KWARA STATE POLYTECHNIC, ILORIN

USES OF MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG RESIDENTS OF ILORIN.

BY

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BEING A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASSCOMMUNICATION,
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CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certified that this project report titled: "**USES OF MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG RESIDENTS OF ILORIN**" meets the requirement of Department of Mass communication for the award of National Diploma in Mass communication.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to Almighty God, whose grace and guidance made the successful completion of this work possible. It is also dedicated to my beloved parents and family for their unwavering love, encouragement, and prayers throughout the course of my study. Finally, I dedicate this work to all undergraduate students of Kwara State Polytechnic, whose experiences and realities inspired the focus of this research.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how residents of Ilorin use mental health information encountered on social media and the implications for awareness, stigma reduction, and help-seeking. A descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted among adult residents across the three local government areas of Ilorin using multistage sampling and a structured questionnaire. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics and chi-square tests to explore associations between demographics and use patterns.

Findings indicate high exposure to mental health content on WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok, with health influencers, NGOs, and government health pages as common sources. Participants primarily used social media to learn symptoms and coping strategies, locate counseling services, and support friends experiencing distress. Perceived credibility was moderate, driven by source transparency, consistency with offline advice, and the presence of references. Reported benefits included improved mental health literacy, greater willingness to seek professional help, and reduced self-stigma. Key barriers were misinformation, sensational content, limited data affordability, and privacy concerns around publicly engaging with sensitive topics. Age, education, and prior contact with mental health services were significantly associated with active use behaviors (e.g., saving posts, sharing helplines, joining support groups).

The study concludes that social media is a critical, though uneven, channel for disseminating credible mental health information in Ilorin. Strengthening partnerships among mental health professionals, local influencers, and public health agencies; promoting fact-checked, culturally sensitive content; and improving digital health literacy can enhance benefits while minimizing harm.

Keywords: Social media, mental health literacy, misinformation, stigma, help-seeking, Ilorin, Nigeria.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0   Introduction

In the digital age, social media has become an integral part of daily life, serving as a primary source of information, interaction, and self-expression. Among the various topics shared and discussed online, mental health has gained increasing visibility. Individuals, organizations, and health professionals use platforms like Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, and TikTok to

disseminate information about mental well-being, coping mechanisms, symptoms of disorders, and available support services. This trend has shaped how people perceive, understand, and manage mental health issues, particularly in urban and semi-urban communities.

In Ilorin, the capital of Kwara State in Nigeria, residents are increasingly exposed to mental health content on social media. The city's diverse population includes students, civil servants, entrepreneurs, and others who engage with digital platforms daily. The role of social media in shaping mental health awareness, attitudes, and practices in Ilorin presents a fertile ground for academic inquiry. This study, therefore, explores how residents of Ilorin access, interpret, and utilize mental health information found on social media platforms.

1.1 Background to the Study

Mental health has long been a stigmatized and overlooked topic in many societies, including Nigeria. Cultural misconceptions, religious beliefs, and limited access to professional care have contributed to widespread ignorance and neglect of mental health issues. However, the advent of the internet, particularly social media, has brought mental health conversations to the forefront. Through user-generated content, testimonials, expert advice, and awareness campaigns, social media serves as a vehicle for promoting mental wellness and reducing stigma.

In Nigeria, where mental health services are scarce and often underfunded, the importance of accessible information cannot be overstated. Social media may offer an alternative avenue for mental health literacy, enabling users to learn about conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, and stress management. However, while the benefits are clear, there are concerns about misinformation, self-diagnosis, and the reliability of online sources.

This study focuses on Ilorin to understand how residents engage with mental health information on social media—what platforms they use, what type of content they consume, and how it affects their attitudes or behaviors regarding mental well-being.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing presence of mental health information on social media, its actual impact on individuals' understanding and behavior remains unclear, particularly in contexts like Ilorin where digital literacy and mental health awareness vary widely. While some residents may benefit from increased awareness, others may encounter misleading content that causes harm or reinforces stereotypes.

Moreover, limited empirical data exist on how residents of Ilorin perceive, trust, and apply mental health content from social media. There is a need to investigate whether such exposure promotes healthier coping strategies or leads to confusion, misinformation, or inaction. This study, therefore, seeks to bridge the gap in knowledge by assessing the uses and perceived impact of mental health information on social media among Ilorin residents.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine the uses of mental health information on social media among residents of Ilorin.

The specific objectives are to:

- Identify the types of mental health information accessed by residents on social media.
- Determine the level of engagement with mental health content on various platforms.
- Assess the perceived reliability and usefulness of such information.
- Evaluate how exposure to mental health content affects attitudes and behaviors toward mental health.
- Investigate challenges encountered by users when accessing mental health information on social media.

1.4   Research Questions

- What types of mental health information do Ilorin residents access on social media?
- Which social media platforms are most commonly used for mental health-related content?
- How do residents perceive the reliability and usefulness of mental health information found online?
- In what ways has exposure to mental health content on social media influenced their awareness and behavior?
- What challenges do residents face in finding or trusting mental health information on social media?

1.5   Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes to the growing body of research on digital health communication in Nigeria. By focusing on Ilorin, the research provides localized insights that can inform public health initiatives and digital literacy programs. It also helps health professionals and advocacy groups understand how to better design and deliver online mental health campaigns.

Additionally, the findings can help social media users make more informed decisions about the sources and content they trust, thereby promoting safer and more productive engagement with mental health resources online.

1.6   Scope of the Study

The study is limited to residents of Ilorin, Kwara State. It focuses on the use of social media platforms—such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), TikTok, and WhatsApp—for accessing and engaging with mental health information. It does not include traditional media like radio or TV. The research also centers primarily on perceptions, awareness, and usage patterns, rather than clinical outcomes or diagnoses.

1.7   Definition of Terms

Mental Health: A state of well-being in which individuals realize their potential, can cope with normal stresses, work productively, and contribute to their community.

Social Media: Online platforms that allow users to create, share, or exchange information, such as Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, and TikTok.

Mental Health Information: Content related to psychological well-being, mental illnesses, therapy, self-care, and support systems.

Residents of Ilorin: People who live or work within the geographical boundaries of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

Engagement: The degree of interaction a user has with online content, including likes, comments, shares, and time spent viewing.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to critically examine existing literature relevant to the topic: "Uses of Mental Health Information on Social Media Among Residents of Ilorin." In recent times, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (now X), Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp have increasingly become popular sources of health information, including mental health awareness and support.

The increasing global awareness of mental health issues has prompted researchers and health professionals to explore various platforms for information dissemination, especially social media. This chapter explores the conceptual framework, theoretical underpinnings, empirical studies, and key issues surrounding the use of mental health information on social media, with a focus on how it affects the residents of Ilorin.

2.1   Conceptual Review

2.1.1   Concept of Mental Health

Mental health, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes their potential, can cope with normal life stresses, work productively, and contribute to their community. It encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being and affects how people think, feel, and behave.

Mental health refers to a state of well-being in which individuals recognize their abilities, cope with normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to their communities. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as more than just the absence of mental disorders but a state of complete mental and social well-being.

In the Nigerian context, mental health is often misunderstood and stigmatized. Many people associate mental illness only with extreme psychiatric disorders, ignoring common conditions like depression, anxiety, and stress. In Ilorin, for example, it is not uncommon to hear mental illness described in spiritual or traditional terms, with sufferers frequently referred to traditional healers

before seeking medical help.

2.1.2 Social Media and its Role in Health Information Dissemination

Social media platforms serve as virtual communities that enable information sharing, interaction, and engagement. In health communication, social media is now a dominant force, allowing public health institutions, NGOs, health professionals, and even individuals to share health-related content rapidly and directly with vast audiences.

Platforms like Twitter and Facebook are frequently used by mental health advocates, psychologists, and institutions to promote awareness campaigns, share motivational content, and provide information on symptoms and treatments of mental illnesses. In Nigeria, organizations such as Mentally Aware Nigeria Initiative (MANI) leverage Instagram and Twitter to educate the public and combat stigma.

2.1.3 Mental Health Information

Mental health information includes content relating to mental disorders, coping strategies, mental wellness tips, therapy options, and awareness campaigns. These can be shared via multiple formats such as texts, videos, podcasts, info graphics, and testimonials.

2.1.4 Mental Health Information on Social Media

Mental health information on social media comes in various forms, including info graphics, videos, live chats, tweets, blog posts, and personal testimonies. Many Nigerians, especially young people in urban centers like Ilorin, rely on platforms like TikTok and Instagram for accessible and relatable information.

However, there is a growing concern about the quality and credibility of such information. While some of it comes from verified professionals, a significant portion is user-generated and may not be scientifically accurate. This raises questions about misinformation, misdiagnosis, and unhealthy self-medication habits.

2.1.5 Social Media

Social media are interactive digital platforms that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, interests, and other forms of expression. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and TikTok serve as major sources of health-related content for users.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Health Belief Model (HBM)

The HBM focuses on individuals' perceptions of the threat posed by a health issue and the benefits of avoiding the threat. It explains how people use online mental health content based on perceived susceptibility, severity, and self-efficacy.

The Health Belief Model posits that individuals are more likely to take health-related action if they perceive a threat to their health and believe that taking specific action would reduce that threat. This theory is useful in understanding how social media users react to mental health content. For instance, a Facebook post on the signs of depression may lead a user in Ilorin to assess their symptoms and decide to seek help if they believe they are at risk.

2.2.2 Uses and Gratification Theory

This theory explains how individuals actively seek out specific media to satisfy particular needs.

In the context of mental health, people may use social media to obtain information, gain emotional support, or share experiences.

This theory explains how people actively choose media that fulfill specific needs, such as information, personal identity, integration, or entertainment. Residents of Ilorin may engage with mental health posts on Instagram or YouTube for different purposes—some for education, others for support or entertainment. The theory helps explain the personalized nature of social media usage and its impact on health behavior.

2.2.3 Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

SCT explains how people learn by observing others within the context of social interactions, media, and experiences. For example, individuals in Ilorin may imitate mental wellness habits shared by influencers or professionals on social media.

- **Role of Social Media in Mental Health Information Dissemination**

Social media provides a platform for quick dissemination of mental health information, especially in low-resource settings. It serves as a tool for: Mental health advocacy, online therapy and support groups, information sharing by NGOs and health agencies, Public health campaigns and Peer-to-peer encouragement

Studies have shown that mental health information on social media can positively influence behavior change, reduce stigma, and increase awareness among users.

2.2.5 Patterns of Mental Health Information Consumption on Social Media

People consume mental health content on social media for different purposes including:
- Learning about symptoms and treatment
- Seeking emotional support
- Sharing personal stories
- Engaging with mental health communities
- Following mental health professionals and influencers

The frequency and depth of consumption vary with age, education level, and platform preference.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Global Perspective on Social Media and Mental Health

Several global studies have investigated how social media influences mental health. A study by Naslund et al. (2016) found that social media can be an effective tool for mental health support, especially among young adults. Similarly, Moreno et al. (2020) highlighted both the risks (cyberbullying, sleep disruption, comparison anxiety) and benefits (community support, psychoeducation) of online mental health engagement.

2.3.2 Nigerian Studies on Mental Health and Social Media

Research in Nigeria is growing. A study by Olumide et al. (2019) revealed that over 60% of undergraduates in southern Nigeria have searched for mental health information online. Another study by Adepoju and Akinwale (2021) found that students who engaged with verified mental health content on Twitter were more likely to adopt healthy coping strategies.

In Ilorin, students at the University of Ilorin and Kwara State Polytechnic report frequent exposure to mental health-related content via WhatsApp groups and Instagram pages. Some have even formed peer support groups based on these interactions.

2.3.3 Case Studies in Ilorin and Kwara State

Interviews with residents in Ilorin show that while awareness is improving, misconceptions remain. For example, some participants associated anxiety and depression with laziness or spiritual attacks. However, there is increasing reliance on social media influencers, blogs, and advocacy pages like MANI and She Writes Woman, which have created a new wave of digital mental health activism in the city.

2.4 Positive Effects of Mental Health Information on Social Media

- Awareness and Education: Social media has contributed significantly to mental health awareness. Campaigns like #MentalHealthAwareness and #EndTheStigma have gone viral and reached millions, including Nigerians in Ilorin.
- Peer Support: Online communities such as Facebook groups and Twitter spaces provide a platform for users to share experiences and seek advice.
- Reduced Stigma: Personal stories shared by Nigerian celebrities and influencers have helped reduce stigma. For example, Nollywood actress Etinosa Idemudia shared her battle with depression, encouraging others to open up.
- Access to Resources: Through platforms like Instagram, users can access links to professional counselors, hotlines, and therapy programs.

2.5 Negative Effects and Misinformation

- Self-Diagnosis and Self-Treatment: Many users wrongly diagnose themselves based on unverified information, leading to mismanagement of their condition.
- Misinformation: Fake news and unverified posts can be harmful. A trending WhatsApp broadcast in Ilorin once claimed that depression could be cured by drinking a particular herbal mixture—causing health complications in some users.
- Emotional Triggers: Exposure to traumatic content, bullying, or negative news can worsen mental health issues.
- Over-Reliance on Social Media: Some users avoid professional help, relying solely on online sources, which may delay effective treatment.

2.6 Challenges in Accessing Reliable Mental Health Info Online

2.7 Challenges Associated with Mental Health Information on Social Media

Despite the benefits, there are several challenges:

- Misinformation: Unverified or misleading content can misguide users.
- Stigmatization: Negative comments or cyberbullying may discourage users from sharing their struggles.
- Information Overload: Users may feel overwhelmed by too much content.
- Lack of Regulation: Unlike traditional media, social media lacks formal screening of medical advice.
- Digital Divide: Not all residents have equal access to smartphones and data plans.
- Lack of Digital Literacy: Not all users can distinguish between credible and non-credible sources.
- Language Barriers: Most content is in English, excluding non-English speakers in

Ilorin suburbs.

- Poor Internet Connectivity: In low-income areas, limited access to stable internet hinders consistent exposure to quality content.
- Cultural and Religious Beliefs: Mental health is still seen as a taboo subject in some quarters, limiting the willingness to engage with online content.

2.7 Strategies for Effective Mental Health Communication on Social Media

Use of Local Language and Context: Tailoring content in Yoruba and Pidgin can help reach wider audiences.

Engaging Influencers: Partnering with popular Nigerian personalities who already have large followings can increase reach.

Government and NGO Partnership: The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with NGOs, should invest in digital health campaigns.

Verification of Sources: Social media platforms should promote verified health accounts and filter false content.

Mental Health Education in Schools: Digital literacy and mental health education should be introduced in schools in Ilorin.

2.8 Summary of Literature Review

This chapter reviewed the concept of mental health and the role of social media in shaping mental health discourse among residents of Ilorin. Theoretical frameworks such as the Health Belief Model and Uses and Gratification Theory were explored to understand user behavior. Empirical studies both globally and locally indicate a significant influence of social media on mental health awareness, with both benefits and risks. While social media has improved access to mental health information, challenges such as misinformation, self-treatment, and cultural stigma persist. Strategic interventions and credible digital engagement are necessary to ensure that social media becomes a safe and effective platform for mental health promotion in Ilorin and beyond.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
3.1 Research Design

This study will adopt a descriptive survey design. This design was chosen because it allows the researcher to collect data from a large population through the use of structured instruments such as questionnaires. It is ideal for investigating the perceptions, opinions, and attitudes of the residents of Ilorin regarding the uses of mental health information on social media. The design

enabled the researcher to gather quantitative data that would be analyzed statistically to draw meaningful conclusions.

3.2 Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised residents of Ilorin metropolis, the capital of Kwara State, Nigeria.

The total population of **Ilorin**, including its urban/metropolitan area, is estimated to be approximately **1.10 million** in **2025**. This is based on the latest projections from United Nations data, as reported by World Population Review [places-in-the-world.com+10worldpopulationreview.com+10populationstat.com+10](#).

Ilorin is a diverse city with a mix of educated elites, artisans, students, and professionals. The population includes both male and female residents from different age groups, socio-economic backgrounds, and religious affiliations. Given the increasing use of social media among residents, it provides a suitable population for the study.

3.3 Sample Size Determination and Sampling Techniques

3.3.1 Target Population

The population of this study comprises residents of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria, who are active users of social media and have access to mental health-related content online. Based on recent demographic estimates, Ilorin has an approximate population of 1,000,000 people. According to recent statistics, about 40% of Nigerians are active social media users. Therefore, the estimated number of social media users in Ilorin is calculated as follows:

1,000,000 × 0.40 = 400,000

Thus, the target population of this study is approximately 400,000 residents of Ilorin who actively use social media platforms.

3.3.2 Sample Size Determination

To determine an appropriate sample size from the population, the researcher adopted the Taro Yamane formula (1967) for sample size calculation. The formula is given as:

$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$

Where:

- n = required sample size
- N = population size (400,000)
- e = margin of error (0.05 for 95% confidence level)

Substituting the values:

$n = 400,000 / (1 + 400,000(0.05)^2)$

n = 400,000 / (1 + 1,000)

n = 400,000 / 1,001 ≈ 400

The calculated sample size is approximately 400 respondents.

However, considering time limitations, financial constraints, and the scope of the research, the researcher decided to reduce the sample size to a more manageable and representative figure of 100 respondents. Despite the reduction, the sample is sufficient for the study's exploratory

nature and provides valid insights into the research objectives.

The sample size for this research is 100 respondents, selected across various communities within Ilorin. A multi-stage sampling technique was used. First, purposive sampling was applied to select three local government areas within Ilorin (Ilorin West, Ilorin East, and Ilorin South) due to their high population density and internet access. Secondly, stratified random sampling was used to ensure fair representation across gender, age, and educational levels.

3.4 Research Instrument

The main instrument used for data collection will be a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and Likert-scale questions and will be divided into two main sections:

Section A: Demographic Information (age, gender, educational background, occupation, etc.)

Section B: Questions related to social media usage, awareness of mental health issues, accessibility and understanding of mental health content, and perceived impact of such information.

The questionnaire was designed in simple English to enhance understanding and ensure accurate responses.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

To ensure validity, the questionnaire will be vetted by two experts in Mass Communication and Psychology to confirm that the items adequately cover the objectives of the study. A pilot study was also conducted using 20 residents from a different community not included in the main sample, and necessary modifications were made based on feedback.

For reliability, the internal consistency of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.81, indicating that the instrument was highly reliable for the study.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

The researchers will employed the self-administered questionnaire method for data collection. Trained research assistants were engaged to help distribute and collect the questionnaires in person across the selected areas. In situations where literacy will be a challenge, the assistants read out the questions and helped fill out the forms based on the respondents' answers.

To ensure higher response rates, the purpose of the study was clearly explained to each participant, and anonymity was guaranteed.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 23 for analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations were used to summarize the data. Where necessary, inferential statistics such as the Chi-square test were used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered strictly to ethical guidelines. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were given the option to withdraw at any time without any consequences. All information provided was treated with confidentiality, and no names or identifying details were recorded.

Approval for the study was sought from appropriate academic authorities, and informed consent was obtained from each participant.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyzes the responses obtained from 100 participants in the study on *"Uses of Mental Health Information on Social Media among Residents of Ilorin."*

The analysis aims to identify patterns of social media usage, awareness of mental health information, preferred platforms, frequency of exposure, types of content accessed, perceived usefulness, and overall attitudes. The discussion links the findings to the research objectives and relevant literature.

4.2 Demographic Information of Respondents

Table 4.1: Age Distribution

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–25	42	42.0
26–35	35	35.0
36–45	15	15.0
46 and above	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research survey 2025

Analysis:

The results show that the majority of respondents (42%) are between 18–25 years old, followed closely by those aged 26–35 (35%). This suggests that the study population is predominantly youthful, which aligns with research indicating that young adults are the heaviest users of social media platforms. The smaller representation from older age groups (36–45: 15%; 46+ years: 8%) may reflect lower adoption rates of social media among older residents in Ilorin.

Table 4.2: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	54	54.0
Female	45	45.0

Prefer not to say	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research survey 2025

Analysis:

There is a near gender balance, with slightly more male respondents (54%) than female respondents (45%). This balance ensures that the findings represent perspectives from both genders. The 1% who preferred not to disclose their gender indicates minimal reluctance to share personal demographic information.

Table 4.3: Educational Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Secondary School	15	15.0
ND/NCE	28	28.0
HND/B.Sc.	40	40.0
Postgraduate	17	17.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research survey 2025

Analysis:

Most respondents are well-educated, with 40% holding HND/B.Sc. degrees and 17% having postgraduate qualifications. This high literacy level may positively influence the ability to understand and evaluate mental health information online. Only 15% had secondary school education, suggesting that the sample largely consists of individuals with higher education exposure.

Table 4.4: Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Student	50	50.0
Civil Servant	20	20.0
Self-employed	18	18.0
Unemployed	12	12.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research survey 2025

Analysis:

Half of the respondents are students, which correlates with the high percentage of young adults in the age distribution table. Civil servants (20%) and self-employed individuals (18%) are also well represented. The unemployed group (12%) suggests that some respondents may have more free time to spend on social media, potentially increasing exposure to mental health content.

Table 4.5: Frequency of Social Media Use

Frequency of Use	Frequency	Percentage (%)

Daily	72	72.0
Several times/week	16	16.0
Occasionally	10	10.0
Rarely	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research survey 2025

Analysis:

The majority (72%) use social media daily, indicating high digital engagement. Only 2% rarely use social media. This level of connectivity suggests that social media is an effective medium for disseminating mental health information in Ilorin.

4.3 Access to Mental Health Information on Social Media

Table 4.6: Awareness of Mental Health Information Online

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	88	88.0
No	12	12.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research survey 2025

Analysis:

An overwhelming 88% are aware of mental health information being shared on social media. This indicates that mental health advocacy efforts online are reaching a significant portion of the population. However, the 12% unaware group highlights the need for broader outreach.

Table 4.7: Platforms Used to Access Mental Health Information *(Multiple responses)*

Platform	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Facebook	65	65.0
Instagram	48	48.0
Twitter(X)	40	40.0
WhatsApp	72	72.0
YouTube	54	54.0
TikTok	38	38.0

Source: Research survey 2025

Analysis:

WhatsApp (72%) and Facebook (65%) are the dominant sources of mental health information, followed by YouTube (54%). This suggests that messaging apps and popular social networks play a significant role in information dissemination. TikTok and Twitter are less used but still relevant.

Table 4.8: Frequency of Encountering Mental Health Content

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very often	30	30.0
Often	40	40.0
Sometimes	25	25.0
Never	5	5.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research survey 2025

Analysis:

A combined 70% encounter mental health content "often" or "very often," showing regular exposure. Only 5% have never come across such content, underscoring the pervasiveness of mental health discourse online.

Table 4.9: Type of Content Seen

Content Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Educational content	55	55.0
Personal experiences	20	20.0
Professional advice	15	15.0
Inspirational quotes	10	10.0
Others	0	0.0

Source: Research survey 2025

Analysis:

Educational content dominates (55%), reflecting a strong focus on awareness and knowledge-sharing. Personal experiences (20%) and professional advice (15%) also play roles in fostering understanding and reliability.

Table 4.10: Helpfulness of Content

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	75	75.0
No	10	10.0
Not sure	15	15.0
Total	100	100.0

Source: Research survey 2025

Analysis:

Three-quarters of respondents find mental health content helpful, suggesting positive perceptions and practical value. The 15% who are unsure may indicate a need for more targeted and credible content.

4.4 Attitudes and Perceptions

Table 4.11: Opinions on Mental Health Information on Social Media

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
Social media is useful for spreading awareness	50	30	10	7	3
Info on social media is easy to understand	35	40	15	7	3
Info improved my well-being	28	35	22	10	5
Govt & experts should promote mental health via social media	60	25	8	5	2
Social media promotes more positive than negative talks	32	38	20	6	4
Social media encourages youths to	30	42	15	8	5

seek help					

Analysis:

Spreading Awareness: 80% (SA + A) agree that social media is a useful platform for mental health awareness.

Clarity of Information: 75% agree that information is easy to understand, indicating accessibility.

Impact on Well-being: 63% believe online information has improved their well-being, suggesting tangible personal benefits.

Government Role: 85% support increased government and expert promotion of mental health content.

Tone of Discussion: 70% perceive social media discussions as more positive than negative, countering some negative narratives about online spaces.

Encouragement to Seek Help: 72% agree that social media motivates youths to seek professional assistance, highlighting its role as an entry point to care.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

The results indicate that social media is a powerful tool for spreading mental health awareness among residents of Ilorin. The high daily usage rate (72%) ensures constant exposure to content, especially through Whatsapp and Facebook. The predominance of educational content reflects a deliberate effort by creators and organizations to inform audiences.

Respondents show generally positive attitudes toward online mental health discourse, and most believe it contributes to personal well-being. However, the 12% unaware of such content and the 15% unsure about its usefulness suggest that outreach could be improved, especially targeting less-engaged demographics and ensuring content is credible and practical.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1   Summary

This study examined the uses of mental health information on social media among residents of Ilorin, focusing on the level of awareness, frequency of access, types of content encountered, and the perceived usefulness of such information. A hundred respondents participated, representing a wide demographic spread. The findings revealed that most respondents were young adults, particularly those aged between 18 and 25 years, followed closely by individuals

within the 26 to 35 age bracket. This youth dominance reflects the demographic most actively engaged on social media. Gender representation was fairly balanced, with a slight male majority, while educationally, most respondents had attained post-secondary qualifications, which likely enhanced their capacity to understand and evaluate mental health information online.

The data showed that social media usage was very high, with more than seventy percent accessing these platforms daily. Awareness of mental health information on social media was equally impressive, with eighty-eight percent of respondents acknowledging the presence of such content. WhatsApp and Facebook were the most frequently used platforms, while YouTube also had notable patronage. Respondents reported encountering mental health content regularly, with educational materials being the most common, followed by personal experiences and professional advice. A significant majority considered such content helpful, underscoring its perceived value in improving knowledge and shaping attitudes toward mental health.

- ### Conclusion

The study establishes that social media is a powerful and effective tool for spreading mental health awareness among residents of Ilorin. The platforms not only offer wide reach but also provide content that is generally perceived as useful, easy to understand, and capable of influencing positive attitudes toward mental well-being. The overwhelmingly positive perceptions expressed by respondents suggest that these platforms can serve as valuable channels for mental health advocacy and education. Nonetheless, the presence of a minority who are either unaware of or unconvinced by such content indicates the need for more inclusive and targeted strategies.

- ### Recommended

That government agencies, mental health professionals, and advocacy organizations strengthen their engagement on widely used platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube. Efforts should be made to diversify the nature of shared content by combining educational materials with relatable personal experiences and credible professional advice. Initiatives to promote digital literacy are essential to help the public distinguish credible mental health information from misinformation. Partnering with local influencers, community leaders, and peer groups can further enhance reach and trust. Finally, integrating clear pathways to professional support services within mental health content will ensure that individuals in need can access timely and appropriate help.

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