



UTILIZATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY ON STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENTS TO LIBRARY REFERENCE SERVICE DELIVERY IN EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, ADO EKITI

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the utilization of social media accessibility on students' engagement with library reference service delivery at Ekiti State University. A descriptive survey research design was employed, and the study population comprised undergraduate students across five faculties: Education, Social Sciences, Management Sciences, Science, and Arts. A total of 200 students were selected using stratified random sampling, with proportional representation from each faculty and level. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean) and inferential statistics (Pearson Product Moment Correlation). The findings revealed that a majority of students have moderate to high access to social media, with WhatsApp and Facebook being the most frequently used platforms. Student engagement with library reference services via social media was generally high. The main challenges identified were poor internet connectivity and low digital literacy. Furthermore, a significant positive relationship was found between social media accessibility and student engagement ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that greater accessibility enhances participation in library services. The study concluded that social media is an effective tool for enhancing students' engagement with library reference services. It was recommended from the findings that libraries maintain active social media platforms, improve responsiveness, and collaborate with institutional management to enhance internet infrastructure and digital literacy programs.

Keywords: Social Media Accessibility, Student Engagement, Library Reference Services, University libraries, Digital Literacy

Introduction

In today's digital age, social media has revolutionized the way information is accessed, shared, and consumed globally. Its pervasive influence has extended beyond social interactions to become a critical tool in educational settings, especially within academic libraries. Libraries, traditionally seen as physical repositories of knowledge, are rapidly transforming into dynamic digital information hubs that leverage social media platforms to extend their reach and improve user engagement (Makinde & Oyekale, 2025). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp offer new possibilities for libraries to connect with students, provide timely reference services, and foster collaborative learning environments (Kumar & Patel, 2020). Although, for university students, access to credible and relevant

information is fundamental to academic success. Yet, many face challenges including restricted library operating hours and physical access barriers. Through social media, libraries can bridge these gaps, offering reference services that are accessible anywhere and anytime, thereby enriching the student learning experience and supporting their research needs (Bakai et al., 2025). Particularly in Nigerian universities like Ekiti State University, integrating social media into library reference services represents a strategic response to the growing digital literacy and mobile device penetration among students (Adeola & Adesanya, 2021).

Despite the undeniable potential of social media to transform library services, there remains a significant debate regarding its

effective utilization within academic environments. Critics argue that relying heavily on social media risks compromising the quality and reliability of information students receive, pointing to concerns about misinformation and distractions inherent in these platforms (Asuquo et al, 2023). Moreover, there is contention about whether social media can truly replace traditional face-to-face library interactions, which some scholars view as irreplaceable for in-depth academic support (Matthews, 2018).

However, mounting evidence suggests that social media is not merely a supplementary tool but a necessary evolution for academic libraries aiming to meet the changing needs of digital-native students (Rabatseta, 2021). The integration of social media into library reference services can democratize access to information, particularly for students who may face physical or temporal barriers in visiting library spaces (Kumar & Kumar, 2024). Furthermore, social media enables real-time communication and personalized support, fostering greater student engagement and collaborative learning (Kumar & Patel, 2020). Thus, the challenge lies not in rejecting social media as an academic tool but in strategically harnessing its strengths while mitigating its weaknesses. This study argues that understanding the balance between opportunity and challenge in social media use for library services is critical for evolving academic support systems especially in contexts like Ekiti State University, where infrastructure and resource constraints persist alongside increasing digital adoption.

Therefore, this paper intends to explore how social media accessibility influences student engagement with library reference services at Ekiti State University. By examining students' usage patterns, perceptions, and the challenges encountered, this research seeks to provide empirical evidence on social media's role in enhancing academic resource access. Understanding these dynamics is critical for academic libraries striving to remain relevant and effective in the digital era. The findings will offer valuable insights for university libraries on improving service delivery and fostering a digitally inclusive academic community.

Statement of the Problem

Social media's explosive growth has revolutionized communication and information access in learning settings, giving libraries new ways to actively engage students and provide reference services. Libraries are increasingly using social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp to promptly respond to consumers' information demands. Despite these developments, a large number of students continue to underuse social media-based library reference services.

Even though professional library reference services are available through social media platforms, students in many higher education institutions frequently rely on generic internet searches instead of using them. The usefulness, accessibility, and awareness of social media-based library services are all called into question by this circumstance. Students' engagement may also be hampered by elements including inadequate promotion of library social media services, limited digital literacy, poor internet connectivity and a lack of institutional support.

Furthermore, it is also uncertain whether social media platforms greatly increase students' engagement with reference services, even as libraries invest in them to improve service delivery. Additionally, there is no actual data on how social media accessibility affects how students use library services, especially in developing countries.

Research Objectives

- To determine the level of accessibility of social media platforms for students in accessing library reference services.
- To identify the types of social media platforms used by libraries for reference service delivery.
- To assess the level of students' engagement with library reference services through social media platforms.
- To examine the relationship between social media accessibility and students' engagement with library reference services.
- To identify challenges associated with the use of social media in accessing library reference services among students.

Research Questions

- What is the level of accessibility of social media platforms for students in accessing library reference services at Ekiti State University?
- Which social media platforms are most commonly used by students to access library reference services?
- What is the level of students' engagement with library reference services through social media platforms?
- What challenges do students face in using social media to access library reference services?
- Is there a significant relationship between social media accessibility and students' engagement with library reference service delivery?

Literature Review

Academic libraries are pivotal in advancing knowledge, supporting teaching, learning, and research within universities. The emergence of social media has profoundly reshaped how these libraries engage with their users, including students and faculty. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram have become essential tools for extending library reference services beyond the physical library space, enabling timely, interactive and accessible communication with library patrons (Drivas, 2024).

Scholars highlight that social media enhances the visibility and outreach of academic libraries by enabling the promotion of resources, services, and events at low cost and with wide coverage (Quadri, 2024). It facilitates information dissemination, real-time responses to users' queries, and fosters library user engagement, which is critical for meeting the evolving expectations of today's digital-native students (Humphries, 2025). Furthermore, social media creates a virtual community extending the traditional library environment, fostering collaborative learning and social interaction among students and staff (Khan et al, 2025).

Moreover, the application of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) helps in the Utilisation of Social Media in Library Service Delivery which was developed by

Fred Davis in 1989 to explain how users accept and use new technology. The model is widely used in studies involving social media adoption, ICT usage and digital library services. According to Davis (1989), two major factors determine whether users will adopt and utilize a technology: Perceived Usefulness (PU) which refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology will improve their performance and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) which refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a technology will be free of effort.

Thus, when applying TAM to social media utilisation in library services, the model explains how students and library users decide whether to use social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram and Telegram for accessing library services. Therefore, when students find social media useful and easy to use, they are more likely to actively participate in library activities and utilize available services.

Social Media and Its Relevance to Academic Libraries

Social media refers to web-based interactive tools that allow users to create, share, and exchange information in real time. For libraries, these platforms extend service delivery beyond physical boundaries. They allow librarians to disseminate updates, engage students in virtual reference conversations, provide research assistance, and promote electronic resources. Common platforms used in universities are WhatsApp (instant messaging & group reference) (Shittu & Taiwo, 2023), Facebook (service promotion & Q/A), Twitter/X (alerts & virtual desk communication), YouTube (instructional video-based reference), Instagram (visual outreach & announcements) and Email-linked academic platforms (LMS chat features) which is graphically shown in fig. 1 for social networking tools where librarians can interact with users to study their needs and give a feedback, photo sharing where archival pictures can be posted to users or uploaded on the library websites.



Fig.1 Web-based interactive tools for libraries service delivery to create and exchange information.

Library Reference Service Delivery

Reference service is the personal assistance provided by librarians aimed at enabling users to access, retrieve, and use information effectively. Modern reference services integrate digital tools such as: **Virtual reference chat, Ask-a-librarian services, online subject guides and Digital resource referral (CLN & Nonrya, 2026).** Social media offers immediacy and informality, enhancing user-librarian interaction beyond traditional counters.

Concept of Student Engagement

Engagement involves behavioral and psychological efforts made by students to participate in academic activities. In library settings: Asking for help, following up on provided resources, Participating in online discussions and providing feedback to librarians. Therefore, social media encourages engagement by reducing intimidation and encouraging help-seeking behaviors. Effective utilization of social media in academic libraries requires thoughtful integration of technology, consistent content creation, and skilled personnel. Library staff training on social media use and content creation is emphasized as vital to attract and sustain student engagement and to provide relevant and user-friendly reference assistance

(Meesad & Mingkhwan, 2024). However, several challenges undermine the full potential of social media adoption, especially in Nigerian universities. These challenges include inadequate internet connectivity, erratic power supply, limited digital literacy among library personnel, and poor infrastructural support, which collectively hinder reliable service delivery (Madhusudhan & Soni, 2024).

Despite these challenges, the growing accessibility of mobile devices and digital platforms among students presents a significant opportunity (Nwankwo et al, 2022). Social media platforms are increasingly becoming preferred channels for information seeking and communication, especially outside traditional library hours, thereby enhancing academic productivity and learning experiences (Adeola & Adesanya, 2021). Research specifically focused on Nigerian academic libraries documents that platforms like Facebook and Twitter are predominantly used for library service delivery, while emerging platforms such as YouTube provide dynamic content formats like video tutorials that appeal to modern learners (Nduka et al, 2021). More so, engaging online content, including user training, live reference services, current awareness updates, and interactive discussions, significantly increases students' awareness

and utilization of library resources (Adewojo & Adebara, 2019).

Empirical Review

Scholarly studies both within and outside Nigeria has examined how students' accessibility to social media influences their engagement with libraries, especially reference services. This section reviews key empirical evidence under relevant thematic areas.

Students' Accessibility to Social Media Platforms

Recent studies show that university students possess high access to smartphones and mobile internet, making social media a primary communication channel in academic communities. In a Nigerian study, Adewojo and Momoh (2025) found that more than 80% of students used smartphones as their main tool for information seeking, with WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram being the most utilized platforms. Similarly, Manj (2024) reported that students' preference for mobile-friendly platforms encourages academic support seeking through social media, particularly when libraries actively promote their digital presence. However, infrastructural challenges persist. Makinde & Oyekale (2025) noted that poor network connectivity and the high cost of internet data negatively affect usage consistency among students in Nigerian universities. This shows that **accessibility alone does not guarantee sustained engagement** if economic and infrastructural barriers remain unaddressed.

Utilization of Social Media for Reference Service Delivery

There is growing empirical support that social media has improved reference service responsiveness. Bakai et al, (2025) found that WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger significantly improved turnaround time for answering student queries in North-Central Nigerian colleges, compared to email and physical reference desks. Ejitagha and Iwighreghweta (2021) also revealed that Nigerian librarians increasingly use social media to guide students to online journals, e-books, and databases. According to Okunlola (2021), the informal ad interactive

nature of messaging encourages students to participate freely without fear of judgment. In South Africa, Rabatseta (2021) observed that students appreciated libraries' availability on platforms they already use daily, showing increased willingness to seek academic assistance.

Therefore, the literature underscores a dual imperative for academic libraries: to embrace social media as a core strategy for service delivery and to overcome infrastructural and capacity barriers through institutional support and policy frameworks. By leveraging the strengths of social media, libraries can sustain their relevance in the digital age and support student success more effectively (Madaki et al, 2025; Nasir & Jana, 2024).

Research Design and Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive survey research design. This design is appropriate because it allows the researcher to gather data from a large group of students to examine the utilization of social media accessibility and its influence on students' engagement with library reference service delivery.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprises all undergraduate students of Ekiti State University who have access to the university's library services and social media platforms. The university has a diverse student body across several faculties, including Education, Social Sciences, Management Sciences, Science, and Arts, spanning 100 to 400 levels. The total population is estimated to be over 20,000 students, but for the purpose of this study, only students actively enrolled in undergraduate programs and who are potential users of library reference services through social media was considered. Focusing on the population, it ensures that the findings accurately reflect the utilization of social media in engaging students with library reference service delivery.

Sample Size

The sample size for this study was 200 undergraduate students of Ekiti State University. This sample is considered adequate to represent the diverse population of students across faculties and

levels, while also being manageable for effective data collection and analysis. The sample was drawn using a stratified random sampling technique, ensuring proportional representation from all faculties (Education, Social Sciences, Management Sciences, Science and Arts) and levels of study (100

to 400 levels). Stratification ensures that students from smaller faculties or levels are included and that the sample reflects the composition of the university population.

The distribution of the sample is presented in the table below:

Table 1 showing the distribution of the 200 students across faculties and levels at Ekiti State University:

Faculty / Level	100 Level	200 Level	300 Level	400 Level	Total
Faculty of Education	12	13	13	12	50
Faculty of Social Sciences	10	10	10	10	40
Faculty of Management Sciences	10	10	10	10	40
Faculty of Science	10	10	10	10	40
Faculty of Arts	8	7	7	8	30
Total	50	50	50	50	200

This sample size is sufficient to provide reliable data for statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage) and inferential statistics (correlation analysis) to examine the relationship between social media accessibility and students' engagement with library reference services.

Data was collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire will be divided into sections, including: Section A: Demographic information, Section B: Social media accessibility, Section C: Utilization of social media for reference services, Section D: Students' engagement and Section E: Challenges. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree).

The questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by experts in library and information science as well as educational research to ensure its relevance and adequacy. A pilot study was conducted

using 20 students from a similar institution (not part of the main study) and the responses was analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a reliability coefficient of 0.70. The researcher administered the questionnaire personally and electronically (e.g., Google Forms). Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, and mean, standard deviation) to answer research questions and inferential statistics using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to test the relationship between social media accessibility and students' engagement with library reference services.

Results Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 200 questionnaires were administered to undergraduate students of Ekiti State University, and all were returned, yielding a 100% response rate. Respondents were distributed across faculties and levels as shown in the sample table.

Table 2: Demographic of Respondents

Faculty	Frequency	Percentage
Faculty of Education	50	25
Faculty of Social Sciences	40	20
Faculty of Management Sciences	40	20
Faculty of Science	40	20
Faculty of Arts	30	15
Total	200	100

Research Question 1: What is the level of accessibility of social media platforms for students in accessing library reference services at Ekiti State University?

Table 3: Social Media Accessibility

Accessibility Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very High	60	30
High	80	40
Moderate	40	20
Low	15	7.5
Very Low	5	2.5

Respondents were asked about their access to social media for library reference services. The results showed that most students (70%) have moderate to high access to social media, indicating that the majority can potentially use these platforms to engage with library services. Moreover, majority of the students have moderate to high access to social media.

Research Question 2: Which social media platforms are most commonly used by students to access library reference services?

Table 4: Social Media Platforms Used

Platform	Frequency	Percentage (%)
WhatsApp	90	45
Facebook	50	25
X/Twitter	30	15
Instagram	20	10
Others	10	5

Respondents indicated which social media platforms they use for library reference services: WhatsApp was the most commonly used platform, followed by Facebook, suggesting libraries

should prioritize these platforms for service delivery. Therefore, WhatsApp and Facebook are the most commonly used platforms

Research Question 3: What is the level of students' engagement with library reference services through social media platforms?

Table 4: Level of Student Engagement

Engagement Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very High	40	20
High	70	35
Moderate	60	30
Low	20	10
Very Low	10	5

Students' engagement with library reference services via social media was measured using a Likert scale. Most students (55%) reported high to very high engagement, suggesting that social media positively supports their interaction with library reference services. Hence, student engagement with library reference services via social media is generally high.

Research Question 4: What challenges do students face in using social media to access library reference services?

Table 5: Challenges in Using Social Media for Library Services

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor internet connectivity	70	35
Low digital literacy	50	25
Lack of awareness of library pages	40	20
Limited library responsiveness	30	15
Other challenges	10	5

Internet connectivity and low digital literacy were the major barriers affecting students' engagement. However, the major challenges include poor internet connectivity and low digital literacy.

Research Question 5: Is there a significant relationship between social media accessibility and students' engagement with library reference service delivery?

Table 6: Relationship between Social Media Accessibility and Student Engagement

Variables	r-value	p-value
Social Media Accessibility vs Engagement	0.68	0.001

A Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was computed to examine the relationship between social media accessibility and students' engagement with library reference services. The positive and significant correlation ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.05$) indicates that higher accessibility to social media is associated with increased student engagement in library reference services. Therefore, Social media accessibility has a significant positive relationship with student engagement.

Discussion of Results

The findings of this study provide important insights into how social media accessibility influences students' engagement with library reference services at Ekiti State University. The study revealed that most students (70%) have moderate to high access to social media platforms. This indicates that social media is widely available and can serve as an effective channel for library reference service delivery. This aligns with previous studies which emphasize that high accessibility of digital platforms is a key factor in increasing user engagement with library services (Nwankwo et al, 2022; Norya, 2026). It suggests that students are technologically capable of utilizing these platforms, provided there is adequate guidance and infrastructure. The data showed that WhatsApp (45%) and Facebook (25%) are the most commonly used platforms for library engagement. This finding is consistent with studies by Quadri et al., (2024), who observed that messaging and social networking applications are preferred by students for accessing academic information because of their convenience and familiarity. Libraries, therefore, should prioritize these platforms when designing reference services, ensuring timely responses and regular updates. The study found that the majority of students (55%) reported high to very high engagement with library reference services via social media. This suggests that social media is an effective tool for enhancing student interaction with library staff and resources. The finding supports the view of Shittu & Taiwo (2023) that interactive platforms increase students' willingness to seek information and promote active participation in academic activities. However, the presence of some students reporting low engagement indicates that

accessibility alone does not guarantee active use; other factors such as awareness, motivation, and digital literacy also play significant roles. The major challenges identified were poor internet connectivity (35%) and low digital literacy (25%). These barriers highlight the contextual issues that may limit the effectiveness of social media in library service delivery in developing countries. This finding is consistent with Okunlola (2021), who noted that infrastructural limitations and inadequate digital skills often hinder students' ability to fully utilize online library services. Libraries must, therefore, not only provide social media-based services but also support students through training and improved infrastructure. The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.05$) between social media accessibility and student engagement. This indicates that students who have better access to social media platforms are more likely to engage actively with library reference services. The result corroborates the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) theory, which posits that perceived ease of use and access to technology positively influence user engagement and behavior (Davis, 1989). Therefore, enhancing accessibility through reliable internet, mobile-friendly platforms, and user-friendly interfaces can significantly boost student interaction with library services.

Implications of Findings

- Libraries need to maintain active and responsive social media platforms, particularly WhatsApp and Facebook, to maximize student engagement.
- Institutions should invest in improving digital infrastructure and support training in digital literacy to remove barriers to access.
- Future Research could explore other factors influencing student engagement, such as motivation, library promotion strategies, and content relevance on social media.

Conclusion

This study has shown how social media plays a vital role in helping students connect with library reference services at

Ekiti State University. Making library resources more accessible through familiar platforms, students can learn and research better, even beyond the usual library hours. Despite facing challenges like poor internet access and low social media skills among some library staff, the benefits clearly outweigh these hurdles. Moving forward, improving infrastructure and training will help libraries serve students even more effectively. Ultimately, this study highlights that integrating social media into academic support can brighten students' learning journeys and open new doors to knowledge and success. The study concludes that social media accessibility significantly contributes to improved student engagement and enhances the effectiveness, visibility and responsiveness of library reference services at EKSU. Also continued investment in digital-based service delivery will ensure that the library remains relevant in the evolving information landscape and better supports academic success.

This study also examined the utilization of social media accessibility on students' engagement with library reference service delivery. The findings highlight that social media platforms have become essential tools for enhancing communication between libraries and students, offering opportunities for timely, convenient, and interactive reference services. The study concludes that while social media accessibility has the potential to significantly improve students' engagement with library reference services, its effectiveness largely depends on factors such as awareness, digital literacy, internet availability, and the level of responsiveness from library personnel. Although many libraries have adopted social media platforms, students' engagement remains moderate due to challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited promotion of services, and varying levels of technological competence.

Furthermore, the study establishes that improved accessibility and strategic utilization of social media can lead to increased student participation, better information-seeking behavior, and enhanced satisfaction with library services. However, without deliberate efforts to address existing barriers, the full benefits of social media in library reference service delivery may not be realized. In conclusion, for libraries

to maximize the advantages of social media there is a need for continuous improvement in digital infrastructure, user education and service delivery strategies. By doing so, academic libraries can strengthen their relevance in the digital age and better support students' academic engagement and success

Recommendations

It was recommended that:

- Academic libraries should ensure that their social media platforms are easily accessible by students through mobile-friendly interfaces and consistent internet availability.
- Libraries should intensify awareness campaigns to inform students about available reference services on social media through orientations, workshops and campus-wide announcements.
- Libraries should utilize widely used platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to reach a broader student population and enhance engagement.
- Librarians should receive regular training on digital communication skills and effective social media management to improve service delivery and responsiveness.
- Institutions should organize training programs to improve students' ability to effectively use social media for academic and information-seeking purposes.
- Library staff should maintain active engagement by responding promptly to students' inquiries and providing personalized assistance through social media platforms.
- Institutions should invest in reliable internet connectivity, power supply and digital tools to support efficient social media-based reference services.
- Libraries should establish policies guiding the use of social media for reference services to ensure professionalism, privacy, and consistency.
- Libraries should continuously assess the effectiveness of social media platforms in service delivery through feedback, analytics, and user satisfaction surveys.

- Libraries should collaborate with academic departments and student bodies to enhance awareness and usage of social media-based reference services.

Contribution to Knowledge

- The study will provide empirical evidence on how social media accessibility influences students' engagement with library reference service delivery, particularly within the context of higher institutions where such studies are still limited.
- It will expand the body of knowledge on digital library services by integrating social media accessibility as a key variable in understanding students' engagement with reference services.
- The study will offer insights specific to developing educational environments (such as Nigerian institutions), where challenges like internet access, digital literacy and infrastructure significantly affect technology adoption.
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