SOCIAL MEDIA UTILIZATION AS A RESEARCH TOOL AMONG EFL RESEARCHERS AT MOROCCAN UNIVERSITIES: A SCIENTIFIC JOURNEY FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

Social media is one of the well-known instruments that have arisen as a result of technology's profound impact on education and learning. The former has provided new opportunities for learning while also posing difficulties that have greatly affected the scientific area. In order to ascertain perceptions of this new method of conducting research and weigh the benefits and drawbacks, the current study was carried out among EFL scholars at three Moroccan universities—Dhar Mehraz University, Sais University, and Moulay Ismail University. 204 EFL researchers who successfully completed an online questionnaire were included in the study. The majority of EFL researchers responded warmly to the query regarding social media integration in the research field, as they view it in an upbeat manner due to its flexibility. According to the quantitative and qualitative data that were obtained, the findings revealed that EFL researchers still spend more time on social media engaging in amusement than learning. The results also showed that Email, Whatsapp, and Facebook are among the top platforms for EFL researchers to conduct research on. The upsides of employing social media as a research instrument include savings on expenses, flexible supervision, and simplicity in getting to know research participants. On the other hand, there were a number of difficulties with social media, such as technological challenges, procrastination, and distraction.

Keywords: Challenges, EFL researchers, Moroccan Universities, Perceptions, Social Media,   Technology

I. INTRODUCTION

We can't hide the fact that social media has become a part of daily life. It is a part of the majority of people's schedules and changes the way they live, work, and, more importantly, learn. This demonstrates that social media has effectively taken over every field, including business, marketing, education, and a wide range of others.

Social media has drastically changed how education is provided because the vast majority of students nowadays are digital natives and habituated to using technology tools like laptops, tablets, and cell phones. While passing through campuses, it is much more typical to witness students focused on their phones, engaged in texting, reading news updates, sharing photographs, etc. All of these online activities are more typical of students' regular routines.

University staff and learners have been solicited to adopt cutting-edge strategies for social media collaboration alongside knowledge sharing. This can ensure that students learn in a fun setting and support them in leading lives that are worthwhile. Due to this, students continue to use social media extensively since it plays a big part in their everyday lives. Consequentially, the research community has grown interested in how social media impacts the educational field in general and the research field in particular. In simple terms,

there are clear and powerful arguments both in favor of and against using social media in education as a research instrument. Many academics and students nowadays contend that social media is changing and redefining education. Its great degree of usage and accessibility, as well as the recognition that technology has made it feasible for learning to proceed outside of conventional classroom settings.

Many EFL students find conducting research in Moroccan higher education institutions to be a challenging experience. But it continues to be a prerequisite for earning a university degree. Because of this, EFL students are constantly looking for creative strategies to improve the caliber of their dissertations. Social media integration is one of these novel approaches. The primary aim of this study is to investigate how social media is changing the research landscape and ascertain how EFL students feel about this newly developed approach to undertaking research. Three Moroccan universities—Dhar Mehraz University, Sais University, and Moulay Ismail University—will be the focus of the current study's EFL participants.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Social Media Definitions

Many academics have diverse definitions of what social media is. Boyd and Ellison (2008) defined social media as platforms that permit the development of user profiles and the visibility of user relationships [1]. Social media, according to Kietzmann et al. (2011), are web-based apps that include functionality for collaboration, interactions, teams, discussions, and accounts [2]. The term "social media sites" (Diga & Kelleher, 2009) [3] or "a set of information technologies" (Kapoor et al., 2017; Oestreicher-Singer & Zalmanson, 2013) has been used to describe social media [4] [5].   However, it seems that most people concur that Web 2.0 technologies were crucial to the creation and uptake of social media.

As stated by Huang and Benyoucef (2013), another definition of social media is "Internet-based applications built on Web 2.0, where Web 2.0 refers to a concept as well as a platform for harnessing collective intelligence." [6]. In this context, people have constant network connectivity thanks to social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn (Asur & Huberman, 2010) [7].

Social media was defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) as a collection of Internet-based programs that expand on the conceptual and technical underpinnings of Web 2.0 and permit the production and distribution of user-generated content. So to speak, social media can be described as a landscape of online platforms through which individuals may readily communicate and share information, ideas, and opinions. Social media has made it simpler, quicker, less expensive, and more widely available to disseminate information, whether it be private, commercial, or official government information. Now, it is feasible to target the audience in new ways. Social media applications are divided into six different groups by Kaplan and Haenlein: "Collaborative projects" (wikis, social bookmarking), "Blogs" (including Twitter), "Content communities" (YouTube, Flickr), "Social networking sites" (Facebook), "Virtual game worlds" (World of Warcraft), and "Virtual social worlds" (Second Life) [8].

2.2 Challenges in Using Social Media

Skold & Feldman (2014) stated that using social media as a data source has a number of drawbacks, just like using other websites for information. What distinguishes social media from "traditional media" also poses a difficulty for using it as a successful means for transmitting knowledge and a trustworthy source of information. In this context, ensuring the accuracy of information and determining the reliability of sources are two of these difficulties [9].

Skold & Feldman (2014) mentioned that data quality is a major concern because it is so simple to share information on social media; that is to say, social media platforms enable anyone to publish content and instantly reach potentially millions of people. Accuracy and speed are always in tension with one another. The focus on fast and unmoderated information dissemination on social media outlets increases the chance that misleading data may be offered, either purposefully or accidently, and spread despite the possibility that it is false, obsolete, or unsupported.

Skold & Feldman (2014) added that due to the compromise between anonymity and reliability, determining the persona and trustworthiness of the source of information obtained via social media can be

tougher than with "traditional media." While a website typically has an "About" page and/or a domain name that may be marked up, a user profile on Facebook or Twitter typically contains very little information about the creator. Although social media platforms are interactive, they paradoxically require less disclosure, making authenticity verification more difficult. In this context information displayed on a website might sometimes be incorrect or deceptive. Rigid information and source evaluation, including the detection of biases, are essential for analyzing data from social media.

2.3 Definitions of Research

Research is defined as "a careful investigation or inquiry, especially through the search for new facts in any branch of knowledge" by the Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English. A search for knowledge is referred to as research. Also, research is a form of artistic and scientific inquiry. In this regard, Research, according to Redman and Mory (N.D), is an organized endeavor to learn new things. Some individuals view research as a transition from the known to the unknown [10].

In the words of Clifford Woody (1924), conducting research entails creating hypotheses or recommended solutions, identifying and redefining problems, gathering, organizing, and analyzing data, drawing deductions, and coming to conclusions to see if they are supported by the facts [11]. Also, a well-known Hudson maxim (N.D) stated that all development arises from investigation. Overconfidence is rarely a good thing since it prevents inquiry, which is the precursor of creativity. This highlights the value of research, whose expansion makes advancement conceivable [12].

2.4 Objectives of Research

As acknowledged by Singh (2021), the procedure for carrying out a research investigation involves a number of scientific steps. All of the stages are connected to one another. The research challenge is where the process initially begins. Then it proceeds consecutively via the following steps: research problem identification, Review of Literature, Hypothesis Formulation, Research Design, Data Collection, Data analysis, and Result reporting. Researchers typically complete their research work in the previously mentioned seven steps. You need a research proposal for most research projects. It is because, whether you are successful in conducting research or not, the proposal endorses the project. As a result, make sure to accurately convey your project's precise goals and thorough plans when you create a research proposal. In this vein, research has a number of objectives, including learning more about a phenomenon or gaining fresh insights into it (Studies that are exploratory or prescriptive), accurately summarizing the traits of a specific person, circumstance, or group (Descriptive analysis), figuring out how frequently something happens or how it is connected to other things; Studies on this subject are referred to as diagnostic research, to investigate the validity of the causal link hypothesis. Such research is referred to as hypothesis-testing research [13].

2.5 Types of Research

Singh (2021) reported that there are various research Types. These are the fundamental ones:

Descriptive versus Analytical: Surveys and fact-finding investigations of many kinds make up descriptive research. The primary goal of descriptive research is to describe the current situation at the time of the investigation. The fact that the researcher has no control over these variables is what makes this method unique. He or she merely needs to report what is occurring or what has already occurred. Survey techniques of all kinds, including correlational and comparative techniques, are used to undertake descriptive research. While conducting analytical research, the researcher must take the information already in the public domain and analyze it to generate a critical opinion on the topic.

Applied versus Fundamental: Research may also be fundamental or applied in nature. Applied research is the process of trying to solve an immediate issues that a company, industry, business organization, or society is facing. Such studies try to reach specific results that address a real-world social or commercial issue. Fundamental research, on the other hand, focuses mostly on theory formulation and generalizations. Or, to put it another way, "Gathering knowledge for knowledge's sake is termed pure' or 'basic' research" (Young in Kothari, 1985) [14]. Examples of fundamental research include investigations into certain natural phenomena or pure mathematics. Studies that concentrate on human behavior are sometimes considered a form of fundamental research. As a result, whereas the primary goal of applied research is to discover a solution to an

urgent practical problem, the goal of fundamental research is to locate information with a broad base of applicability and to add to the previously organized body of scientific knowledge.

Quantitative versus Qualitative: Aspects that can be quantified or stated in terms of quantity are relevant to quantitative research. It includes quantifying a quantity or an amount. In this research, many statistical and economic techniques are used for analysis. This also involves time series analysis, regressions, and correlation. The focus of qualitative research, on the other hand, is on qualitative phenomena, or more particularly, on elements having to do with quality or kind. For instance, "Motivation Research" is a crucial category of qualitative study that looks into the motivations behind certain human behaviors. By employing in-depth interviews, this form of research aims to uncover the underlying motivations and goals of people. In the context of the behavioral sciences, which seek to understand the fundamental causes of human behavior, qualitative research is very important. In addition to advancing our understanding of why people enjoy or dislike certain things, such research aids in the analysis of the different components that influence human behavior. It is important to note that performing qualitative research in actual practice is a challenging task. Consequently, it is crucial to obtain advice from seasoned, knowledgeable researchers when conducting such research.

Conceptual versus Empirical: Conceptual research is the study of a vague notion or theoretical framework. Philosophers and other thinkers typically use it to create new concepts or reinterpret ones that already exist. Conversely, empirical research almost entirely disregards theory and systems in favor of observation or experience. Such research is data-driven and frequently yields results that may be tested by observations or experiments. In experimental research, sometimes referred to as empirical research, facts and their sources must first be gathered, and then active measures must be used to encourage the generation of the desired information. In this kind of research, the researcher first develops a working hypothesis before accumulating enough data to support or refute the theory. He or she creates the experimental plan that, in his or her opinion, will manipulate the variables and yield the desired results. The fact that the researcher has control over the factors being studied defines this form of research. Simply put, empirical research is best suited when an effort is made to demonstrate that particular variables have some influence on other factors. As a result, the findings of experimental or empirical investigations are regarded as the strongest evidence for a particular concept.

2.6 Negative Sides of Using Social Media as a Research Instrument

According to Hanna (2012) [15], Hunt & McHale (2007) [16], and Jowett et al. (2011) [17], using social media as a tool and its data might present additional obstacles, regardless of whether the research is traditional in nature or uses a relatively new methodology. Among these difficulties could be:

The correctness of the data: Compared to conventional research methodologies, participants in social media studies frequently choose to remain anonymous or use pseudonyms (Christopher, 2009) [18], making it challenging to verify the validity of the data. The data may not be reliable if the interviewee's identity cannot be confirmed. Additionally, the literature contends that while anonymous use offers users a high level of privacy, it also tends to give users permission to "misbehave." Examples include publishing improper, obnoxious, or unlawful material without concern for repercussions (Tsang et al. 2010). [19]

Data sources: Myers & Newman (2007) stated that the researcher must create interview data, which is a key distinction between data received through social media and that obtained through traditional face-to-face interviews. Although it can be created (for example, through questionnaires, live chats, online meetings, focus groups, etc.), social media data can also be the product of user-generated content. The researcher has more influence in a traditional interview because they frequently steer the conversation with specific questions. But with user-generated data, there is less oversight and awareness of where the data came from, so there may be a lot more "noise" in the data that needs to be filtered. Additionally, the exact topics in which the researcher is interested may not be included in the social media data gathered. [20]

Digital Divide: Goncalves & Smith (2018) mentioned that some members of society who lack access to or feel uneasy using social media may be left out if social media is widely utilized [21]. Therefore, if researchers just use social media, there may be a digital gap that would prevent some people from participating in the study, making the use of social media alone unworkable for specific research projects. (Ameripour et al. 2010) [22].

Several novel behaviors: Researchers may encounter distinct personality traits on social media that are uncommon in in-person interviews. For instance, many behaviors are exclusive to social media, such as "flaming" (Papacharissi, 2002) [23], "lurking," or "whispering" (Garcia et al., 2009) [24]. For instance, lurking is when users of social media participate in passive behaviors: they listen to, monitor, and possibly record the "conversations," but they sparsely, if not at all, interact with the social media contributors. Such passive behavior cannot be explained if it is not clear or obvious.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Problem

The research problem rested on the fact that many EFL students find undertaking research in Moroccan colleges and universities to be a challenging experience. Yet, it remains an obligatory requirement for obtaining a college diploma. In light of this, EFL students perpetually search for inventive ways that will enhance the standard of their research papers. Social media incorporation is one of these groundbreaking strategies. In this regard, because not all EFL students see social media platforms as helpful resources for conducting research, this study made an effort to address the issue that views about social media implementation in the research setting differ. On the flip side, other EFL students consider social media a cutting-edge searching method that has the potential to have a substantial impact on their research dissertation.

3.2 Research Objectives

Different objectives have been established in light of the aforementioned research problem. In general, the main aim of this investigation was to explore how social media is changing the research environment at Moroccan universities. The objectives were:

- To explore the perspectives on and readiness for social media use as a research tool among EFL students.
- To determine whether there are any benefits to adopting social media in the research sector.
- To find out the hurdles that EFL students experience while using social media for research.

3.3 Research Questions

The study primarily addressed the following queries:

Q1: What do EFL students at Moroccan universities feel about employing social media for academic research?

Q2: How comfortable are EFL students with using social media for research?

Q3: What advantages might social media integration provide EFL students conducting research?

Q4: What challenges do EFL students face while utilizing social media for research?

3.4 Research instrument

An online survey was employed as a way of gathering data for the purpose of this research. A segment with quantitative questions and a segment with qualitative questions were both present.

3.5 Sample and Setting

Table 1: participants by gender

Gender	Participants
Male	119
Female	80
Prefer not to Say	5

Table 1 showed that 204 EFL students from three Moroccan universities—Dhar Mehraz University, Sais University, and Moulay Ismail University—completed the online survey satisfactorily. There are 119 male students, 80 female students, and 5 EFL students who would rather not disclose their gender.

Table 2: participants by age

Age	Participants
Below 20	54
Between 20 and 30	118
Above 30	32

Table 2 revealed that 118 respondents are between the ages of 20 and 30 and that there are 54 respondents who are under the age of 20, while there are 32 respondents who are over 30.

Table 3: participants' educational level

Educational Level	Participants
Bachelor	134
Master	43
Ph.D	27

Table 3 disclosed that 134 EFL students are enrolled in bachelor's programs, 43 in master's programs, and 27 in doctoral programs.
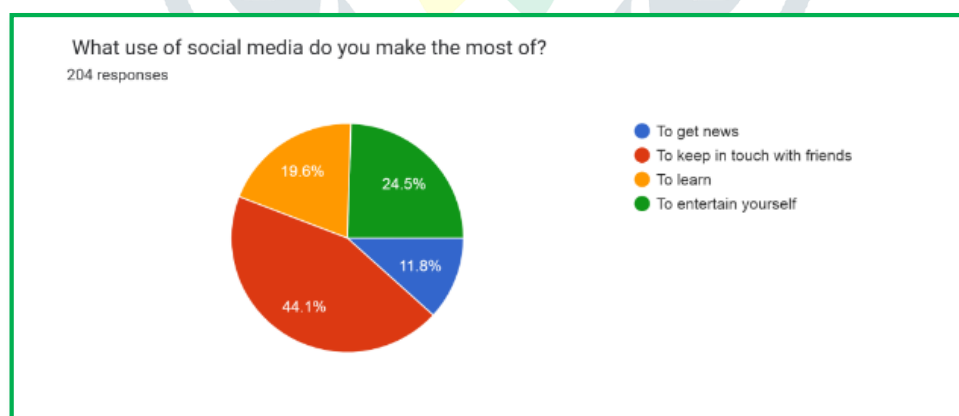
3.6 Data Analysis

Figure 1: the participants' motivation for engaging in social media

Figure 1 demonstrated that 50 EFL students claimed they use social media to entertain themselves, whereas 90 students, representing a higher percentage of 44.1%, said they use it to stay in contact with their friends. 24 EFL students use social media to get news, while 40 EFL students utilize it for educational goals. Figure 1 proved unequivocally that EFL students continue to give priority to pleasurable activities like news gathering, conversing, and messaging despite the emergence of social media in educational circumstances.
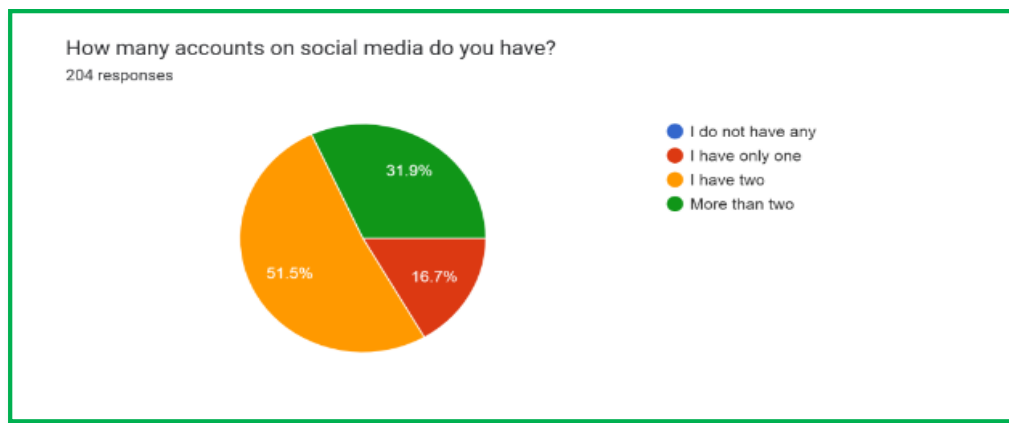
Figure 2: the total number of social media channels used by participants

Figure 2 made it very evident that 105 EFL students acknowledged having two social media accounts, whereas 65 EFL students possess more than two and 34 have just one. Nobody among the participants stated that they lacked any. This obliquely suggests that social media sites are easy for EFL learners to access and that they are at ease utilizing them.
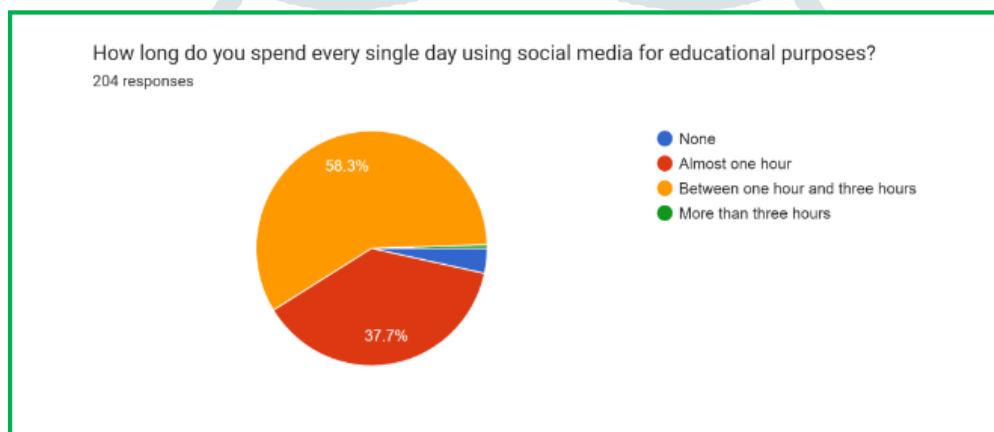

Figure 3: participants' time spent on social media for educational purposes

Figure 3 indicated that a greater percentage of respondents—58.3%, including 119 EFL students—admitted they use social media for learning for one to three hours every day. In comparison to one EFL student who spends more than three hours, 77 EFL students spend approximately an hour. Seven EFL students, sadly, claimed they do not use social media for learning. In plain language, figure 4 showed that, despite differences in the amount of time spent, practically all EFL students use social media for learning.
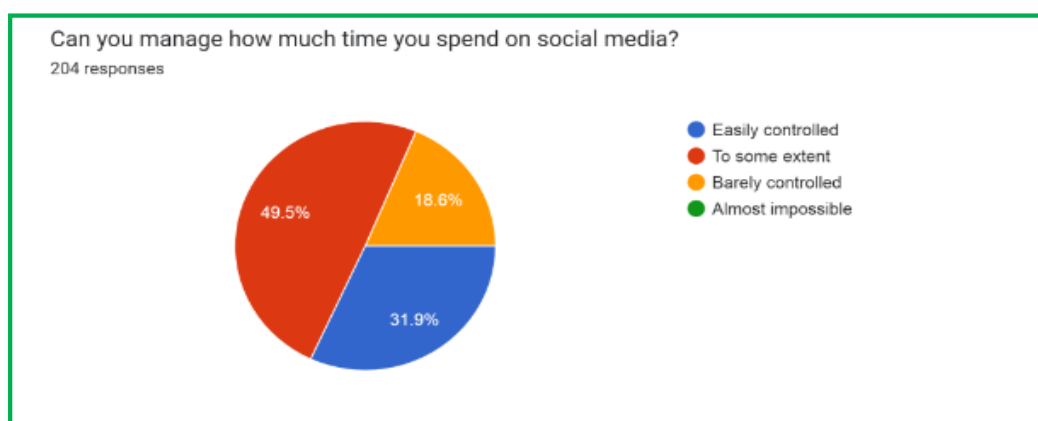

Figure 4: control of social media time by participants

Figure 4 pointed out that 65 EFL students feel it is easy for them to maintain control, while 101 reported having some degree of control over how much time they consume on social media. While 38 students claimed that they

have limited control over how they use social media, and no EFL students claimed that it is practically impossible, the majority of EFL students have control over how much time they spend on social media, as demonstrated by Figure 4. As a result, they are less likely to become addicted to it and are more likely to use it safely and constructively.
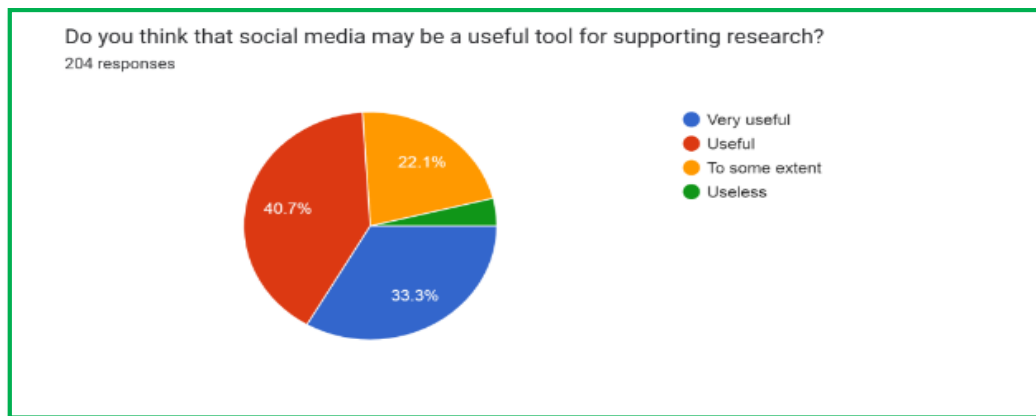

Figure 5: perceptions of participants towards the use of social media as a research tool

According to Figure 5, 68 EFL students concurred that social media is a very helpful research tool; while 83 EFL students, or a significant portion of the total respondents (40.7%), said that social media may be an excellent learning tool for assisting research. On the other hand, 45 EFL students do not find social media to be all that effective as a research tool, despite their belief that it may be. Sadly, eight students claimed that social media is a useless tool for conducting research. Figure 5 unequivocally showed that the majority of EFL students view social media favorably when it is included in research.
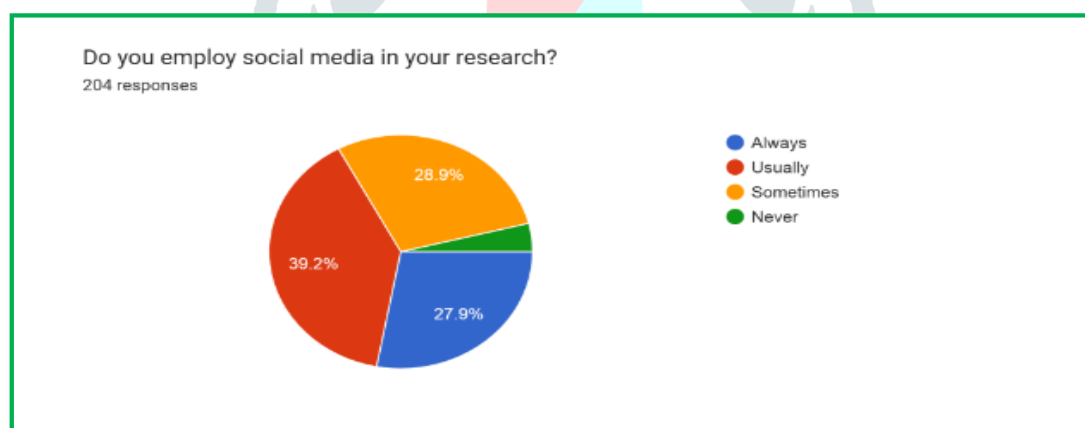

Figure 6: social media adoption by participants during research

In Figure 6, 57 EFL students indicated that they constantly utilize social media for conducting research, whereas 80 EFL students stated that they do so frequently. 59 students overall admitted to occasionally using social media for research. Less than 4%, or eight EFL students, reported never utilizing social media for research. Figure 6 illustrated how the majority of EFL students definitely use social media for research reasons.
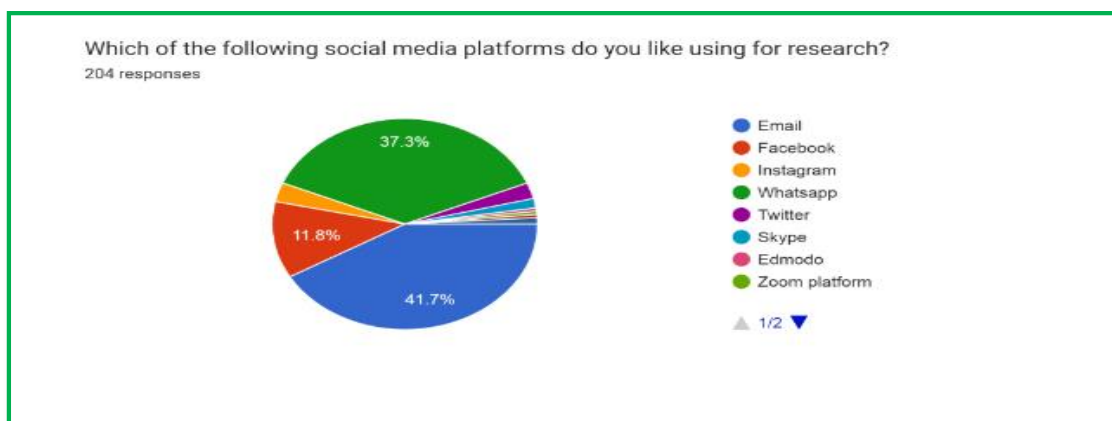
Figure7: favorite social media learning platform for participants to conduct research

Figure 7 obviously revealed that a higher percentage, 41.7%, which included 85 EFL students from the total respondents, stated that they prefer to use email as an educational research social media platform. This was followed by a percentage of 37.3%, which included 76 EFL students from the total respondents who prefer to use WhatsApp. Only six EFL students prefer Instagram after 24 EFL students pick Facebook. A very small number of other EFL students mentioned other websites, such as Skype, Twitter, Zoom, or Edmodo. Figure 7 proved quite evident which social media platforms EFL students most frequently utilize for research: Facebook, WhatsApp, and email.
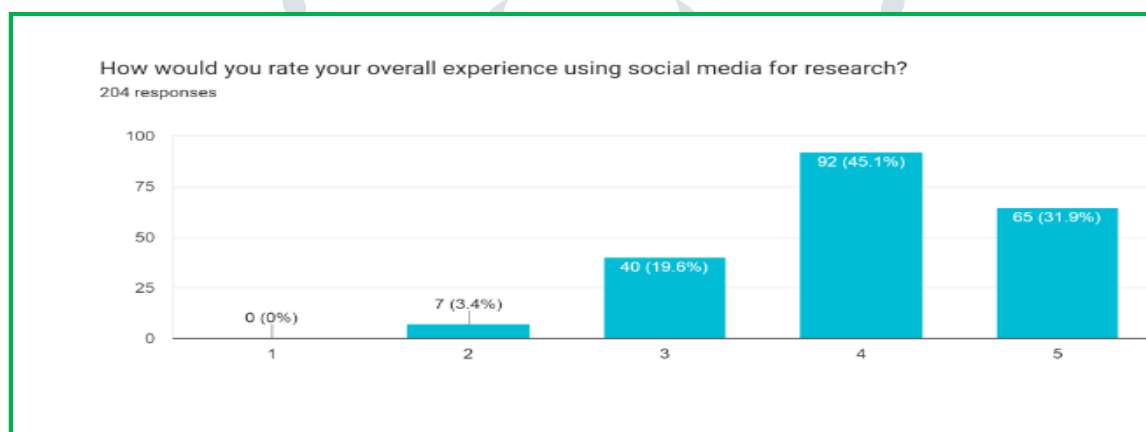

Figure 8: participants' social media research using experiences

In accordance with Figure 8 above, 92 EFL students claimed they have good experience using social media for research, 65 EFL students said they feel they are advanced users of social media as a research tool, and 40 EFL students stated they have average experience using social media for research. Seven EFL students, sadly, admitted to having little experience. Figure 8 as a whole made it clear that all EFL students are digital natives with the knowledge and abilities needed to use social media flexibly for research purposes.

The survey's remaining qualitative questions queried EFL students about the potential benefits of incorporating social media into their research and any difficulties they might encounter. The outcomes of the analysis showed that making use of social media for research has some advantages. The following advantages were cited by participants the most:

- The Simplicity of Getting to Know Research Participants: The majority of EFL students claimed that social media provides them with the chance to get to know their audience easily. This indicates that social media's appeal is based on the fact that it promotes instant dialogue between researchers and participants. In this regard, while social media gives scholars the potential to meet and understand their audience without investing much effort, it is entirely up to them to make the most of this chance. To get to know their participants, for instance, they can use Facebook or WhatsApp groups and communities. This will make it much easier for them to acquire pertinent data from these groups and will improve the quality of the data they collect.

- Reduced Expenses: Most EFL learners agreed that using social media as a research tool in a learning environment can be less expensive than doing research in a more conventional setting. According to this viewpoint, respondents expressed their level of relief with social media in terms of costs, saying that social media in particular and online learning in general can lower the costs associated with transportation, paying for copies, looking for locations to conduct interviews, etc. This suggests that rather than having to schedule a genuine meeting, researchers can get in touch online with their participants anytime they choose. As a result, researchers may find it affordable to use social media as a research instrument.

- Convenient Supervision: The majority of EFL students acknowledged how social media can impact supervision in a positive way. They said that social media makes it easier for supervisees and supervisors to communicate, allowing researchers to ask for assistance without needing to make physical contact and receive an immediate response and direction. Additionally, they can inform their supervisors of the progress of their theses. More importantly, EFL students noted that using social media allows them ample time to think clearly and comfortably before approaching their supervisors, which reduces their stress levels when asking for assistance. Face-to-face meetings are less likely to be taken advantage of because of researchers' anxiety and shyness.

Another significant finding of this study was that using social media for research can be challenging for EFL students. The following were the obstacles that participants most frequently pointed out:

- Technical Challenges: The majority of EFL students voiced their reservations about using social media as a research tool, stating that they are more likely to be duped by tablets, computers, cellphones, and even internet access when using social media. This shows that social media platforms and technological gadgets are not always dependable and constant. It can be difficult for EFL students to conduct research online using different social media platforms that call for an internet connection. Although employing technology tools for research in general and social media in particular shouldn't be completely and blindly trusted, they can still be used as support to improve the research process.

- Distractibility: Nearly all respondents named distraction as a major obstacle to using social media for research. This demonstrates that social media can tempt researchers to perform multiple tasks simultaneously, meaning that they can engage in other activities while undertaking online research, such as checking messages, texting, etc. Many social media sites make it easy to get distracted, which reduces researchers' levels of focus and affects the caliber of their research.

- Postponement: A number of respondents indicated that procrastination is made simple by social media sites. This indicates that there is no encouragement or reminder on social media to continue researching. Thus, researchers are more likely to become complacent and give up on the completion of their dissertations.

IV. MAIN RESULTS

The findings of this investigation supported the following:

- ➢ Based on the analysis, most EFL students perceive social media as an advantageous research tool. For this reason, they like to employ it in their research to buttress the caliber of their work. The analysis further demonstrated that, despite the fact that social media is used for research in particular and education in general, messaging, chatting, and other ways to enjoy it still take primacy.

- ➢ The findings of this study also demonstrated that most EFL students possess the capabilities needed to use social media for research in a relaxed and comfortable manner, considering they all reported having social media accounts.

➢ Another finding that deserves attention is the fact that, although there are variations in the length of time consumed, almost all EFL students schedule time for utilizing social media for research. Additionally, EFL students claimed that they are in charge of controlling how much time they spend on social media. This can, therefore, avoid addiction.

➢ Additionally, the results indicated that Facebook, WhatsApp, and email are the most popular social media sites among EFL students for conducting research.

➢ The results of this study revealed that the most common advantages of using social media as a research tool are convenient supervision, reduced expenses, and the ease of getting to know research participants.

➢ In accordance to the study's final finding, EFL students most frequently encounter technological challenges, distractions, and procrastination when using social media for research.

V. DISCUSSION

The results of this study obviously demonstrated that most EFL students are digital natives and are equipped with essential foundational expertise for utilizing technology in general and social media in particular without any problems. Social media remains an adaptable and accessible research instrument that can be applied to education. In this regard, the most popular learning tools used by EFL students for carrying out investigations are Facebook, WhatsApp, and Email. Additionally, the findings proved that EFL students spend more time on social media entertaining themselves than learning.

Social media can aid EFL students in a number of ways, including the convenience of supervision, cost savings, and ease of getting to know research participants. On the other hand, social media presented a number of hurdles, including technical challenges, distractibility, and procrastination. Overall, the study's conclusions reinforced the idea that social media is a two-edged research instrument for education that has both advantages and disadvantages. However, EFL students should utilize social media carefully and avoid becoming unduly reliant on it if they want to get the most out of it as a research tool.

The study's results were in line with what I anticipated as a researcher and a digital native. To be more explicit, I am convinced that technology in general and social media in particular have drastically changed the essence of education. EFL scholars are increasingly faced with situations that entail substantial reliance on social media, including distributing questionnaires, organizing online group discussions, submitting assignments, participating in webinars, and many other activities. EFL researchers believe that having familiarity with technical tools is the only way for them to flourish in this digital age and raise their scholastic performance and research caliber. This is why, prior to doing this study, I believed that EFL students would be responsive to the prospect of incorporating social media into a research context.

Thanks to advancements in technology, social media has grown to be a vital element of the scientific community and academic life. Thus, there are several chances available to EFL researchers to use social media, interact with people, and connect in novel and innovative manners. In this vein, social media channels are growing in popularity among EFL scholars as an efficient way to conduct research due to the fact that they are always accessible and can be used for research. Nevertheless, the introduction of social media into educational settings invites a range of EFL researchers' opinions, both in support of and against the application of social media in the research field. This was my main driving force for conducting this study since I wanted to discover more about EFL students' viewpoints and the advantages and disadvantages of using social media for research.

The study's small number of participants, which focused on EFL researchers at three Moroccan universities (Dhar Mehraz University, Sais University, and Moulay Ismail University), hampers its generalizability. Because of this, the study's findings depend solely on the beliefs, views, and personal experiences of the EFL researchers. Due to this restriction, a thorough investigation of the issue of social media integration in the research environment among EFL researchers at Moroccan universities is difficult. In order to accurately and completely comprehend this issue, more study is necessary to show the effect of social media integration on research quality. Future studies should take into account additional departments and majors.

VI. CONCLUSION

My last thought on the issue of adopting social media in research environments is that social media may be a helpful research instrument for EFL scholars if handled successfully and appropriately. The findings indicated that social media has both benefits and drawbacks. If the benefits surpass the drawbacks, it should only be utilized. Consequently, in order to get the most possible from it, EFL researchers must consider social media seriously as a research tool and put a few tactics into practice, such as staying away from exploiting it excessively to keep addiction at bay, focusing on only one social media platform to circumvent content overload, and establishing specific goals with time constraints to prevent procrastination. I contend that social media can't entirely substitute for traditional research methods because face-to-face interaction is one of the most important characteristics of humans as social creatures. However, social media can be utilized as an opportunity to raise the standard of research quality.

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