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DEDICATION

I dedicate the work to Almighty Allah for his unspeakable love and mercy over my life. And to my parents for their caring and support morally, financially and for their prayers towards me. May Almighty Allah in his infinite mercy continue to increase and bless them (AMEN).

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background of the Study

The digital revolution of the 21st century has transformed communication patterns, especially among young people. Social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have become central to how students interact and express themselves. As stated by Boyd (2022),

Social media serves as a powerful medium that shapes language and communication norms, influencing both written and spoken discourse. This transformation has led to the emergence of a new linguistic culture, where speed and brevity are prioritized, often at the expense of grammatical accuracy and formal writing standards. For students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, the use of social media is a daily reality. According to Oladipo and Adewole (2021), young adults and students in Nigeria spend a significant portion of their time on social media, which has influenced their language use and writing habits. The use of abbreviations and shorthand, such as "btw" (by the way), "u" (you), and "smh" (shaking my head), has become pervasive. These abbreviations, initially developed to overcome character limitations on platforms like Twitter or to increase the speed of typing on mobile devices, have now become part of everyday communication. However, the prevalence of these linguistic shortcuts has sparked concerns among educators and language experts. As stated by Johnson (2023), there is growing evidence that the frequent use of abbreviated language on social media platforms negatively impacts students' academic writing. The casual nature of social media communication can blur the lines between formal and informal writing, leading to a decline in students' ability to produce well-structured and grammatically sound academic work. Similarly, Adu and Ojo (2021) found that students who frequently engage in social media conversations often struggle with spelling, vocabulary, and the construction of coherent sentences in their academic assignments.

This phenomenon is not unique to Kwara State Polytechnic but is a global issue. In their study on social media's impact on writing skills, Ngugi and Mwangi (2021) reported that students who are active on platforms like WhatsApp and Instagram often transfer informal language conventions into academic writing. The study highlighted that the use of abbreviations and emojis in online communication has become so ingrained that students sometimes forget to switch to formal language when required. This trend raises questions about the long-term implications for language education and academic performance.

Moreover, the influence of social media extends beyond mere language use; it affects cognitive processes related to writing. As observed by Greenfield (2021), the constant exposure to fragmented and abbreviated content on social media may reduce students' attention spans and ability to engage in deep, reflective thinking, which is essential for academic writing. This concern is echoed by Adekunle (2022), who argues that the decline in students' writing skills can partly be attributed to the instant gratification and rapid feedback loops created by social media platforms. Despite these concerns, some scholars recognize the potential benefits of social media in enhancing communication skills. For instance, Lopez (2023) suggests that the use of digital platforms encourages creativity and adaptability in language use, as students learn to express themselves in diverse ways. However, the challenge lies in ensuring that students can compartmentalize their informal online language practices from their formal academic writing. In summary, the increasing use of social media among students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, has brought about a shift in language use, particularly the widespread adoption of abbreviations. While social media has undeniably made communication more efficient, it has also introduced linguistic habits that may undermine academic writing skills. The need to understand and address this issue is more pressing than ever, given the central role of writing in academic success and professional communication.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The widespread use of social media has introduced new linguistic norms, including the habitual use of abbreviations and shorthand language. This trend has been observed among students, who may unintentionally incorporate these informal language features into academic work, resulting in writing that lacks clarity, formality, and grammatical accuracy. Teachers at Kwara State Polytechnic have raised concerns about a decline in students' writing quality, with assignments often containing errors influenced by social media language practices.

The problem, therefore, lies in understanding the extent to which social media use affects students' writing skills, specifically through the use of abbreviations. If this issue is not addressed, it could have long-term negative effects on students' academic performance and professional communication abilities. Thus, this study seeks to examine the impact of social media on the writing skills of Kwara State Polytechnic students, focusing on the use of abbreviations.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to explore the impact of social media on the use of abbreviations and overall writing skills among students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. The study seeks to achieve the following specific objectives:

- 1: To investigate the extent to which students at Kwara State Polytechnic use abbreviations influenced by social media in their academic writing.
- 2: To analyze how social media usage affects students' understanding and application of grammar, syntax, and punctuation in formal writing.
- 3: To determine students' awareness of the differences between appropriate language use for social media and the formal language required for academic writing and professional communication.
- 4: To identify strategies that can be implemented by educators and students to mitigate the negative effects of social media language on academic writing, while also leveraging any potential benefits.

1.4 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1: How does social media usage influence the use of abbreviations among students of Kwara State Polytechnic?
- 2: What impact does social media have on students' grammar, vocabulary, and spelling?
- 3: Are students aware of the distinction between formal academic writing and informal social media language?
- 4: What measures can be implemented to reduce the negative effects of social media on students' writing skills?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research is significant for several reasons:

1. Educational Impact: The findings will provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers at Kwara State Polytechnic to address writing challenges linked to social media influence.
2. Student Awareness: It will raise awareness among students about the importance of maintaining formal writing standards and how to balance social media language use.
3. Literature Contribution: The study will contribute to existing literature on the impact of social media on language use, particularly in an academic context, and may inspire further research.

1.6 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. It examines the impact of social media usage on their writing skills, with particular attention to the use of abbreviations.

The study will analyze how social media influences grammar, vocabulary, and spelling, as well as the students' ability to differentiate between formal and informal writing styles.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

This study, while comprehensive, has certain limitations that may affect its generalizability and applicability:

1. Geographical Scope: The research is limited to students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, and does not account for the experiences of students in other institutions or regions, which might have different social media usage patterns and linguistic influences.
2. Sample Size: The study's findings are based on a specific sample size of students, which may not represent the broader student population. This constraint could impact the ability to generalize results to all Nigerian students.
3. Time Constraints: The study was conducted within a fixed academic timeframe, which limited the depth of longitudinal analysis on how social media influences language habits over an extended period.
4. Focus on Abbreviations: While the study emphasizes the impact of social media on abbreviations, other language aspects such as tone, sentence complexity, and critical thinking in writing are outside its scope.
5. Self-Reported Data: Some data relied on self-reported information from students, which could introduce biases, as participants may not accurately recall or report their language practices on social media.
6. Technological Evolution: The dynamic nature of social media platforms and their features means that trends influencing language use may evolve rapidly, potentially making some findings less relevant over time.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

- 1: Social Media: Digital platforms used for communication and information sharing, such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp.
- 2: Abbreviation: A shortened form of a word or phrase commonly used in social media communication.

3: Writing Skills: The ability to write clearly, correctly, and effectively in an academic or formal context.

4: Kwara State Polytechnic: A tertiary institution in Ilorin, Nigeria, where this study is conducted

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study addresses the intersection of social media usage, abbreviations, and students' writing skills, focusing on how informal communication styles, especially abbreviations, impact academic writing. Social media platforms such as Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram are crucial in facilitating shorthand language, where abbreviations are commonplace. The growing influence of these digital communication tools raises questions about their impact on formal writing skills among students. This study, therefore, seeks to explore how social media use, specifically the adoption of abbreviations, affects the academic writing abilities of students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin.

Social media platforms have become integral to students' daily communication, fostering a unique linguistic environment characterized by abbreviations and slang. According to Kauser and Awan (2019), the frequent use of acronyms and informal expressions in online interactions has permeated students' writing practices, potentially affecting their proficiency in Standard English. This linguistic shift raises concerns about the inadvertent incorporation of informal language into academic writing, thereby challenging traditional literacy norms.

The phenomenon of "brain rot," as discussed by The Atlantic (2025), highlights the potential cognitive implications of consuming unchallenging online content, which may manifest in contemporary speech and writing patterns. This trend underscores the need to examine how habitual exposure to informal language on social media platforms can influence students' ability to engage with complex texts and articulate ideas formally.

Another critical aspect of the impact of social media abbreviations on students' writing skills is the shift in cognitive processing of language. Studies have suggested that students who frequently engage in social media communication tend to prioritize speed over accuracy in their writing (Adeyemi & Bello, 2021). This preference for rapid communication often results in neglecting essential writing conventions such as punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure. Over time, the habitual omission of these elements in digital communication may spill over into academic writing, making it challenging for students to differentiate between formal and informal writing contexts. Consequently, the quality of students' written assignments, essays, and reports may

decline, raising concerns among educators and language professionals about the long-term effects of this trend on literacy development.

In addition to grammatical concerns, social media abbreviations have been linked to a reduction in students' vocabulary range. Research by Chukwu and Adekunle (2022) highlights that students who rely heavily on shorthand expressions, emojis, and acronyms in digital communication may struggle with lexical diversity when constructing formal texts. Since social media platforms encourage concise and often simplified language, students may become less exposed to complex sentence structures and academic vocabulary. This limitation can negatively impact their ability to express nuanced arguments and engage critically with academic content. Without intentional efforts to bridge the gap between digital communication and academic literacy, students may face challenges in professional and academic writing, ultimately affecting their overall academic performance.

Empirical studies have demonstrated a correlation between the use of internet slang and a decline in academic writing quality. Research published in the *American Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* (2023) indicates that the prevalence of internet slang in students' writing is associated with decreased literacy skills, including grammar and vocabulary proficiency. This suggests that the normalization of informal language through social media may undermine students' capacity to adhere to academic writing conventions.

Furthermore, the infiltration of social media language into formal writing contexts has been observed globally. For instance, the *Financial Times* (2024) reports a significant decline in literacy skills among adults in various countries, attributing this trend to the consumption of short-form content facilitated by technological advancements. This global perspective reinforces the relevance of investigating the specific impact on students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, to develop targeted educational interventions. In conclusion, the integration of social media abbreviations into students' writing practices presents a multifaceted challenge to academic literacy. Addressing this issue necessitates a comprehensive approach that includes raising awareness among students about the distinctions between informal and formal language registers, incorporating digital literacy into the curriculum, and encouraging critical engagement with online content. By understanding and mitigating the influence of social media language on academic writing, educators can better prepare students to navigate the demands of both digital communication and scholarly discourse.

2.1.1 Social Media as a Linguistic Space

Social media platforms have transformed how young people communicate, often emphasizing brevity and informality, which leads to the widespread use of abbreviations and slang. Research indicates that these platforms, including WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter, are fostering a new language norm where informal language, including abbreviations, is dominant (Akinyemi & Olaniyan, 2022). This has created a parallel form of communication that is deeply ingrained in daily interactions among students. Abbreviations like “lol” (laugh out loud), “omg” (oh my god), and “smh” (shaking my head) are now common, even in academic contexts. While these language shortcuts help with quick communication online, they can influence students to adopt informal language habits in academic writing, potentially compromising clarity and the formal tone expected in assignments (Oladipo, 2021).

Language evolution through social media is not solely about convenience; it also reflects creativity and cultural shifts. Researchers argue that this transformation is reshaping the linguistic identity of younger generations. According to Adewale and Akinyemi (2021), digital platforms are fostering a global linguistic culture while simultaneously encouraging localized expressions and slang, which vary across communities. In Nigeria, abbreviations such as “abi” (right?) and “biko” (please) are often blended with English in online communication, showcasing a unique hybrid of global and local language use. As these digital language practices seep into formal communication, students may struggle to differentiate between the informal language used on social media and the formal structures required for academic work. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of language use on social media and its effects on writing skills is vital for identifying educational strategies that can mitigate the negative impact on students’ academic performance

2.1.2 Abbreviations as a Byproduct of Digital Communication

The prolific use of abbreviations in digital communication stems from the need for quick, efficient exchanges in fast-paced online environments. Platforms like Twitter, which restrict users to short posts, naturally promote brevity, encouraging the use of abbreviations. Studies show that students frequently use shorthand like “brb” (be right back), “idk” (I don’t know), and “bff” (best friends forever) in their daily interactions, often without considering the implications for academic communication (Johnson, 2020).

The pervasiveness of abbreviations is particularly pronounced among students, who are frequent users of social media platforms. While these linguistic adaptations enhance efficiency, they also present challenges in formal writing contexts. Research by Adebola

(2020) found that students often unconsciously incorporate digital abbreviations into academic assignments, resulting in reduced clarity and coherence. For example, terms like “BTW” (by the way) or “ASAP” (as soon as possible) may appear in essays, highlighting the influence of informal digital habits on formal communication practices. The problem arises when these abbreviated forms become second nature to students and inadvertently affect their academic writing. For instance, a student may write “pls” (please) or “u” (you) in an academic paper, reducing the formality and professionalism expected in such work. This can lead to miscommunication and a decrease in the quality of academic writing (Adetola, 2021). Understanding how these digital language habits spill over into academic writing is crucial for designing interventions that encourage students to adopt more formal language in academic contexts.

Despite these challenges, some scholars argue that the use of abbreviations reflects a form of linguistic creativity and adaptability. According to Akinbiyi (2021), young people’s ability to navigate between formal and informal registers showcases their linguistic dexterity. This adaptability underscores the dual role of abbreviations: while they simplify communication, they also necessitate an awareness of appropriate contexts. Thus, promoting digital literacy can help students manage the dichotomy between social media habits and academic expectations.

2.1.3 Writing Skills and Academic Standards

Writing skills are fundamental for academic success. They help students communicate complex ideas clearly and cohesively. Proper grammar, spelling, syntax, and structure are essential for crafting high quality academic papers. However, the increasing influence of informal language on social media is eroding these fundamental skills. Students, who are frequently exposed to the informal language of social media, may find it difficult to switch back to the formal writing style required for academic tasks.

The incorporation of social media conventions, such as abbreviations and slang, into academic writing can compromise the quality of students' work. Adewole (2022) notes that frequent exposure to informal language norms reduces students' attention to detail, resulting in errors in spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. These issues are further compounded by the declining emphasis on formal writing practices in educational settings, where digital communication is often prioritized over traditional literacy skills. Students may struggle with maintaining formal standards, particularly in grammar and vocabulary, when they are accustomed to the informal communication style of social media. This underscores the need for focused educational initiatives that help students

make the distinction between casual and academic writing, ensuring that their communication aligns with academic expectations (Oladipo, 2021).

Nevertheless, educators play a crucial role in mitigating these effects. By integrating writing workshops and grammar tutorials into the curriculum, institutions can help students strengthen their writing capabilities. Research by Egbebi and Musa (2020) suggests that combining traditional teaching methods with digital literacy initiatives can significantly enhance students' ability to differentiate between informal and formal writing styles.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is grounded in three primary theories: Social Learning Theory, Linguistic Relativity Theory, and Diffusion of Innovations Theory. These theories help explain the dynamics between social media, abbreviation use, and the effects on students' writing skills. Social Learning Theory focuses on how students learn language from their social environment. Linguistic Relativity Theory explores how language shapes thought and behavior, and Diffusion of Innovations Theory examines how new linguistic practices, like abbreviations, spread within social groups.

2.2.1 Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura (1977), posits that people learn behaviors and language through observation and imitation of others, particularly those in their social environment. Social media platforms serve as such environments where students are exposed to informal language usage. The language behaviors, including the use of abbreviations, are modeled by peers and influencers online, making them more likely to be adopted by students. According to Miller and Gonzalez (2020), students often mimic language patterns they observe online, using abbreviations like “smh” (shaking my head) or “omg” (oh my god) in their everyday communication.

The theory is particularly relevant to understanding how digital communication habits are transferred into academic writing. As students observe peers and influencers using shorthand on social media, they subconsciously incorporate these practices into their own language use. Over time, these informal language habits can infiltrate academic contexts, diminishing the quality of their written work. Bandura's theory underscores the importance of understanding how external influences, like social media, shape students' linguistic behaviors and stresses the need for interventions that encourage students to use formal language in academic settings (Miller & Gonzalez, 2020).

2.2.2 Linguistic Relativity Theory

Linguistic Relativity Theory, also known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, asserts that language shapes the way individuals perceive and think about the world. This theory is relevant to the study of social media's impact on students' writing because the use of abbreviations and informal language can influence how students think and write. As Adewole (2021) notes, frequent exposure to shorthand language on social media simplifies communication but can limit students' cognitive and linguistic flexibility, especially when writing academically.

By relying heavily on abbreviations, students may not develop the cognitive depth needed for formal writing, which requires clear, precise language to express complex ideas. Linguistic Relativity Theory helps explain why students who frequently use abbreviated language on social media might find it difficult to engage with more sophisticated writing. The language they use on social media shapes their thought processes, limiting their ability to effectively engage with academic writing (Akinyemi & Salami, 2021). The theory suggests that students need to be aware of how language influences their thinking and must be taught to distinguish between informal and formal writing styles.

2.2.3 Diffusion of Innovations Theory

Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory (2003) explains how new ideas, behaviors, and practices spread through social networks. Social media, as a vast communication network, has facilitated the rapid diffusion of abbreviations and informal language. The adoption of abbreviations, such as "tbh" (to be honest) or "brb" (be right back), has become widespread among students, contributing to the normalization of these language features in everyday communication.

Rogers' theory explains how innovations, like abbreviations, are first introduced and then gradually spread through social networks. As students observe their peers using abbreviations in digital communication, they are more likely to adopt these shorthand forms themselves. Over time, the use of abbreviations becomes widespread, influencing not only digital communication but also students' academic writing. Diffusion of Innovations Theory suggests that the spread of abbreviations, once adopted by early users, becomes a cultural norm. However, this widespread adoption can create challenges when these informal practices are transferred into academic writing, where formal language is expected. Educators must act as "opinion leaders" to help students recognize the differences between informal and formal communication (Rogers, 2003).

2.3 Review of Related Studies

This section provides an in-depth analysis of existing studies relevant to the research focus. It examines the influence of social media on language use, the impact of abbreviations on academic writing, and the awareness of formal writing standards among students. The review highlights key findings from previous research and identifies gaps that this study aims to address.

2.3.1 Studies on Social Media's Influence on Language

Social media platforms have fundamentally transformed how language is used and perceived, particularly among younger generations. Research by Akinyemi and Olaniyan (2022) shows that social media has created a new linguistic paradigm characterized by brevity, informality, and creativity. This digital language often incorporates abbreviations, emojis, and memes, fostering a communication style distinct from traditional language use.

Studies reveal that students immersed in social media are prone to adopting the informal language norms of these platforms, such as using abbreviations like “gr8” (great) or “t tyl” (talk to you later), even in contexts where formal language is required. Oladipo (2021) found that these practices often blur the lines between casual and professional communication, leading to a decline in the adherence to grammar and structure in academic writing. Additionally, Johnson (2020) notes that the increased reliance on abbreviations reduces students' exposure to conventional vocabulary, negatively impacting their linguistic development. These findings underscore the need for educational strategies to help students navigate the linguistic challenges posed by social media.

2.3.2 Challenges of Abbreviation Use in Academic Writing

The frequent use of abbreviations on social media has significant implications for academic writing. Abetola (2021) identifies that students often struggle to transition from informal to formal language, inadvertently incorporating abbreviations into their academic work. This habit can lead to poorly structured essays, unclear arguments, and reduced academic credibility. For instance, students might use terms like “pls” (please) or “b4” (before) in assignments, undermining the formal tone expected in academic communication.

Research by Adewale (2020) further highlights the role of social media in diminishing students' grammatical proficiency. The convenience of abbreviations can make students less attentive to details such as punctuation, sentence structure, and spelling. As academic writing demands precision and coherence, the infiltration of informal language norms can significantly affect students' academic performance. These studies emphasize the

importance of reinforcing formal writing conventions through targeted educational interventions.

2.3.3 Awareness of Formal Writing Standards Among Students

Despite their frequent use of social media, many students are aware of the distinction between informal and formal writing. However, bridging this gap remains a challenge. According to Olaniyan (2021), students often lack sufficient training in formal writing practices, making it difficult for them to apply these standards effectively in their academic work. Furthermore, Miller and Gonzalez (2020) argue that the informal habits formed through digital communication can become deeply ingrained, making it harder for students to adhere to formal conventions.

Educators have a pivotal role in helping students navigate these challenges. Programs that emphasize grammar, vocabulary development, and formal writing techniques have been shown to improve students' academic writing skills. For example, Johnson (2020) recommends incorporating digital literacy training into the curriculum to help students understand the differences between informal and formal language use. This approach not only enhances students' writing abilities but also prepares them for professional communication beyond academia.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the methodological framework utilized to investigate the impact of social media on the use of abbreviations and its effect on the writing skills of students at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin. The chapter covers the research design, population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, and data analysis methods. The adoption of a descriptive survey design facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the research problem, offering both quantitative and qualitative insights. This systematic approach ensures that the research objectives and questions are addressed rigorously, providing reliable and valid findings to inform educational and policy-related recommendations.

3.2 Research Design

The study will employ a descriptive survey research design, which is suitable for analyzing current phenomena, particularly the influence of social media on students' writing skills. A descriptive survey design allows for systematic data collection and analysis to describe and interpret the relationship between variables. According to Creswell (2019), descriptive research is ideal for exploring the characteristics of a specific population, making it applicable to this study.

This design focuses on examining the extent to which students' exposure to social media platforms contributes to their use of abbreviations in formal and informal writing contexts. Through structured questionnaires, quantitative data on frequency, types, and contexts of abbreviation usage will be gathered. Qualitative data, collected through open-ended questions, will complement the quantitative findings by capturing individual experiences and perceptions related to social media's influence on writing skills.

The descriptive survey is advantageous because it is cost-effective, time-efficient, and capable of handling large datasets. Moreover, it enables the researcher to identify patterns and relationships between social media usage and its impact on academic writing without manipulating variables. This non-experimental approach ensures the validity of the findings, as they reflect real-world scenarios.

The decision to integrate both quantitative and qualitative data further strengthens the reliability of the study. While quantitative analysis provides measurable trends and patterns, qualitative insights offer depth and contextual understanding, bridging gaps in numerical data. Ultimately, the descriptive survey design aligns with the study's objectives of investigating and analyzing the nuanced effects of social media on writing

skills among students of Kwara State Polytechnic.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population for this research will include all students enrolled at Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, across both National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) programs during the 2023/2024 academic session. The institution comprises diverse departments such as Engineering, Science and Laboratory Technology, Business and Management Studies, Environmental Studies, and Communication and Information Technology. This diversity ensures that the research captures a wide range of perspectives on social media usage and its effects on writing.

The total student population is estimated to be a large number of students, including those in full-time, part-time, and weekend programs. This large population will ensure the generalizability of findings to other similar academic settings. Students will be targeted because they are active users of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok, which are known to influence communication styles.

This population will be highly relevant to the research as it will represent varying degrees of academic writing exposure and social media usage, providing insights into how different levels of digital engagement impact writing skills. Additionally, students' writing submissions, ranging from essays to research projects, will offer a basis for evaluating the practical implications of social media on academic writing.

The choice of Kwara State Polytechnic as the research setting will be significant, as it will reflect the broader linguistic and technological trends in tertiary institutions across Nigeria. This relevance will underline the importance of addressing the identified problem at both local and national levels, making the findings applicable for educational reforms.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A representative sample of 100 students was selected from the total population using a stratified random sampling technique. Stratified sampling ensures that each faculty and department within Kwara State Polytechnic is adequately represented, reflecting the diversity in academic disciplines and social media usage patterns. According to Etikan and Bala (2017), stratified sampling enhances the reliability of data by ensuring proportional representation across key demographic and academic groups.

The sample was divided into strata based on faculty, level of study (ND or HND), and gender. From each stratum, participants were randomly selected to eliminate bias. This approach was chosen to capture varying levels of social media exposure and academic writing experiences across the student population. The final sample size of 100 was

determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for sample size determination. This sample size is adequate to yield statistically significant results while remaining manageable for data collection and analysis. By ensuring representation from all faculties and departments, the findings are expected to be robust and reflective of the larger student body.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The primary data collection instrument for this study will be a structured questionnaire designed to elicit both quantitative and qualitative information. The questionnaire is divided into three sections:

Section A: Demographic information, including age, gender, faculty, and level of study.

Section B: Social media usage patterns, focusing on platforms, frequency, and purpose of use.

Section C: Academic writing practices, with specific attention to the use of abbreviations, grammar, and spelling accuracy.

The questionnaire will include both closed-ended questions for quantitative analysis and open-ended questions to capture qualitative insights. The combination of these question types provides a comprehensive understanding of the research problem, bridging the gap between numerical trends and personal experiences.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

The instrument to be used in the study will be shown to an expert(supervisor) to examine whether the questions were clear and whether such questions were sufficient to provide answers to the research questions.

The assessment and comments of the expert will be used to standardize the questionnaire before being administered to the respondents.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected through the questionnaires will be analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data will be entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics, including mean, frequency, and percentage distribution, will provide an overview of social media usage patterns and writing skill trends. Inferential statistics, such as correlation and regression analysis, will test the relationship between social media usage and writing proficiency.

Qualitative data from open-ended responses will be analyzed using thematic analysis. This involves identifying recurring themes, such as students' perceptions of social media's impact on their writing. This dual approach ensures a balanced analysis, combining numerical evidence with contextual depth.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION & ANALYSIS

4.0 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the most crucial part of any research. Data analysis summarizes collected data. It is a process used by researchers in reducing data to a story and interpreting it to derive insights. In this chapter, data are organised into tables so that statically and logical conclusions can be obtained from the collected data and merit will be discussed. In this research work, the simple percentage tabular presentation in presenting the primary data generated from the field was used. Doing this would enable easy, convenient, clarity and vetted comprehension. The researcher presents all the questionnaire items that would provide answers to the researcher's identified problem and all presentation and analysis shall be in conformity with questionnaire items and responses.

4.1 Analysis of Research Instrument

Data presentation is defined as the process of using various graphical formats to visually represent the relationship between two or more data sets so that an informed decision can be made based on them. It also refers to the organization and presentation of data into tables, graphs, charts, etc. However, the organization and presentation of data shall be according to questionnaire items and responses, in the (20) twenty questionnaire items developed from the three framed researchers' questions, the researcher aimed at using them to provide an answer to his topic problem.

A total of hundred(100) copies of the questionnaire were produced and distributed to the researcher sample populace. All presentations are done in simple percentage tabular mode, while a simple descriptive analysis technique was used to describe what items were contained in the tables.

Table 4.1.1

Distribution of respondents by gender

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Female	61	61%
Male	39	39%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 61% of the respondents are Female, 39% of the respondents are male

Table 4.1.2

Distribution of respondents by marital status

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Married	10	10%
Single	86	86%
Others	4	4%
Total	100	100%

GOOGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 10% of the respondents are married, 86% of the respondents are single, and 4% of the respondents are others.

Table 4.1.3

Distribution of respondents by age

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
18- 25	65	65%
26- 35	28	28%
36- 45	5	5%
46 and above	2	2%
Total	100	100%

GOOGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 65% of the respondents are between the ages of 18-25, 28% of the respondents are between the ages of 26- 35, 5% of the respondents are between the ages of 36- 45 and 2% of the respondents are between the ages of 46 and above.

Table 4.1.4

Distribution of respondents by religion

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Muslim	74	74%
Christian	26	26%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The above table shows that 74% of the respondents are Muslim, 26% of the respondents are Christian.

Table 4.1.5

Distribution of respondents by department

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Mass communication	69	69%
Engineering	17	17%
Science and Laboratory technology	9	9%
Others	5	5%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 69% of the respondents are from the mass communication department, 17% of the respondents are from the engineering department, 9% of the respondents are from the science and laboratory technology department, and 5% of the respondents are others.

Table 4.1.6

Distribution of respondents by level of study

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
ND	33	33%
HND	61	61%
Others	6	6%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 33% of the respondents are ND students, 61% of the respondents are HND students, 6% of the respondents are Others.

Table 4.1.7

Which social media platform do you use most frequently?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
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Whatsapp	26	26%
Twitter	17	17%
Instagram	15	15%
Facebook	7	7%
Tiktok	32	32%
Others	3	3%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 26% of the respondents use whatsapp most often, 17% of the respondents use twitter most often, 15% of the respondents use Instagram most often, 7% of the respondents use facebook most often, 32% of the respondents use tiktok most often, and 3% uses others most often.

Table 4.1.8

How often do you use social media daily?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Less than an hour	11	11%
1-3 hours	23	23%
4-6 hours	25	25%
More than 6 hours	41	41%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 11% of the respondents use social media for less than an hour daily, 23% use 1-3 hours daily, 25% use 4-6 hours daily, 41% use more than 6% daily.

Table 4.1.9

What is the primary purpose of your social media usage?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Academic purpose	26	26%
Entertainment	37	37%

Social networking	15	15%
Business/ Marketing	18	18%
Others	4	4%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 26% of the respondents use social media for academic purposes, 37% of the respondents use for entertainment purposes, 15% of the respondents use social networking, 18% use for business/ marketing and 4% use for others.

Table 4.1.10

Do you frequently use abbreviations while chatting on social media?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	95	95%
No	5	5%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 95% of the respondents use abbreviations while chatting on social media, and 5% do not use abbreviations while chatting on social media.

Table 4.1.11

If yes, which type of abbreviations do you use most?

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Common internet slangs (e.g., LOL,OMG)	29	29%
Shortened words (e.g., U for You, 2 forTo)	13	13%
Combination of both	56	56%
I do not use abbreviations	2	2%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 29% of the respondents use Common internet slangs (e.g., LOL,OMG), 13% of the respondents use Shortened words (e.g., U for You, 2 forTo) mostly, 56%

of the respondents uses Combination of both, and 2% do not use abbreviations.

Table 4.1.12

The frequent use of abbreviations on social media has negatively affected my academic writing skills

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agreed	47	47%
Agreed	28	28%
Neutral	10	10%
Disagree	14	14%
Strongly disagree	1	1%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 47% of the respondents strongly agreed, 28% of the respondents chose agreed, 10% of the respondents chose neutral, 14% of the respondents chose to disagree and 1% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 4.1.13

I often use abbreviations in formal writing due to social media influence

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agreed	50	50%
Agreed	29	29%
Neutral	6	6%
Disagree	13	13%
Strongly disagree	2	2%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 50% of the respondents strongly agreed, 29% of the respondents chose agreed, 6% of the respondents chose neutral, 13% of the respondents chose to disagree and 2% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 4.1.14

Social media platforms encourage the use of informal language, making it difficult to maintain proper grammar in academic work.

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agreed	50	50%
Agreed	28	28%
Neutral	4	4%
Disagree	17	17%
Strongly disagree	1	1%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 50% of the respondents strongly agreed, 28% of the respondents chose agreed, 4% of the respondents chose neutral, 17% of the respondents chose to disagree and 1% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 4.1.15

The use of shorthand and abbreviations on social media has reduced my ability to spell words correctly in academic writing

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agreed	43	43%
Agreed	33	33%
Neutral	7	7%
Disagree	13	13%
Strongly disagree	4	4%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 43% of the respondents strongly agreed, 33% of the respondents chose agreed, 7% of the respondents chose neutral, 13% of the respondents chose to disagree and 4% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 4.1.16

Exposure to social media has enhanced my ability to communicate effectively, despite the use of abbreviations

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agreed	43	43%
Agreed	34	34%
Neutral	9	9%
Disagree	13	13%
Strongly disagree	1	1%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 43% of the respondents strongly agreed, 34% of the respondents chose agreed, 9% of the respondents chose neutral, 13% of the respondents chose to disagree and 1% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 4.1.17

I sometimes struggle to differentiate between formal and informal writing due to my social media habits

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agreed	45	45%
Agreed	30	30%
Neutral	13	13%
Disagree	10	10%
Strongly disagree	2	2%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 45% of the respondents strongly agreed, 30% of the respondents chose agreed, 13% of the respondents chose neutral, 10% of the respondents chose to disagree and 2% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 4.1.18

Social media has had more positive effects than negative on my writing skills

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agreed	43	43%

Agreed	31	31%
Neutral	10	10%
Disagree	13	13%
Strongly disagree	3	3%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 43% of the respondents strongly agreed, 31% of the respondents chose agreed, 10% of the respondents chose neutral, 13% of the respondents chose to disagree and 3% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 4.1.19

Academic institutions should introduce measures to limit the influence of social media abbreviations on students' writing

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agreed	44	44%
Agreed	33	33%
Neutral	11	11%
Disagree	10	10%
Strongly disagree	2	2%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 44% of the respondents strongly agreed, 33% of the respondents chose agreed, 11% of the respondents chose neutral, 10% of the respondents chose to disagree and 2% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Table 4.1.20

I actively make efforts to avoid using social media abbreviations in my academic writing.

Respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agreed	48	48%
Agreed	29	29%
Neutral	5	5%

Disagree	16	16%
Strongly disagree	2	2%
Total	100	100%

GOGGLE FORM SURVEY, 2025

The table above shows that 48% of the respondents strongly agreed, 29% of the respondents chose agreed, 5% of the respondents chose neutral, 16% of the respondents chose to disagree and 2% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Findings from the above research questions tested with survey methods gained empirical support. The research questions support the **“IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON THE USE OF ABBREVIATION ON WRITING SKILLS AMONG STUDENTS OF KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC ILORIN”**

Research Question 1: How does social media usage influence the use of abbreviations among students of Kwara State Polytechnic?

The data in Table 4.1.10 shows that 95% of the respondents confirmed they frequently use abbreviations while chatting on social media. Table 4.1.11 further reveals that 56% use a combination of common internet slang and shortened words, while 29% use only internet slang and 13% use shortened words like "u" for "you". This indicates that the majority of students are heavily influenced by social media in their communication patterns. The dominant usage of abbreviations across platforms like TikTok (32%) and WhatsApp (26%) further reinforces the trend of abbreviation adoption linked to their high daily usage rates (Table 4.1.7 & 4.1.8).

Research Question 2: What impact does social media have on students' grammar, vocabulary, and spelling?

As shown in Table 4.1.12, 47% of the respondents strongly agreed and 28% agreed that frequent use of abbreviations on social media has negatively affected their academic writing. Similarly, Table 4.1.13 shows that 50% strongly agreed and 29% agreed that they often use abbreviations in formal writing due to social media influence. In Table 4.1.14, 78% agreed that social media encourages informal language, making it harder to maintain proper grammar. Table 4.1.15 reveals that 43% strongly agreed and 33% agreed that their ability to spell correctly has been reduced. However, 77% of respondents in Table 4.1.16 still felt that social media exposure enhances communication. This suggests a mixed impact: while social media encourages informal grammar habits, it also fosters digital fluency and quick expression.

Research Question 3: Are students aware of the distinction between formal academic writing and informal social media language?

Table 4.1.17 shows that 45% of the respondents strongly agreed and 30% agreed that they struggle to differentiate between formal and informal writing. Yet in Table 4.1.20, 48% strongly agreed and 29% agreed that they make conscious efforts to avoid using abbreviations in academic writing. Table 4.1.19 also supports this, where 44% strongly agreed and 33% agreed that academic institutions should introduce measures to limit the influence of social media abbreviations. These findings indicate that while many students are aware of the distinction, a notable percentage still struggle to fully apply it.

Research Question 4: What measures can be implemented to reduce the negative effects of social media on students' writing skills?

This is clearly shown in table 4.1.19. From the data gathered, in table 4.1.19, 44% of respondents strongly agreed that academic institutions should introduce measures to limit the influence of social media abbreviations on students' writing, 33% agreed, 11% chose to be neutral, 10% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed.

This shows that there is an overwhelming agreement (above 70%) that academic institutions can help in reducing the negative effects of social media on students' writing skills.

4.3 DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

This section discusses the key findings of the study, as presented in the data analysis, and how they relate to the objectives of the research. The discussion provides a contextual interpretation of the results and compares them with previous research and theoretical expectations.

The demographic data (Tables 4.1.1 – 4.1.6) shows that the majority of respondents were female (61%), single (86%), and aged between 18–25 years (65%). Most were students, with 61% in HND and 69% from the Mass Communication department. This indicates that the sample group was largely composed of young, educated individuals who are likely to be active social media users, making them a suitable audience for evaluating the influence of digital language behavior. This aligns with prior studies (e.g., Okoro & John, 2021) that found youth to be the dominant demographic engaging with language trends on social platforms.

In terms of platform usage, Table 4.1.7 revealed that TikTok (32%), WhatsApp (26%), and Twitter (17%) were the most frequently used platforms among students. Additionally, Table 4.1.8 shows that 41% of respondents use social media for more than 6 hours daily, further validating that students spend a considerable amount of time online, thus increasing their exposure to informal communication patterns like abbreviations and slangs.

Tables 4.1.10 and 4.1.11 indicate that 95% of the respondents use abbreviations, and 56% use a combination of both slangs and shortened words such as “LOL”, “OMG”, and “U” for “You”. This strongly supports the first research question, confirming that high social media usage does influence abbreviation use among students. This aligns with the Uses and Gratification Theory,

which suggests that users shape their communication style based on the medium and their purpose of use.

Tables 4.1.12 – 4.1.15 reflect the impact of social media on students' academic writing. In Table 4.1.12, 75% of respondents agree that social media has negatively affected their academic writing skills. Similarly, in Table 4.1.13, 79% of respondents admit to using abbreviations in formal writing due to social media influence. Additionally, 76% of respondents (Table 4.1.15) believe shorthand has affected their spelling ability. These findings show a clear correlation between prolonged exposure to informal digital language and declining adherence to formal writing conventions—supporting the argument in Research Question 2.

However, Table 4.1.16 adds nuance, showing that 77% believe social media has improved their communication skills overall, suggesting that while grammar and spelling may suffer, general digital communication fluency is enhanced. This supports existing literature that acknowledges both the positive and negative linguistic effects of digital media.

In Table 4.1.17, 75% of respondents admitted struggling to differentiate between formal and informal writing due to social media habits. Yet in Table 4.1.20, 77% actively avoid using abbreviations in academic work, and in Table 4.1.19, 77% believe academic institutions should intervene. This suggests a general awareness of the difference between formal and informal language, even though full mastery is not yet achieved. These responses support the Agenda Setting Theory, as media behavior seems to shape not only writing styles but also institutional expectations and the students' own corrective awareness.

In summary, the findings confirm that social media use significantly influences language behavior, especially in abbreviation usage, spelling accuracy, and formal writing awareness. While many students are aware of the risks and try to regulate themselves, the high exposure to informal content continues to blur the lines between social and academic communication. The study validates the relevance of digital media influence on language and calls for practical steps by educational institutions to reinforce proper writing standards.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This research project titled “Impact of Social Media on the Use of Abbreviation on Writing Skills Among Students of Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin” was structured into five systematic chapters, each contributing to the understanding and investigation of how social media has impact on the use of abbreviations on writing skills among students of kwara state polytechnic, Ilorin.

Chapter One provided a comprehensive introduction to the study. It highlighted the growing reliance on social media among students and its influence on communication patterns, particularly the rise of abbreviations. The chapter discussed the background of the study, formulated the research problem, outlined objectives, and posed questions aimed at exploring how social media-driven abbreviations affect writing proficiency among polytechnic students.

Chapter Two reviewed related literature and presented the conceptual and theoretical frameworks. It explored how platforms like WhatsApp, Twitter, and TikTok promote informal communication styles and how these linguistic habits filter into academic writing. The chapter was grounded in three theories:

Social Learning Theory – explaining how students imitate language patterns from online environments;

Linguistic Relativity Theory – examining how language shapes thought, and

Diffusion of Innovations Theory – describing how abbreviations spread within student social networks.

Chapter Three described the methodology adopted. A descriptive survey design was used to gather data from 100 randomly selected ND and HND students across departments. Data collection was done via structured Google Forms questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, capturing both qualitative and quantitative responses.

Chapter Four presented and analyzed the data. The findings showed that a majority of respondents use social media heavily and frequently rely on abbreviations during digital communication. Many respondents admitted that these habits influence their academic writing, with evidence of weakened grammar, vocabulary, and spelling proficiency. However, a notable proportion also expressed awareness of the difference between formal and informal writing, and some indicated efforts to avoid using abbreviations in academic work.

Chapter Five offers the conclusion drawn from the findings and recommendations for curbing the negative influence of social media abbreviations on students' academic writing skills.

5.2 Conclusion

The research revealed a clear relationship between social media usage and the increasing use of abbreviations among students, which negatively affects their academic writing quality. Many students are exposed to digital platforms that promote informal language, and this often results in the unconscious integration of shorthand and slang into formal writing.

While social media offers benefits such as enhanced digital literacy and rapid communication, it also challenges traditional writing norms. The inability of some students to differentiate between informal online communication and academic standards has contributed to a decline in grammar accuracy, vocabulary depth, and spelling proficiency.

Nevertheless, the study also found that many students are aware of this influence and are making conscious efforts to correct it. Educational institutions thus have a critical role in providing structured writing support to help bridge the gap between informal digital communication and formal academic writing expectations.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Curriculum Development:** Institutions should incorporate digital literacy and formal writing courses into the curriculum to help students consciously differentiate between informal and formal communication styles.
2. **Writing Clinics and Workshops:** Regular academic writing workshops and grammar clinics should be organized to strengthen students' formal writing abilities and correct poor writing habits influenced by social media.
3. **Educator Involvement:** Lecturers should emphasize the importance of formal writing in assignments and give feedback highlighting the use of inappropriate abbreviations or informal expressions.
4. **Awareness Campaigns:** Awareness programs should be held to sensitize students on the long-term consequences of excessive abbreviation use on academic and professional communication.
5. **Balanced Media Use:** Students should be encouraged to balance their social media time with reading formal academic materials to enrich their vocabulary and exposure to proper sentence structures.

6.Strict Guidelines for Academic Submissions: Academic departments should enforce strict policies against the use of abbreviations and informal language in academic submissions, with penalties for violations to discourage poor writing habits.

7.Integration of Technology Tools: Institutions can provide access to grammar correction tools such as Grammarly or Microsoft Editor to help students detect and correct informal expressions before submission.

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