

# Students' Use of Social Media for Academic Purposes in Moroccan Higher Education

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**Abstract**— Recently, social networking platforms have been increasingly integrated into students' academic lives, reshaping the ways they communicate, collaborate, and access learning resources. The current study explores students' utilization of social networks for academic purposes, focusing on tools being used, their frequency of use, motives, benefits and challenges encountered, if any. To this end, a questionnaire, written in both English and French, was administered online to 163 graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in Moroccan higher education institutions in the 2025-2026 academic year. After collection, data were coded and statically analysed using Excell software. The findings revealed that the vast majority of the participants used social networks, most often YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram and LinkedIn, in their studies. Their utilization mostly took the form of text messages, audio messages or calls and collaborative documents like Google Docs. The participants indicated that they used social networks for various academic purposes, most of which involved communication. In fact, they demonstrated that these networks were beneficial as they facilitated communication with classmates and teachers as well as group works. Nevertheless, using these platforms resulted in some hurdles such as reduced face-to-face interactions, superficial online conversations, and the risk of addiction. The present study concludes that using social networks was common among students in the Moroccan educational context. However, their misuse generated multiple adverse effects which necessitates making strategic interventions. These include integrating students more in peer and group discussions to foster face-to-face social interactions and in-depth discussions.

**Keywords**— Social Networks, Communication, Morocco, Higher Education, Benefits, Hurdles

## I. INTRODUCTION

There has been an increasing shift towards the use of social media recently [1]. A notable shift towards the use of social media has been noticed, as the number of social media users has risen to 5.66 billion active "social media identities" at a worldwide level in 2025, representing 68.7% of the total global population[2]. Among them, 22.8 million users were Moroccans and represented 59.1% of the total Moroccan population. This shift is fostered by a number of factors including COVID 19, which urged the world to integrate technology into the vast majority of practices, including education [1], [3]. As a matter of fact, students' learning style has changed from a traditional mode to the use of social media platforms to accomplish academic tasks. Nevertheless, access to these platforms is not always accessible due to some constraints like lack of connection and the unavailability of digital resources [4]. Additionally, the use of social media networks may result in challenges despite their efficiency in some aspects [5]. The current study aspires to explore this issue from the perspective of students enrolled in Moroccan higher education to identify their familiarity with these platforms, motives, benefits and challenges, if any.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Students utilize social medial platforms for multiple instrumental motives. Searching for entertaining contents on platforms, like Instagram and Facebook, is one of students' motivations [6]. Another key driver is education-focused motivation, which entails searching for information, staying updated on academic events such as conferences and lectures [7] and sharing resources. Furthermore, they are used to establish new connections and relations as well as maintain existing ones [8]. In fact, these motives result in several advantages. For instance, students' interaction with their classmates and teachers through social media boosts their engagement and collaborative learning [9]. Also, social networking platforms, like LinkedIn, enhances

professional networking, which facilitates finding internship and training opportunities for their studies [10]. Furthermore, social-media platforms provide virtual spaces where students can interact with their teachers and classmates, including posting and reacting to contents [11]. Such participations foster their engagement and collaborative learning skills [9], maintain their privacy and eliminate the fear of judgement mainly when their interactions are anonymous [12].

Despite its academic benefits, social media presents several disadvantages. Social networking platforms facilitates the spread of inaccurate and misleading information, as everyone can post any contents online[13]. This might negatively impact students' knowledge and understanding because they struggle to identify accurate information out of fake contents[14], [15]. Furthermore, they can distract students' attention and concentration due to frequent notifications and online interactions [16]. Moreover, extensive use of social media leads to addictive behaviors which interfere with students' academic responsibilities and tasks [17]. Furthermore, students' performance is at risk as a consequence to their frequent online interactions which reduce their study time and concentration [18]. In addition, students' use of social media exposes them to cyberbullying and cybervictimization, which can negatively influence their psychological and academic lives [19].

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Question

The current study explores students' attitudes towards the use of social networking platforms in Moroccan higher education. It aims to identify the platforms they most frequently get engaged with, their underlying motivations, perceived benefits and potential drawbacks. Hence, it answers the following research question:

What are students' attitudes towards the use of social media in Moroccan higher education?

#### B. Sample

163 students enrolled in Moroccan higher education institutions participated in this study. Among them, there were 159 Bachelor students from economics, English and engineering departments. The sample also included two Master and two Doctorate students from the English department.

### IV. RESULTS

This study revealed that networking platforms were common among students, which they utilized for multiple academic purposes. Additionally, these platforms positively contributed to their studies. However, they led to several drawbacks. Full results with figures and tables will be published in the second proceeding.

Students frequently utilized social medial platforms for individual and interactive motives. The most frequently used platforms among students were YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram and LinkedIn, representing 31.89%, 28.06%, 11.51% and 7.91% of the students' total responses, respectively. The utilization of these platforms took different forms such as text messages, audio messages and calls, video calls and collaborative documents like Google Documents. Furthermore, more than half of the students, representing 69.93% of the total participants, frequently utilized these platforms in their studies for multiple academic purposes. For instance, communicating with their classmates (26.73%) and teachers (11,68%), participating in group works or project-based discussions (21.39%), asking and answering academic questions (12,67%), and sharing academic contents such as announcements, deadlines and resources (12,08%) were the top motives.

The utilization of social networking platforms had both positive and negative impacts on students. Starting with the former, students' engagement with social networking platforms enabled them to receive notifications on events and announcements as well as quick feedback to academic questions. Moreover, they facilitated students' communication and group work like projects and presentations. Furthermore, they streamlined academic publications, access of resources and profile recognition. Additionally, they boosted students' imagination as they used them to get new ideas. Nevertheless, social networks limited students' face to face interactions, which made expressing thoughts in real conversations difficult. Not only that, the online

conversations were superficial because they tended to be brief and sketchy. In addition, there were misunderstandings among students, because online talks lacked voice tone and emotions. Furthermore, they diminished students' self-confidence at the level of sharing ideas with others.

## V. DISCUSSION

The present study explores higher education students' experiences with the integration of social networks into their academic practices in the Moroccan context.

Students frequently used some social networking platforms to accomplish their academic tasks. The most commonly used tools among students were YouTube, WhatsApp and LinkedIn. This aligns with findings by researchers in [20], who confirmed that social networks became vital sources of information for students. At the level of forms of communication, students often used text messages, voice messages such as audios and audio calls, video calls and collaborative documents such as Google Documents, Sheets and Slides. The use of each one may be based on students' preference. For instance, students with high levels of shyness or social anxiety often prefer text-based messages over audio or video calls [21]. This is because the former allows users to compose messages at their own pace [22] and avoid immediate social evaluation which tends to be based on different factors, including physical appearance [23]. With regards to students' motives, they engaged with social networks for some personal and interactive motives. For instance, they tended to post academic contributions, which would increase their visibility as they could reach other students, professors and experts worldwide [24].

Despite that social media platforms enhanced multiple dimensions of student learning, they had negative drawbacks. They boosted their imagination as they sparked new ideas for projects and presentations. This findings is also confirmed by researchers in [24] and [25], who demonstrated that social media use fostered students' creativity. In addition to that, they facilitated students' communication and group work. On the other hand, social media use limited students' face to face interactions, which made expressing thoughts in face-to-face conversations difficult. Additionally, they held superficial conversations which were brief and not deep. This led to misunderstandings among students, as online talks, mainly texting messages, lacked non-verbal cues. These findings are in consonant with what researchers confirmed in [27], who demonstrated that the observer's ability to understand the communicator's true thoughts and feelings, when reading an email, decreased in comparison to when hearing the same message via speech like voice messages.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The present study explores higher education students' attitudes and experiences with using social media networks for academic purposes. They showed consistent engagement with platforms like YouTube, WhatsApp and LinkedIn. They utilized these networks for multi-academic tasks, including interacting with their classmates and teachers. In fact, using these tools were considered beneficial as they positively contributed to their learning. These entailed having an easier access to resources and publishing academic contributions. Nevertheless, they led to some serious drawbacks such as addition, lack of confidence, superficial conversations and misunderstanding. In order to mitigate the intensity of these drawbacks, effective strategies are required. For instance, teachers are recommended to make extra-interactive activities to boost students' social skills and self-confidence, and encourage them to conduct deep-conversations.

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