
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Professors and Students' Attitudes Towards the Impact of Digital Media on Higher Education in Morocco

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| ABSTRACT

Digital Media is a significant tool for educators and students alike to reconsider their educational viewpoints and build a better educational environment; using media for educational purposes allows educators and students to become "Global/Digital Citizens" capable of discussing issues related to "Digital Citizenship" in the hope of bridging the "Digital Divide" between students as "Digital Natives" and educators as "Digital Immigrants.". The concept of Digital Citizenship (Ribble and Bailey, 2007; Mossberger and Tolbert, 2008; Ribble, 2012; Choi, 2016; Ribble and Park, 2019; Whitehead, 2019) implies the significant role of Digital Media in higher education in Morocco. This quantitative study explores university professors and university students' attitudes on the impact of Digital Media on higher education in Morocco. The results of this study highlight the existing gap in digital practices and of Digital Media and the potential benefits it has to offer in higher education in Morocco.

| KEYWORDS

Media; Digital Media; Higher Education; Morocco.

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

As we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century (2021-2030), an upheaval in the world's higher education systems is required, particularly with the shift toward more asynchronous classes/seminars in the post-Covid 19 age. By using media for educational purposes, educators and students can become "Global/Digital Citizens" capable of discussing issues related to "Digital Citizenship" in the hopes of bridging the "Digital Divide" between students as "Digital Natives" and educators as "Digital Immigrants." Digital media is a significant tool for both educators and students to reconsider their educational viewpoints and build a better educational environment.

This quantitative study explores university professors and university students' attitudes on the impact of Digital Media on higher education in Morocco. The results of this study highlight the existing gap in digital practices and of Digital Media and the potential benefits it has to offer in higher education in Morocco.

2. Literature Review

The review of the literature takes a deeper look at the examination of the literature; based on social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), this study investigates the social impact of Digital Media in higher education in Morocco. The various scholarly and empirical works devoted to the study range from "Digital Citizenship: The Internet, Society and Participation" (Mossberger et al, 2008) until Whitehead's "Digital Citizenship: Teaching Practices and Strategies" (Whitehead, 2019) and Moonsoon Choi's thesis on DC measuring scale (Choi, 2016).

"The ability to participate in society online" is the first definition of Digital Citizenship, according to Mossberger et al. (2008). This implies that the ability to engage in virtual activities online—whether through the internet or social media—makes a person perceived as an active member of society. The "abilities, thinking, and action regarding internet use, which allows people to understand, navigate, engage in, and transform, self, community, society, and the world" (Choi, M. 2016) is the second definition of digital citizenship. Put another way, simply being able to engage in online activities is insufficient since individuals also need to be aware of their actions and be able to function as productive digital citizens who can create and recreate in the virtual world. "Digital citizenship" is defined as "norms of appropriate, responsible behaviour with regard to technology use" in the following definition. (Ribble and Bailey, 2007, 10), showing that in a virtual setting, people have duties to one another. People's actions have an impact on how they engage with the virtual environment. Following is an expansion or update of the previous definition of "digital citizenship," which is defined as "the continuously developing norms of appropriate, responsible, and empowered technology use" (Ribble and Park, 2019). This definition indicates that, because technology is constantly evolving, the required responsible behaviour of citizens in the digital world advances and develops over time and because of personal experiences.

3. Methodology

Methodology refers to "a set of principles and ideas that inform the design of a research study." (Birks and Mills, 2011, p 4); that is to say; the way researchers design their research. It is the section the researcher must specify what type of research design is being used, the setting where research occurs, what population and sampling is being targeted and the instruments used to collect data from the participants in the study. The goal of this section is to highlight the research methodology of this paper in terms of collecting and analysing the data to explore the impact of Digital Media at the level of the Moroccan universities.

3.1 Statement of the Problem

As far as Morocco is heading towards implementing more asynchronous courses in the educational system, this study identifies the existing gap in digital practices in the Moroccan universities and the repercussions it might have on the teaching learning process in higher education in Morocco.

3.2 Objective of the Study

In a digitized world, one of the objectives of this study is to explore potential uses of Digital Media in specific, and Digital Media in general, in higher education in Morocco to raise professors and students' awareness towards up-to-date global issues.

3.3 Participants

Participants in this research include academics from various Moroccan universities as well as students. Their varying perspectives on the matter of using Digital Media in higher education in Morocco offer valuable insights into the notion of Digital Citizenship inside Moroccan academic institutions.

3.4 Research Questions

Three research questions must be addressed to investigate the potential use of Digital Media higher education in Morocco from the standpoint of Digital Citizenship:

How successful is Digital Media in sharing significant information about Digital Citizenship?

How possible it is for Digital Media to promote the concept of Digital Citizenship in higher education in Morocco?

How can Digital Media sensitise university professors and university students to the importance of becoming digital citizens?

The following section discusses in detail the results of the study.

4. Results

The results of this study shed light on the importance of Digital Media in higher education in Morocco, its importance in sharing significant information about Digital Citizenship and its role in promoting it, its ability to fight and/or correct misinformation, its ability to sensitize university students as to the necessity of becoming digital citizens, its ability to sensitize university professors and university students alike to their digital rights and responsibilities, and its importance in sharing significant data.

The first figure depicts the participants' responses regarding the relevance of Digital Media in higher education in Morocco. Using a Likert scale, the multiple-choice question supported respondents in picking the appropriate response based on their understanding of higher education in Morocco, with alternatives such as agreeing, strongly agreeing, disagreeing, and strongly disagreeing.

Table 1: The Importance of Digital Media in Higher Education in Morocco.

		Respondents	Percentage
	Extremely Important	99	44.8
	Important	101	45.7
	Not Important at all	5	2.3
	Not Very Important	16	7.2
	Total	221	100.0

According to the table above, 45.7 percent (101) of survey respondents believe that media in higher education is significant, with 44.8 percent (99) believing it is extremely important. In contrast, only 7.2 percent (16) believe that Digital Media is not very significant, and 2.3 percent (5) believe it is completely irrelevant.

The following chart depicts the role of the media in disseminating knowledge about DC. The multiple-choice question assisted respondents in selecting the proper response based on their understanding of higher education in Morocco, including options such as agreement, strongly agreeing, disagreement, and strongly disagreeing.

Table 2: The Importance of Digital Media in Sharing Information about Digital Citizenship.

		Respondents	Percentage
	Extremely Important	123	55.7
	Important	81	36.7
	Not Important at all	3	1.4
	Not Very Important	14	6.3
	Total	221	100.0

The researcher asked the participants whether Digital Media is important for providing knowledge about Digital Citizenship. 55.7 percent (123) consider media to be highly important, while 36.7 percent (81) believe it is important. On the other hand, 6.3 percent (14) believe it is unimportant, while only 1.4 percent (3) believe it is completely irrelevant.

The chart below depicts statistically the participants' replies to the question of whether Digital Media plays a role in promoting DC. The multiple-choice question assisted respondents in selecting the most acceptable response based on their understanding of higher education in Morocco, including options such as agreement, strongly agreeing, disagreement, and strongly disagreeing.

Table 3: Digital Media Has a Role in Promoting Digital Citizenship.

		Respondents	Percentage
	Agree	127	57.5
	Disagree	26	11.8
	Strongly Agree	61	27.6
	Strongly Disagree	7	3.2
	Total	221	100.0

According to this figure, 57.5 percent (127) of questionnaire respondents think that Digital Media plays a role in fostering Digital Citizenship, while 27.6 percent (61) strongly agree. On the other hand, 11.8 percent (26) disagree with the statement, but just 3.2 percent (7) strongly disagree.

The following chart shows the statistical frequencies of respondents' responses about the impact of Digital Media on the teaching and learning process. The multiple-choice question helped respondents choose the appropriate response based on their knowledge about higher education in Morocco, including alternatives like agreement, strongly agreeing, disagreement, and strongly disagreeing.

Table 4: Digital Media Has an Impact in the Teaching Learning Process.

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	128	57.9
Disagree	31	14.0
Strongly Agree	55	24.9
Strongly Disagree	7	3.2
Total	221	100.0

The researcher asked the questionnaire's respondents whether Digital Media had an impact on the teaching-learning process. 57.9 percent (128) agree with this statement, while 24.9 percent (55) strongly agree. On the other hand, 14.0 percent (31) disagree with this viewpoint, while 3.2 percent (7) severely disagree.

The following chart shows the percentage of respondents who said the Digital Media helps fight and/or rectify misinformation. The multiple-choice question helped respondents choose the best response based on their knowledge about higher education in Morocco, with options including agreement, strongly agreeing, disagreement, and strongly disagreeing.

Table 5: Digital Media Helps Fight and/or Correct Misinformation.

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	119	53.8
Disagree	43	19.5
Strongly Agree	46	20.8
Strongly Disagree	13	5.9
Total	221	100.0

According to the figure above, 53.8 percent (119) agree that Digital Media helps fight and/or correct disinformation, while 20.8 percent (46%) strongly agree. On the other hand, 19.5 percent (43) disagreed with this concept, but just 5.9 percent (13) severely disagreed.

The chart below provides an overview of the influence of Digital Media in raising awareness among university students about the importance of becoming digital citizens. Also, the researcher employed Likert scale questions to assist respondents in selecting the proper answer depending on their knowledge and expertise with the subject area.

Table 6: Digital Media Sensitises University Students as to the Necessity of Becoming Digital Citizens.

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	127	57.5
Disagree	41	18.6
Strongly Agree	45	20.4
Strongly Disagree	8	3.6
Total	221	100.0

The researcher asked the questionnaire respondents whether Digital Media raises awareness among university students about the importance of being digital citizens. 57.5 percent (127) agreed with this idea, while 20.4% (45) strongly agreed. In contrast, 18.6 percent (41%) disagreed with the statement, with only 3.6 percent (8) severely disagreeing.

The following chart shows how participants responded to the question of whether Digital media sensitizes university instructors and students about their digital rights and responsibilities. The researcher used Likert scale questions to help respondents choose the best answer based on their knowledge and experience with the topic.

Table 7: Digital Media Sensitises University Professors and University Students as to their Digital Rights and Responsibilities.

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	121	54.8
Disagree	43	19.5
Strongly Agree	45	20.4
Strongly Disagree	12	5.4
Total	221	100.0

54.8 percent (121) agree with the statement that Digital media educates university instructors and students about their digital rights and duties, while 20.4 percent (45) strongly agree. On the other hand, 19.5 percent (43) disagree with this concept, but just 5.4 percent (12) severely objected.

The last chart in this section shows statistical percentages of participants' responses about whether Digital Media was successful in communicating significant information during the Covid 19 pandemic. Additionally, the researcher used Likert scale questions to allow respondents to select the best answer based on their knowledge and experience with the subject.

Table 8: Digital Media Has Been Successful in Sharing Significant Information during COVID 19 Pandemic.

	Respondents	Percentage
Agree	115	52.0
Disagree	32	14.5
Strongly Agree	63	28.5
Strongly Disagree	11	5.0
Total	221	100.0

Concerning the success of Digital media in communicating significant information during the COVID-19 epidemic, 52.0 percent (115) of respondents agree with this statement, while 28.5 percent (63) strongly agree. On the other hand, 14.5 percent (32) disagreed with this concept, while just 5.0 percent (11) severely disagreed.

With that said, the following section discusses the findings of this study to provide a more complete understanding of Digital Media and its relationship to the context of higher education in Morocco.

5. Discussion

Nowadays, people's lives are heavily influenced by Digital Media; it is possible to reconstruct people's attitudes using Digital Media, particularly social media now that it has become a part of our lives. In higher education in Morocco, social media can be an important asset in the dissemination of the concept of "Digital Citizenship" among university professors and students; some elements of "Digital Citizenship," such as "Digital Security" and "Digital Rights and Responsibilities," can solve some of the problems faced in the digital world.

The following section investigates the potential for transitioning from local to global citizens, as well as how it relates to Digital Media and Digital Citizenship; the rapid changes that have occurred in the post-pandemic era have necessitated encouraging individuals to think of themselves as global citizens who are willing to embrace and adapt to global development. Higher education in Morocco is in critical need of university professors and students who are eager to explore the myriad opportunities that the digital world offers.

Also, Integrating "Digital Citizenship" into higher education in Morocco aids in the transition from local to global citizens. The rapid changes that have occurred in the post-pandemic age have necessitated the idea of encouraging individuals to consider themselves as global citizens who are willing to embrace and adapt to global developments. Higher education in Morocco is desperately in need of university teachers and students willing to explore the many options that the digital world has to offer.

6. Conclusion

Digital Media can be a valuable tool for educators and students alike in revisiting their educational viewpoints and creating a better educational environment; using Digital Media for educational purposes will allow educators and students to become "Global/Digital Citizens" capable of discussing issues related to "Digital Citizenship" in the hope of bridging the "Digital Divide" between students as "Digital Natives" and educators as "Digital Immigrants."

7. Limitations of the Study

The biggest impediments to employing technology in the past were its slowness and excessive expense; now, these two barriers no longer exist. As a result, instructors use these tools to encourage students, save time, and learn about a range of topics.

No one can deny that Digital Media is of capital importance in Moroccan higher education. It is thanks to this process that educational concepts have improved in Morocco. Also, Digital Media in Morocco is successful in moulding university students' perceptions of different global issues. However, this very fact is surrounded by many limitations such as the inability of some teachers and/or students to accept the integration of "Digital citizenship" as a component in the educational system may hinder the implementation of "Digital Citizenship" concepts in the teaching-learning process in the Moroccan universities.

Another limitation is that the digitization process in Morocco is slow, and that makes it hard for most university professors who are willing to open to change and that provides enough space for media to intervene by reshaping peoples' mindsets according to certain criteria designed by mass media. In other words, Morocco's slow digitalization process makes it difficult for most university teachers to be flexible, which gives the media the opportunity to meddle and reshape people's perceptions to fit their predetermined narratives.

8. Recommendations for Further Studies

This study offers some recommendations for implementing "Digital Citizenship" concepts in Morocco's higher universities to address the various issues surrounding the notion. To create global future generations that are open but watchful towards delicate situations, the latter require global educational viewpoints that can help rectify some misconceptions given by the media.

One recommendation regarding the notion of Digital Citizenship in Morocco is to consider potential coursebooks that cover the concepts of Digital Media at every educational level. To have a thorough discussion of this concept at the higher education course level in Moroccan universities, topics related to Digital Citizenship in Morocco should be addressed from the primary through the junior and high school levels.

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