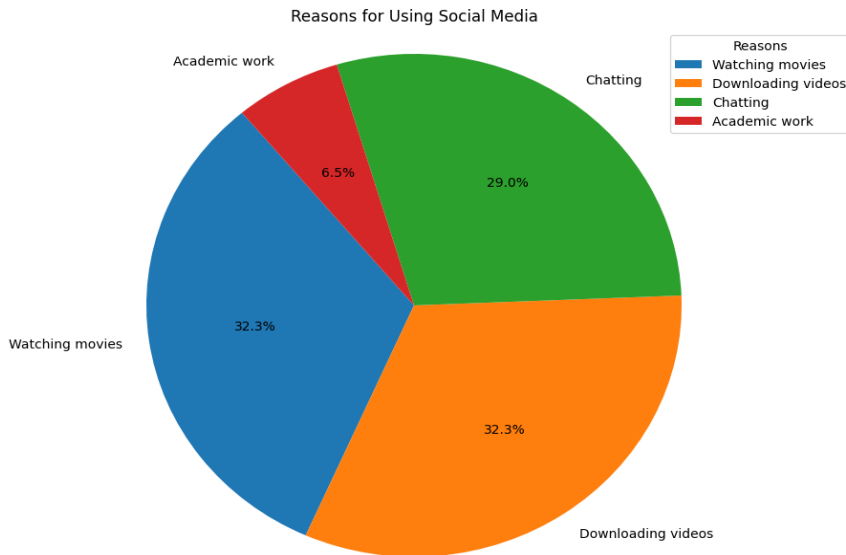
Facebook is the most dominant platform (100%), followed by WhatsApp (90%). TikTok (20%) and YouTube (10%) are less used, while Twitter, Instagram, Skype, Zoom, and MySpace are not used at all. Older platforms like Yahoo Messenger (4%) and WeChat (2%) are marginally present. Facebook and WhatsApp are the primary socializing and communication tools for these students. The very low use of Instagram and Twitter is surprising compared to global trends, which may suggest cultural or regional differences in social media preferences. TikTok's modest popularity (20%) could indicate that it is growing but not dominant in this demographic. Heavy reliance on Facebook may influence how students interact socially and academically, as it often doubles as both a communication and informal learning platform.



**Figure 3: Time Spent Perusing Social Media**

**Source: Field work, 2025**

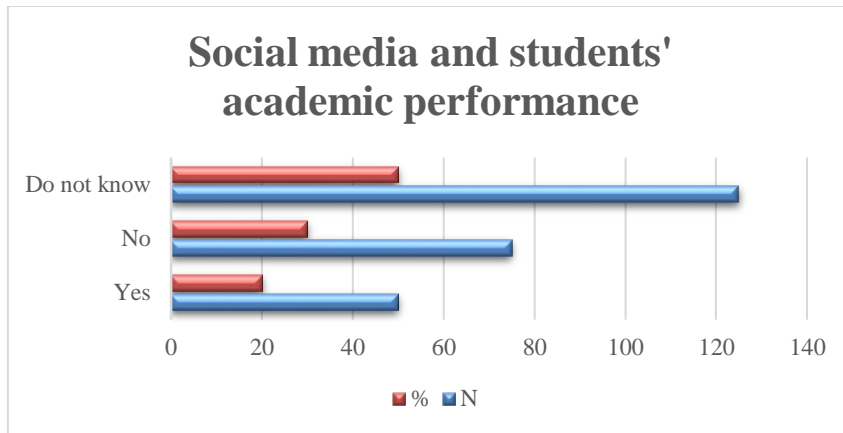
As shown in figure 3, half of respondents (50%) spend one hour per day on social media. 20% spend two hours, 16.8% spend three hours, and 13.2% spend four hours daily. This suggests that while most students use social media moderately, a significant portion (30%) spend three to four hours daily, which is relatively high. Time use patterns may affect academic focus — the heavier users could be more distracted from studies. However, moderate use (1–2 hours) might provide a healthy balance between social interaction and academics.



**Figure 4: Reasons for Using Social Media (Source: Field work, 2025)**

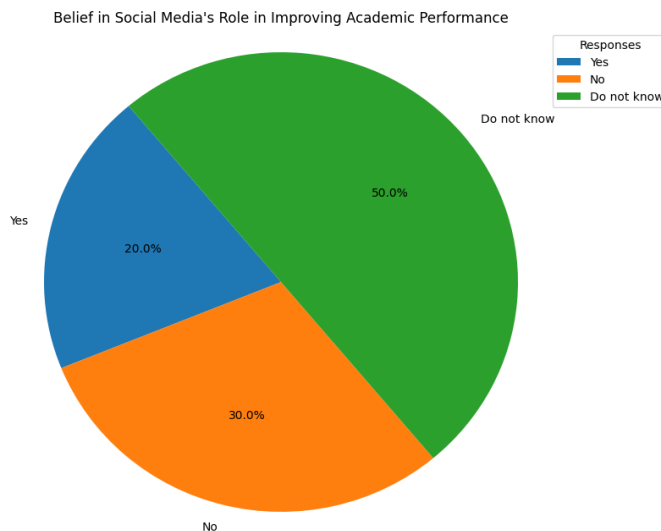
The results in figure 4 show that all respondents (100%) use social media for entertainment purposes (watching movies, downloading videos). 90% use it for chatting, while only 20% use it for academic work. Social media is primarily seen as a source of entertainment and social connection, not as a learning tool. The low academic use (20%)

indicates that students may not fully leverage platforms for educational purposes. This could explain why social media is often perceived as a distraction rather than a resource for studying.



**Figure 5: Social Media and Students' Academic Performance (Source: Field work, 2025)**

The results in figure 5 show that 20% of the respondents believe that social media negatively affects academic performance. 30% say it does not affect them, while 50% are uncertain. The high rate of uncertainty (50%) shows that students are not fully aware of the indirect impacts of social media on their studies. The relatively small group acknowledging negative effects (20%) suggests that most students may underestimate distractions caused by prolonged use. Educators may need to sensitize students about time management and academic focus.



**Figure 6: Belief in Social Media Improving Academic Performance**

**Source: Field work, 2025**

Figure 6 shows that 20% of the participants believe that social media can improve academic performance. 30% disagree, and half (50%) remain uncertain. Students have

mixed attitudes toward the educational value of social media. The high level of uncertainty reflects a lack of structured academic integration of social media in their learning environment. If schools and teachers were to use social platforms for academic engagement (study groups, educational videos, online collaboration), perceptions might shift positively.

The overall analysis across tables and figures shows that social media is universal, accessible, and widely used by students. Entertainment and social interaction dominate usage, while academic purposes remain secondary. Students spend a considerable amount of time online, but many are unaware of its impact on their studies. There is potential to harness social media for learning, but this requires guidance, awareness, and academic strategies from educators.

## 2.2 Discussion

The analysis revealed that "sharing information with classmates on social media" had a statistically significant positive impact on academic performance. This suggests that using social media platforms for educational purposes, such as sharing academic information with peers, can enhance academic outcomes among secondary school students. These findings align with previous research by Iqbal et al. (2023), indicating that students' engagement in social media networking activities results in increased focus on their academic pursuits and greater investment of time and effort in their studies.

Conversely, no statistically significant impacts were found for other variables in the study, such as "academic discussion on social media platforms", "relying solely on social media for assignments", "losing concentration due to social media interruptions", and "time spent on social media takes away from studying". The findings suggest that, while these aspects of social media usage are common among secondary school students, they do not significantly influence academic performance in this context.

This contrasts with studies by Lau (2017) and Chang et al. (2019), which identified significant negative impacts of social media distractions on academic outcomes. The discrepancy might stem from differences in study design, demographic characteristics, or variations in social media usage patterns and time management strategies among different student populations. Specifically, high school students may use social media differently than university students, which could explain the divergent findings.

One possible explanation for these non-significant findings is the variability in individual behaviors and preferences regarding social media usage. While some students may experience distractions or difficulties balancing social media and academic responsibilities, others may have developed effective strategies to manage their time and prioritize their studies. Additionally, the specific nature of the content and interactions on social media platforms may also play a role. For instance, academic discussions on social media may not be as structured or focused as traditional study methods, thus not contributing significantly to academic performance.

Further research is needed to explore these dynamics in greater detail, considering factors such as the type of social media platform, the quality of interactions, and individual differences in self-regulation and time management.



Understanding these nuances can help educators and policymakers develop targeted interventions that maximize the positive impacts of social media on academic performance while mitigating potential drawbacks.

Despite this, the Partial Eta Squared values, ranging from 0.120 to 0.141, suggest moderate to large effects, pointing to potential but non-significant influences of social media. These findings are consistent with existing literature, which highlights the role of social media as a significant distractor from academic responsibilities.

Previous research, such as the study by Akakandelwa and Walubita (2017), supports the notion that social media can displace time that might otherwise be allocated to academic tasks. The reported displacement effect aligns with these studies, indicating that social media usage may replace valuable study time, even if not consistently captured by statistical significance in our analysis.

Moreover, the association between interruptions caused by social media and loss of concentration is consistent with the broader literature on the attention-diverting nature of social networking platforms. The findings align with Akakandelwa and Walubita's (2017) observation that social media can negatively impact academic productivity. Although our study did not find statistically significant effects, the moderate to large effect sizes suggests a meaningful trend that supports existing research. This indicates that social media usage could still have substantial implications for study habits and academic performance, underscoring the need for further investigation into its impact on students' educational experiences.

The study revealed that secondary school students in Benin, perceive moderate benefits from using social media for academic purposes. The participants reported a moderate level of engagement in academic discussions on social media platforms, suggesting the potential of these platforms to extend collaborative learning environments beyond traditional classroom settings. Similarly, the act of sharing information with classmates through social media was perceived as moderately beneficial, indicating that social media serves as a valuable tool for knowledge dissemination and peer support. The participants also demonstrated a moderate inclination to use social media to stay updated with the latest developments in their fields, underscoring the platform's role as a dynamic source of timely and relevant information. These findings align with previous research conducted in India by Singh and Guruprasad (2019), which highlighted social media's potential to connect individuals, facilitate information sharing, and influence human behavior positively or negatively.

Furthermore, participants believed that using social media for class-related research moderately improved their grades and communication skills. These findings are consistent with research conducted in Malaysia by Ainin et al. (2015), which highlighted the value of social media in fostering collaborative learning and information exchange. Similarly, Manca and Ranieri (2016) found that Italian university students perceived social media as beneficial for enhancing communication skills and accessing course materials, emphasizing the importance of digital literacy in maximizing these benefits.

The consistent findings across these studies point to a broader trend: social media, when used effectively, can complement traditional educational methods by providing a platform for enhanced communication, information sharing, and academic engagement.

However, the moderate levels of perceived benefits also highlight the need for targeted strategies to maximize these advantages. Educational institutions and policymakers should leverage these insights to promote responsible social media use and enhance digital literacy among students. Table II below illustrates the positive and negative effects of social media.

**Table II: Effects of Social Media on Both Students and Teachers**

To Students		To Teachers	
Positive Effects	Negative Effects	Positive Effects	Negative Effects
Sharing homework, information, resources or ideas	Failure to meet study targets	Share information and resources with students	Devotes little time to attend to students class related problems
Communicating to teachers	Poor performance (lower grades)	Learn how social networking can be incorporated into teaching	Reduction in face-to-face human contact due to SNS
General group discussion and exchanging ideas	Paying more attention towards SNS than utilizing this time for their studies	Creates student groups to collaborate on projects	Reducing the time of doing research to improve on your profession
Assignment preparation and argument	Missing classes due to SNS	Increases teachers availability to students outside school hours	Affects profession reputation and career
Communication among students and their instructors, following announcements about classes and courses	Reduction in face to face human contact	Enables research through the exchange of different materials	Causes stress and affects your health

Source: Asad, et al., 2012.



## Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, this study has provided valuable insights into the impact of social media on the success of EFL students in Beninese secondary schools. The findings highlight the potential benefits of social media for language learning, including improved language skills, access to language learning resources, and opportunities for interaction with native speakers. However, the study also reveals the potential challenges and distractions associated with social media use, including decreased academic performance and language errors. Overall, this study contributes to our understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of social media's impact on language learning. By understanding the benefits and challenges of social media use, educators, policymakers, and parents can work together to harness the potential of social media to enhance language learning outcomes among EFL students in Benin and similar contexts.

To enhance student engagement and academic performance, educators and policymakers should consider integrating social media into educational strategies. This integration could involve using social media for sharing academic information, facilitating group discussions, and promoting collaborative learning activities.

Additionally, promoting effective time management and self-regulation strategies is crucial to mitigate the potential distractions of social media. Enhancing students' digital literacy will enable them to use social media responsibly and engage in productive academic interactions.

Further research should explore the impact of different social media platforms and the quality of academic interactions on these platforms, providing deeper insights into their long-term effects on academic performance and study habits. Longitudinal studies could help develop comprehensive strategies that leverage the positive impacts of social media while mitigating any negative effects. By implementing these measures, educators and policymakers can maximize the benefits of social media for high school students' academic experiences.

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