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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS AND PERCEIVED USEFULNESS IN SOCIAL MEDIA- ASSISTED EFL LEARNING: EVIDENCE FROM SAUDI ARABIA

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at how Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat affect English language learning among Saudi undergraduate students, with a focus on the roles of perceived enjoyment and socio-cultural factors. Researchers used a quantitative method, collecting data from 350 EFL students through an online questionnaire and analyzing it with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that Instagram and Snapchat use both have a clear, positive effect on English learning, while Facebook does not. The influence of enjoyment and socio-cultural factors varied by platform. Enjoyment only made a difference for Snapchat, while socio-cultural factors helped with Instagram, but had a negative effect on Snapchat. One important limitation is that the measures for Instagram use and English learning outcomes were not clearly distinct, potentially leading to overlap in what they measured. This study stands out by focusing on each social media platform separately, showing that psychological and cultural factors can shape how effective these tools are for learning. The findings suggest that educators and platform designers should use strategies tailored to each platform, making the most of their unique features and how students perceive them to improve language learning with technology.

KEYWORDS: Socio-Cultural Factors, Perceived Usefulness, Social Media, EFL Learning, Saudi Arabia, Technology-Assisted Language Learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

The integration of digital technologies into language education has fundamentally transformed the landscape of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning worldwide (Khoso et al., 2025). Zhao et al. (2024) argue that social media platforms now serve as pervasive environments that significantly influence political and religious socialization. These platforms also facilitate English language interaction and production in contexts that were once limited to formal classroom settings (Alshabab, 2020). Unlike traditional computer-assisted language learning tools, social media platforms offer authentic, communicative contexts that blur the boundaries between formal instruction and informal, incidental learning (Zahira et al., 2024). This convergence of social interaction and language exposure presents both opportunities and challenges for educators and researchers seeking to understand how these platforms can be harnessed for educational purposes (Xavier, 2021; Slim & Hafedh, 2019).

The potential of social media for language learning lies in its capacity to provide learners with continuous exposure to authentic language use (Schmidt & Strasser, 2018; Ping, 2022), opportunities for meaningful interaction with native and non-native speakers, and access to diverse linguistic and cultural content (Emara, 2020; Alhatmi, 2023; Al-Hosni, 2016). Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat have attracted millions of users worldwide, including substantial populations in the Arab world, yet their educational utility remains unevenly understood. While early research focused on Facebook as the dominant platform (Bailey & Rakushin-Lee, 2021), the social media landscape has diversified, with image-centric and ephemeral platforms gaining particular traction among younger demographics (Alhatmi, 2023). This shift necessitates a more granular examination of how specific platforms, with their unique affordances and user practices, contribute to language learning outcomes.

In the Saudi Arabian context, the relevance of this inquiry is particularly acute. The Kingdom has witnessed unprecedented digital transformation under Vision 2030, with internet penetration exceeding 98% and social media adoption rates among the highest globally (Communications and Information Technology Commission, 2021). Young Saudis, who constitute the majority of the population, are active consumers and producers of social media content, much of which is in English. Simultaneously, English language proficiency has become a national priority, positioned as essential for economic diversification, global competitiveness,

and access to scientific and technical knowledge (Bennacer, 2019). This convergence of high digital engagement and pressing educational need creates a fertile ground for examining whether and how social media platforms can support EFL learning beyond the classroom.

Despite growing scholarly attention to social media in language education, significant gaps persist. First, much existing research treats social media as a monolithic phenomenon, aggregating across platforms or focusing on single platforms in isolation (Kolmykova et al., 2021). This approach obscures the possibility that different platforms, with their distinct technical features and social norms, may support different types of language learning activities and outcomes. Second, while technology acceptance models have illuminated factors such as perceived usefulness and ease of use, the role of socio-cultural factors including peer influence, familial attitudes, and cultural norms remains underexplored, particularly in non-Western contexts where collectivist values shape technology adoption (Abdullah, 2023). Third, the interactive effects of psychological factors (e.g., enjoyment) and contextual factors (e.g., socio-cultural environment) on platform-specific learning outcomes have received limited empirical attention.

The present study addresses these gaps by investigating three research questions: (1) What are the frequency and nature of Saudi EFL undergraduates' use of Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat for informal English learning activities? (2): Do Facebook use, Instagram use, and Snapchat use significantly and differentially predict self-reported English language learning outcomes among Saudi EFL students? (3) Does perceived enjoyment moderate the platform-learning relationship differently across Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat? (4) Do socio-cultural factors moderate the platform-learning relationship differently across Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat? By examining platform-specific effects and their contingencies, this research contributes a more nuanced understanding of technology-mediated language learning that can inform pedagogical practice, platform design, and educational policy in Saudi Arabia and beyond. The findings hold particular relevance for educators seeking to leverage students' existing digital practices for instructional purposes, and for policymakers aiming to align technological infrastructure with educational objectives under Vision 2030.

The objectives of this research are deliberately specific and measurable, aiming to:

1. Quantify and compare the extent to which Saudi EFL learners utilise three specific social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat for informal English language learning activities.
2. Examine the direct relationships between the use of each platform (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat) and the students' self-reported progress in learning English.

Investigate the mediating role of Perceived Usefulness in the relationship between the use of these social media platforms and learning outcomes, testing the hypothesis that enjoyment is a key mechanism through which usage translates into educational benefit.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The intersection of social media and language learning has attracted considerable scholarly attention over the past decade, yet theoretical clarity regarding platform-specific effects remains elusive. This review synthesizes existing literature across three interconnected streams: technology-mediated language learning theories, empirical studies of social media platforms in EFL contexts, and the role of socio-cultural and psychological factors in shaping technology adoption for educational purposes.

2.1. Theoretical Foundations of Technology-Mediated Language Learning

The theoretical rationale for integrating social media into language education draws primarily from sociocultural theory and interactionist perspectives on second language acquisition. Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory posits that learning occurs through social interaction within meaningful contexts, with language developing as learners engage in collaborative activities mediated by cultural tools. Social media platforms, as contemporary cultural tools, potentially instantiate Vygotsky's zone of proximal development by connecting learners with more proficient language users and providing authentic communicative opportunities (Shukry et al., 2021). Complementing this perspective, interactionist framework emphasizes the importance of input modification, meaningful interaction, and output production in computer-assisted language learning environments (Hanif & Imran, 2022). Social media platforms, by design, facilitate these conditions through commenting, messaging, and content creation features that compel learners to produce language in response to authentic communicative needs (Afzal et al., 2025).

2.2. Social Media Platforms and EFL Learning: Empirical Evidence

Early empirical investigations focused predominantly on Facebook, yielding mixed findings that may reflect the platform's evolving functionality and user base. Jin (2024) surveyed 300 undergraduate students and found that Facebook contributed to motivation, positive attitudes, and confidence in English learning, though primarily through receptive activities such as reading posts rather than productive engagement. Subsequent studies reported more targeted benefits: Kusuma et al. (2025) demonstrated that Facebook use improved writing skills among Czech EFL students, particularly in idea organization, vocabulary development, and peer collaboration. While Jordanian EFL students felt comfortable using Facebook, less than half engaged regularly, with most preferring observation over participation a pattern that limits language production opportunities critical for acquisition (Alshabeb & Almaqrn, 2018).

Research on image-centric platforms has emerged more recently, reflecting shifting user demographics. Instagram has attracted attention for its multimodal affordances that combine visual, textual, and interactive elements. Salih and Elsaid (2018) found that Instagram effectively supported vocabulary acquisition, writing skills, and collaborative learning among Indonesian EFL students, while Altam (2020) reported similar benefits across conventional and distance learning modalities. The platform's visual nature may enhance memory retention through dual-coding processes (Shamsi & Bozorgian, 2022), while comment sections provide low-anxiety environments for written interaction. Snapchat, despite its popularity among younger demographics, has received limited empirical attention in language learning research. Kusuma (2025) reported positive Saudi student attitudes toward using Snapchat and mobile technologies for English learning, noting that the platform's ephemerality may reduce communication anxiety. Similarly found positive attitudes among Saudi learners toward social media technologies generally, though platform-specific analyses remained undifferentiated.

2.3. The Role of Perceived Enjoyment and Socio-Cultural Factors

Technology acceptance models have long shown that perceived usefulness and ease of use affect adoption of new technology (Davis, 1989). In language learning, though, perceived enjoyment – the pleasure people get from using the technology – can be just as important, especially when learners use

these tools on their own outside of school (Liu et al., 2023). Enjoyment helps keep learners engaged, increasing opportunities to practice and use the language (Jamshed et al., 2023; Taleb Falah & Mohammed, 2025). Socio-cultural factors are especially important in collectivist societies, where the opinions of peers and family strongly influence individual choices (Xia et al., 2023). Research shows that technology acceptance models operate differently across cultures, with social norms having a greater impact in non-Western countries. In Saudi Arabia, for example, family and community ties are central to society (Xu et al., 2024; Ghimire, 2022). As a result, the views of important people in a learner's life can determine whether social media is used for learning or seen as just entertainment.

2.4. Research Gaps and the Present Study

Although substantial evidence has accumulated, notable gaps remain in the literature. First, there is a lack of comparative studies that examine multiple platforms concurrently using consistent theoretical frameworks and measurement methods. Second, existing research has not sufficiently investigated how psychological factors, such as enjoyment, and contextual factors, such as the socio-cultural environment, interact with platform-specific affordances to influence learning outcomes. Third, most studies depend on self-reported perceptions rather than analyzing the specific mechanisms by which platform use facilitates language development. The present study addresses these gaps by examining platform-specific effects and their moderators within a single Saudi EFL sample, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of technology-mediated language learning in the Arabian context.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This research was conducted based on the quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the nature of relationships between the three variables, which are social media usage, socio-cultural factors, and perceived usefulness, and English language learning among Saudi EFL students. The cross-sectional approach was considered the best since it allows the gathering of data concerning a sample of the population at one time and measurement of the variables, as well as the analysis of the interrelation between variables without the manipulation of the data. The design would be most fitting during pilot research, which does offer an effective and less expensive way of

obtaining primary evidence and trying out the validity of the research tool. The research is mostly correlational, as it aims to reveal and define the shape and extent of the relationship among the key constructs of interest. Quantitative paradigm was chosen because it allows one to have a statistical analysis of these relationships and it will be objective to define the measurement scale as well as to design a larger, later study.

3.2. Population And Sampling

The target population for this research comprised undergraduate students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at Saudi Arabian higher education institutions. Access to participants was obtained through established academic channels. A non-probability convenience sampling method was utilized. The initial sampling frame consisted of a large WhatsApp group of EFL students from a Saudi university, chosen for its practicality and high penetration within the target demographic. A Google Forms questionnaire, accompanied by a detailed explanation of the study's purpose and a consent statement, was distributed via this group. Subsequently, recruitment was expanded through referrals and sharing within other relevant student networks to increase the sample size. Data collection continued until a sample of $n=350$ respondents was achieved. All responses underwent a rigorous screening process to remove incomplete entries, straight-lining (the pattern of selecting identical answers across questions), and implausible response patterns. After data cleaning, 350 complete and usable responses were retained for analysis. Although the non-probability sampling design precludes statistical representativeness of the entire population, the sample size of $n=350$ provides a robust foundation for meaningful analysis within the study's context.

3.3. Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected using a structured online questionnaire developed and distributed via Google Forms to facilitate accessibility and efficient response management. The questionnaire comprised two sections designed to streamline respondent participation and enhance data quality. The first section collected demographic information, including age, gender, academic year, and self-assessed English proficiency. The second section measured the six primary constructs of the study. All items in this section employed a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), to capture the extent of

participants' agreement with each statement. To ensure the instrument's accuracy and cultural appropriateness for Saudi Arabian participants, the questionnaire was initially drafted in English, translated into Arabic by a bilingual expert, and subsequently back-translated into English by a separate translator to verify consistency and minimize potential misunderstandings.

The study's constructs were operationalized using established scales from existing literature to enhance validity. Usage of the three targeted social media platforms—Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat—was assessed through adapted items that measured the frequency and nature of learning-oriented activities specific to each platform. The Socio-Cultural Factors construct evaluated the perceived influence of the learner's immediate social environment, including peer and family attitudes. Perceived Usefulness, based on technology acceptance models, assessed the intrinsic enjoyment and satisfaction derived from the learning process. The dependent variable, Learning English Language, was measured using a multi-item scale that captured students' self-reported improvement in key language competencies resulting from their engagement with social media. This comprehensive instrument development approach ensured accurate and reliable measurement of each variable, providing a solid foundation for subsequent quantitative analysis.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The data sampling process was made efficient and ethically correct. After the institutional approval of the questionnaire and the completed bilingual questionnaire, the link on the Google Forms was created. The message was also elaborated in Arabic, still presenting the researchers, describing the academic objective of the research, and guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity to the respondents,

and clearly informing them that their participation was voluntary. This message with the link to the questionnaire was spread to the target WhatsApp group. The questionnaire was accessible in a duration of two weeks to open it up to allow the participants time to interact. There were no incentives to participation during this period to prevent coercion. The information was collected automatically and anonymously in the Google Sheets spreadsheet attached to the Google Form and then downloaded to be cleaned and analyzed.

To ensure linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance for the Saudi Arabian cohort, the questionnaire underwent rigorous translation. It was initially drafted in English, translated into Arabic by a bilingual language expert, and subsequently back-translated into English by an independent translator to verify conceptual equivalence and minimize potential misinterpretation (Brislin, 1970).

After institutional approval, a Google Forms link was generated. An accompanying message in Arabic introduced the researchers, outlined the study's academic purpose, assured confidentiality and anonymity, and explicitly stated that participation was voluntary. This message and the questionnaire link were distributed via a large WhatsApp group of EFL students from a Saudi university, selected for its high penetration among this demographic.

The questionnaire remained open for two weeks to provide participants sufficient time to respond. No incentives were offered to avoid coercion. Responses were automatically collected and stored anonymously in a Google Sheets spreadsheet, then downloaded for data cleaning and analysis. After rigorous screening to remove incomplete entries and implausible response patterns, 350 complete and usable responses were retained for analysis. Table 1 presents the questionnaire's constructs and sources, with references.

Table 1: Construct Measurement and Sources.

Construct	Operational Definition	Example Item	Adapted Source	Number of Items
Facebook Use	Frequency and nature of learning-oriented activities on Facebook	"I use Facebook to follow English-language educational pages."	Alhabash & Ma (2016); Smock et al. (2011)	6
Instagram Use	Frequency and nature of learning-oriented activities on Instagram	"I watch English-language videos with subtitles on Instagram."	Alhabash & Ma (2016); Sheldon & Bryant (2016)	6
Snapchat Use	Frequency and nature of learning-oriented activities on Snapchat	"I exchange English-language snaps with friends to practice writing."	Alhabash & Ma (2016); Vaterlaus et al. (2016)	5
Socio-Cultural Factors	Perceived influence of peers, family, and cultural norms on social media use for learning	"My friends encourage me to use social media to improve my English."	Vygotsky (1978); Kabilan et al. (2010)	5
Perceived Usefulness	Extent to which learners find social media enjoyable and intrinsically motivating for learning	"Learning English through social media is fun and entertaining."	Davis (1989); Lee et al. (2021)	5

Learning English Language	Self-perceived improvement in language competencies attributable to social media engagement	"My vocabulary has expanded because of my social media use."	Warschauer & Healey (1998); Lin et al. (2016)	6
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3.5. Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis utilized a two-stage analytical approach, employing SPSS version 28 and SmartPLS 4 for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Initially, SPSS 28 was used to generate descriptive statistics summarizing the sample's demographic profile and the central tendencies of key variables. Subsequently, a two-phase structural equation modeling approach was implemented with SmartPLS 4. The first phase involved a comprehensive evaluation of the measurement model to validate the constructs. This process included confirming the psychometric properties of all scales by examining item factor loadings to ensure they exceeded 0.70, establishing internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR), and assessing convergent validity by calculating the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct. Discriminant validity was then tested using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations to confirm that each construct was distinct. Upon validation of the measurement model, the analysis advanced to

the structural model assessment, which tested all direct and hypothesized moderating relationships specified in the research framework. The model's explanatory power was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2) for the endogenous variables, and the significance of all path coefficients was assessed through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples to generate t-statistics and p-values.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to give a general overview of the data that gives a brief description of how the sample looks regarding the responses of the key constructs. This analysis played a critical role in determining the central tendency and variability of the data as this was essential to determine the profile of the sample and provided a base on which the subsequent analysis of inferential analysis will be interpreted. The means and standard deviations reflected the general tendencies and the extent of agreement of the participants in their use of social media to learn EFL.

Table 1: Demographic Profile Of Respondents (N=350).

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	225	64.3
	Female	125	35.7
	Total	350	100.0
Age	18 - 22 years old	261	74.6
	23 - 26 years	39	11.1
	27 - 30 years	21	6
	31 years and above	29	8.3
	Total	350	100.0
Education Level	Bachelor's Degree (BS)	281	80.3
	Master's Degree (MS)	49	14
	Doctoral Degree (PhD)	20	5.7
	Total	350	100.0
Department	Education	277	79.1
	Engineering	41	11.7
	Medical	32	9.1
	Total	350	100.0
Nationality	Saudi	340	97.1
	Non-Saudi	10	2.9
	Total	350	100.0
Social Media Platform (Primary Use)	Facebook	194	55.4
	Snapchat	51	14.6
	Instagram	105	30
	Total	350	100.0
Years of Social Media Experience	1 Year	1	0.3
	2 Years	2	0.6
	3 Years	8	2.3
	4 Years	5	1.4
	5 Years or More	334	95.4

	Total	350	100.0
Place of Residence	Urban	265	75.7
	Rural	54	15.4
	Peri-Urban	31	8.9
	Total	350	100.0
Socio-economic Background	Lower Class	62	17.7
	Middle Class	256	73
	Upper Class / Elite Class	32	9.1
	Total	350	100.0

Table 1 shows that the sample consists primarily of young male Saudi nationals pursuing a bachelor's degree in Education. Most respondents were between 18 and 22 years old (74.6%), male (64.3%), and enrolled in an education department (79.1%). A large majority (97.1%) were Saudi nationals. Facebook was the most commonly used social media platform (55.4%), and most respondents reported

extensive experience with social media: 95.4% said they had used it for 5 years or more. The sample was predominantly urban (75.7%) and of middle-class socio-economic background (73.1%). These results suggest that the findings mainly reflect the experiences and views of young, male undergraduate education students living in urban areas of Saudi Arabia.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics.

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Minimum (Min)	Maximum (Max)
Facebook Use	3.82	0.91	1.00	5.00
Instagram Use	4.15	0.76	2.00	5.00
Snapchat Use	2.97	1.12	1.00	5.00
Socio-Cultural Factors	3.65	0.84	1.50	5.00
Perceived Usefulness	4.28	0.68	2.25	5.00
Learning English Language	4.05	0.79	2.00	5.00

Table 2 disclose that on the average, the participants had positive attitudes, and they used the constructs in high frequency. Perceived Usefulness (M=4.28, SD=0.68) had the highest mean score, so there was a high level of agreement regarding the idea that social media is a useful tool to learn, whereas the lowest mean was the Snapchat Use (M=2.97, SD=1.12), which may indicate the least used or most disliked platform among the three to use to learn. There were also high average ratings of Instagram Use (M=4.15, SD=0.76) and Learning English Language (M=4.05, SD=0.79). The standard deviations indicate that the responses of Snapchat Use were the most varied, which should be associated with the high variety of interactions

between the participants and this platform, and Perceived Usefulness was the most consistent. The ranges affirm the fact that the entire scale of the 5-point scale was used in all variables.

4.2 Measurement Model

Measurement model is an important initial phase of structural equation modeling (SEM) because it determines the validity and reliability of latent constructs under investigation then dwells upon their structural interdependencies. It establishes that the set of observed variables (survey items) is a valid and reliable measure of the theoretic constructs (e.g. Perceived Usefulness or Socio-Cultural Factors) which they represent.

Table 3: Measurement Model Results.

Constructs	Items	ELL-LANG	Cormbach's Apha	CR	AVE
ELL-lang	ELL_LANG2	0.777			
	ELL_LANG3	0.809			
	ELL_LANG4	0.830	0.879	0.888	0.580
	ELL_LANG5	0.767			
	ELL_LANG6	0.729			
PER-EN	PER-EN2	0.791			
	PER-EN3	0.803			
	PER-EN4	0.869	0.856	0.859	0.698
	PER-EN5	0.876	.		
	SM_FB2	0.784			
	SM_FB3	0.773			

SM-FB	SM_FB4	0.813	0.883	0.894	0.681
	SM_FB5	0.886			
	SM_FB6	0.865			
	SM_FB2	0.784			
	SM_IG2	0.771			
	SM_IG3	0.819			
SM-IG	SM_IG4	0.832	0.868	0.871	0.655
	SM_IG5	0.841			
	SM_IG6	0.782			
	SM_SC1	0.720			
	SM_SC2	0.845	0.833	0.846	0.668
SM-SC	SM_SC3	0.876			
	SM_SC4	0.821			
	SOC_CULT3	0.808			
SOC-CUL	SOC_CULT4	0.880	0.750	0.756	0.668
	SOC_CULT5	0.759			

Table 3 suggest that the constructs have satisfactory to superior degrees of reliability and convergent validity. The factor loadings are all above the recommended threshold value of 0.70 and this affirms that each of the items is a good indicator of its associated latent construct. Moreover, it has a high internal consistency, Cronbach Alpha values are between 0.750 and 0.883 with all having values exceeding the acceptable value of 0.70. The scores of

Composite Reliability (CR) are also within the range of 0.756 to 0.894 that exceeds the criterion of 0.70, which strengthens the reliability of the scales. Convergent validity is attained because the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) associated with each construct is above the 0.50 marker and the values are 0.580 to 0.698, to prove that the items measure a significant amount of the variance contained in them.

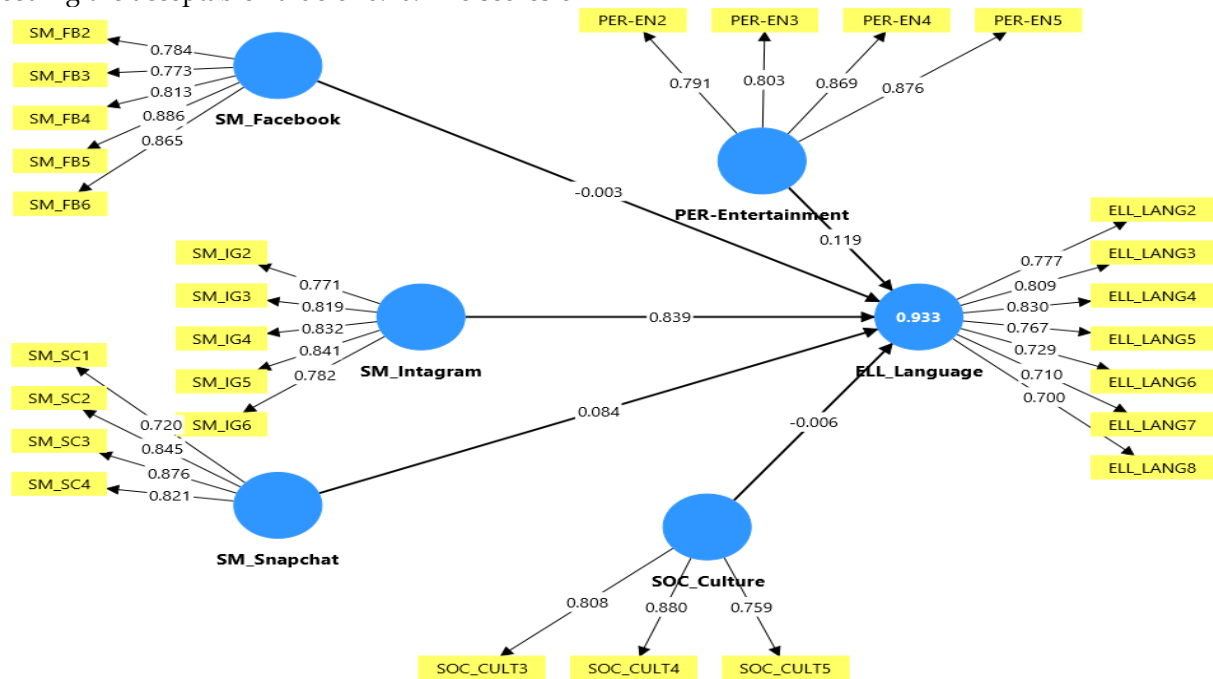


Figure 2: Measurement Model.

Table 4: Discriminant Validity Based On HTMT.

Item	ELL_Language	PER-Entertainment	SM_Facebook	SM_Instagram	SM_Snapchat	SOC_Culture
ELL_Language						
PER-Entertainment	0.836					
SM_Facebook	0.822	0.841				
SM_Instagram	1.076	0.782	0.815			

SM_Snapchat	0.672	0.591	0.647	0.600		
SOC_Culture	0.622	0.632	0.805	0.608	0.585	

Table 4 offers more support to the issue of discriminant validity in the measurement model. The standard level of HTMT set is normally 0.90 and any point above this shows that there is no appropriate differentiation amongst constructs. Although the majority of construct pairs report acceptable discriminant validity with HTMT values lower than this threshold value, a critical violation is indicated. The relationship between SM Instagram and ELL language has a value of 1.076 which is a significant

value better than 0.90. This confirms the above hint of Fornell-Larcker criterion that the two constructs are not empirically different. That high HTMT ratio is a strong indicator that the variables of Instagram use and English language learning are measuring almost the same variance, which makes it difficult to separate them conceptually and would say that both are redundant or there is a serious measurement problem in the model.

Table 5: Discriminant Validity Based on FLC Method.

Item	ELL_Language	PER-Entertainment	SM_Facebook	SM_Intagram	SM_Snapchat	SOC_Culture
ELL_Language	0.762					
PER-Entertainment	0.729	0.836				
SM_Facebook	0.733	0.754	0.825			
SM_Intagram	0.958	0.684	0.720	0.809		
SM_Snapchat	0.572	0.506	0.557	0.515	0.818	
SOC_Culture	0.505	0.518	0.663	0.492	0.462	0.817

Table 5 that a discriminant validity test based on the Fornell-Larcker criterion is typically achieved is that the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of individual constructs (marked in bold on the diagonal) is larger than its correlations with all other constructs (off-diagonal values) in the rows and columns correspondingly. This implies that every latent construct has greater variance with its indicators compared to those of other constructs. There is however, an exception between SMInstagram and ELLLanguage since the correlation of both (0.958) exceeds the square root of the AVE of SMInstagram (0.809) and is also near to that of ELLLanguage (0.762). This is an extremely high correlation that may indicate that these two constructs are not discriminant valid and that they

may not be empirically different in this measurement model and may be measuring something that is very similar.

4.3 Assessing the Structural Model

Measurement model was tested and proved by the structural model of the current study. The test of structural model includes the following steps: (1) testing the significance of the standardized path hugs using bootstrapping of 5000 re-samples representing the relationships among the constructs that the proposed research model hypothesizes, (2) assessing the coefficients of determination (R²), (3) assessing the magnitude of the f², and (4) blindfolding to test the predictive importance of the path model Q².

Table 6: Direct Relationship Test.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	T-Statistics	P Values	Decision
H ₁	SM-FB EL	0.011	0.031	4.397	0.325	Not Supported
H ₂	SM-IG EL	0.041	0.024	4.397	0.00	Supported
H ₃	SM-SC EL	0.086	0.020	4.290	0.00	Supported

Note: SM-FB=Facebook, SM-IG=Intagram, SM-SC= Snap Chat, SOC-CULT= Socio-Cultural, PE= Percieved Enjoyment, ELL-LANG=Learining English

Table 6 shows H₁: There is a significantly positive impact of Facebook on English language learning. The results reveal ($\beta = 0.031$, t-value = 0.454, p-value = 0.325). Hence, H₁ was not supported. This results

may be supprted by findings by Talafhah et al., (2019) showed that most participants felt comfortable using Facebook in English language learning, but less than half of them used Facebook on a regular basis to learn

English. In addition, they tended to read and observe discussions in English rather than participate in them or produce language output. On the other Klimova and Pikhart (2020) found that using Facebook improves writing skills in EFL classes, particularly in terms of shaping and organizing ideas, increasing motivation, developing and supporting peer collaboration, improving vocabulary, and reducing students' shyness. **H₂**: There is a significantly positive impact of Instagram on English language learning. The results reveal ($\beta = 0.024$, t -value = 4.397, p -value = 0.000). Hence, H₁ was **supported**. These results are consistent with those of Nasution (2023) and Anindita & Noveintine (2022), who found that in both conventional and distance learning, Instagram

is effective in various aspects of learning, including vocabulary, writing skills, grammar, and collaboration. **H₃**: There is a significantly positive impact of Snapchat on English language learning. The results reveal ($\beta = 0.020$, t -value = 4.290, p -value = 0.000). Hence H₁ was **supported**. The results of this research are consistent with Alshabeb & Almaqrn (2018b) who found that an overall positive response from the student participants towards using social media and mobile technologies to facilitate learning English. Similarly, survey in Saudi Arabia indicated that the students showed positive attitudes to use social media technologies to support English language learning (Alshammari, 2019).

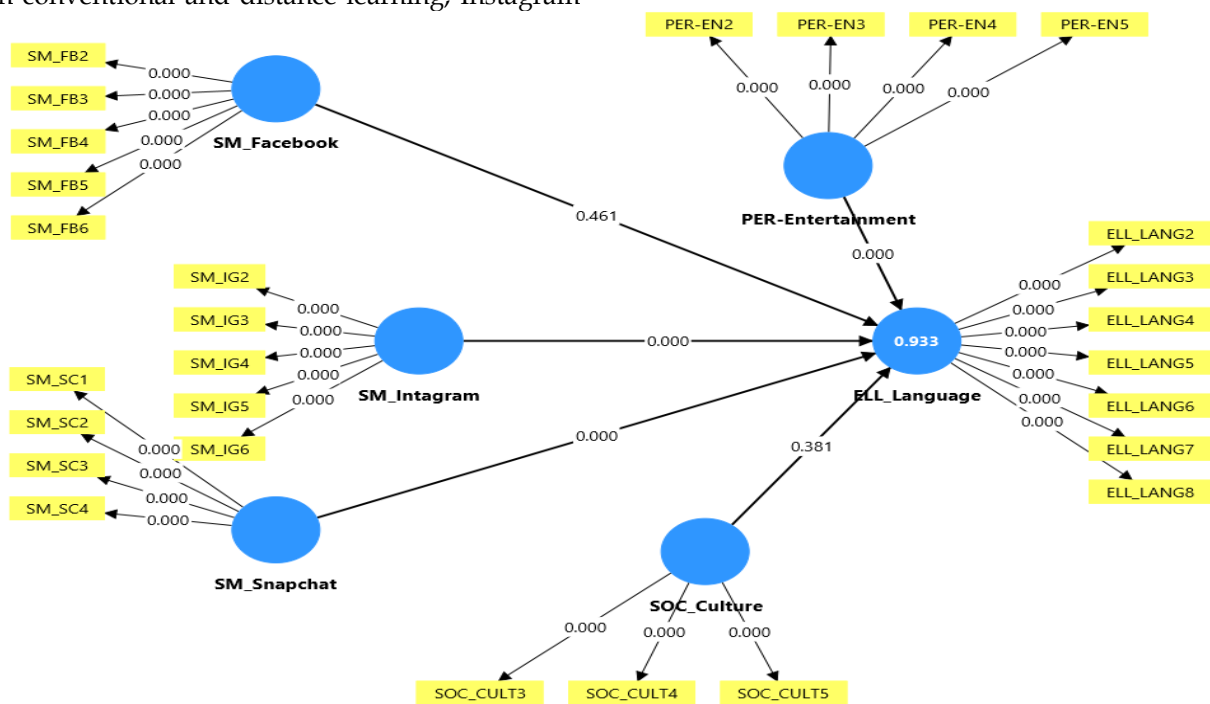


Figure 3: Path Model Using PLS SEM.

4.4 Moderation Analysis

Three (3) of the nine (9) hypotheses assumed that perceived enjoyment and socio-cultural factors has a moderating effect on the relationship between social media (FB, IG, SC) and learning English language (dependent variable). The moderation effect was

assessed through the product indicator approach in PLS-SEM (Henseler & Fassott, 2010b). The researcher used the Model (Product Indicator Approach) in Partial Least Squares (PLS) to test the moderation effect of (perceived enjoyment and Socio-Cultural). Hence, hypotheses (H4, H5, H6, H7, H8, & H9) in Table 7 represent the moderation hypotheses.

Table 7: Results Of Moderation (Indirect Relationship) Test.

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient	Std. Error	T Value	P Value	Decision
H ₄	FB $\xrightarrow{\uparrow PE}$ EL	-0.022	0.025	0.840	0.200	Not Supported
H ₅	IG $\xrightarrow{\uparrow PE}$ EL	-0.019	0.024	0.932	0.176	Not Supported
H ₆	SC $\xrightarrow{\uparrow PE}$ EL	0.052	0.022	2.476	0.007	Supported
H ₇	FB $\xrightarrow{\uparrow SoC}$ EL	-0.009	0.025	0.377	0.377	Not Supported

H ₈	IG $\xrightarrow{\uparrow \text{SoC}}$ EL	0.036	0.023	1.664	0.048	Supported
H ₉	SC $\xrightarrow{\uparrow \text{SoC}}$ EL	-0.042	0.025	1.776	0.038	Supported

Note: SM-FB=Facebook, SM-IG=Instagram, SM-SC= Snap Chat, SOC-CULT= Socio-Cultural, PE= Percieved Enjoyment, ELL-LANG=Learining English

Table 7 unveil a subtle contribution of the Perceived Enjoyment (PE) and Socio-Cultural factors (SoC) to the development of the association between the social media use and English language learning (ELL). Namely, Perceived Enjoyment was only significant as a mediator between Snapchat Use and ELL (0.052, $p = 0.007$), indicating that the positive impact of Snapchat on learning is greater when the users enjoy using it. Contrary to this, the effects of Facebook or Instagram were not significantly moderated by PE ($p > 0.05$). In the case of Socio-Cultural factors, Instagram use showed a significant positive moderation effect (0.036, $p = 0.048$) meaning the effect of Instagram on learning is strongly facilitated in totally positive socio-cultural environments. On the other hand, Socio-Cultural factors exhibited a strong negative moderation of Snapchat use ($= -0.042$, $p = 0.038$), which means that socio-cultural environment could be neutralising the benefits of Snapchat use or that this tool is viewed differently in some cultural settings. Facebook through Socio-Cultural factors had no significant moderation ($p > 0.05$). All these results suggest that the processes that connect the particular social media sites with language acquisition results are not universal but entirely rely on the unique psychological (enjoyment) and contextual (socio-cultural) mediators.

5. Discussion

This study set out to investigate the differentiated impact of three social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat—on English language learning among Saudi EFL undergraduates, with particular attention to the moderating roles of perceived enjoyment and socio-cultural factors. The findings reveal a complex, platform-contingent landscape that constitutes the study's primary contribution to the field. Rather than treating social media as a monolithic phenomenon, this research demonstrates that each platform's affordances shape distinct patterns of language learning behavior, yielding differential educational outcomes. This platform-specific analysis, combined with the examination of psychological and contextual moderators, addresses a significant gap in the literature, which has tended to aggregate social media use or focus on single platforms in isolation (Lin et al., 2016; Kabilan et al., 2010).

5.1. Platform-Specific Learning Activities and Skill Development

This study stands out by showing *how* learners actually use each platform for language learning, something earlier research often misses. The results show clear patterns in platform use, which helps explain the different effects. Instagram was the most popular for learning ($M=4.15$). Participants said they followed English-language educational accounts and influencers, watched short video clips with English subtitles, read captions and comments on English posts, and sometimes wrote English-language comments. These activities mainly helped learners build vocabulary in context, improve reading comprehension through captions and comments, and gain cultural knowledge from real content. Instagram's visual format offers learners several ways to learn, which supports vocabulary retention (Nasution, 2023). The comment sections also let learners practice writing in a low-pressure way. The platform's algorithm shows users content that matches their interests, so they regularly see English-language content on topics they care about. This ongoing, relevant exposure supports incidental learning (Schmidt, 1990).

Snapchat had the lowest average use ($M=2.97$) and the most variation ($SD=1.12$), but it still showed a strong positive effect on learning when used. Participants said they exchanged English-language snaps with friends to practice writing, watched English stories from media and influencers, and used the chat for informal English conversations. These activities mainly helped with writing skills through real communication, listening comprehension from stories, and practical language use with peers.

Facebook was the most used platform overall (55.4% of respondents), but it did not have a clear effect on learning outcomes. Looking at what participants did on Facebook helps explain this. Most used it to follow English-language educational pages and read English-language posts, but they rarely joined discussions or wrote in English. This pattern of mostly reading without much participation matches Talafhah et al.'s (2019) finding that learners on Facebook tend to "read and observe discussions in English rather than participate in them or produce language output." Some studies have found Facebook helpful for certain skills, such as writing

(Klimova & Pikhart, 2020), but in this Saudi EFL context, the results were different.

5.2. The Novel Contribution: Platform-Contingent Moderation

In addition to showing these direct effects, this study stands out by revealing that each platform's educational impact depends on specific moderating factors. This helps the field move past basic models and better understand who benefits from social media for language learning and under what circumstances.

Perceived Enjoyment only had a significant effect on the Snapchat-ELL relationship ($\beta=0.052$, $p=0.007$). This means Snapchat helps language learning most when users genuinely enjoy using it. This makes sense because Snapchat is designed for casual, playful chats with friends. When learners have fun using Snapchat, they are more likely to use the language in real, extended conversations, which supports learning (Krashen, 1982). If Snapchat feels like a chore, its learning benefits drop. For Instagram and Facebook, enjoyment did not have a significant effect, suggesting these platforms may help learning in more routine or practical ways, rather than through enjoyment.

Socio-cultural factors had two distinct effects: a positive effect on Instagram ($\beta=0.036$, $p=0.048$) and a negative effect on Snapchat ($\beta=-0.042$, $p=0.038$). This shows how a platform is viewed in Saudi culture, which strongly affects its value for learning. Instagram is seen as more legitimate for education because of its polished look and links to influencers and aspirational lifestyles. When friends and family support their use of Instagram, learners feel more confident using it for study. On the other hand, Snapchat's reputation for casual and short-lived messages can make it seem less serious for learning. If there is social pressure, learners might hide or reduce their Snapchat use for education, or feel uncomfortable, which can hurt learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

5.1. Practical Implications

These findings offer useful ideas for teachers who want to use social media in EFL classes. Instead of using the same method across platforms, teachers should consider what makes each platform unique and how students see it. For example, Instagram can help students build vocabulary and practice reading by using curated posts and captions. Teachers can suggest English-language accounts to follow or set up class hashtags for sharing content. Although Snapchat is less commonly used, it can give students

a chance to practice writing in a relaxed way. Teachers might create short writing tasks or encourage students to keep English-language streaks with classmates. Facebook did not show direct benefits in this study, but it could still be useful for sharing information or building a sense of community. It's also important for teachers to consider the local culture. If some platforms have a bad reputation, teachers may need to clearly explain their educational value. Talking openly about how these platforms can help learning, showing good examples, and involving parents and peers can help make social media a positive part of the classroom.

6. CONCLUSION

This study explored how different social media platforms affect English language learning among Saudi undergraduate students, while also considering the roles of perceived enjoyment and socio-cultural factors. The results showed that the educational value of social media is not uniform, but varies depending on the platform and context. Instagram and Snapchat had a clear positive effect on language learning, while Facebook did not. This supports the idea that choosing the right platforms is important when designing instruction. The study also found that these effects depend on both internal and external factors: Snapchat's usefulness is strongly linked to how much users enjoy it, and both Instagram and Snapchat are influenced by socio-cultural factors, but in different ways. A methodological issue was identified, as there may be overlap between how Instagram use and learning outcomes are measured, which future research should address. Overall, this study supports a more nuanced, context-based view of technology's role in language learning.

6.1. Limitations And Future Research

This study used a cross-sectional design and primarily male participants; it cannot establish causality or generalize findings to all populations. Future research should adopt longitudinal methods and recruit more diverse samples. Employing objective proficiency tests and experimental designs, rather than self-reports, would better distinguish platform use from actual learning. Despite these limitations, the results indicate that the educational value of social media varies by platform and is shaped by complex psychological factors. This research provides a valuable foundation for advancing theory and practice in technology-based language learning.

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