Internet use among Moroccan secondary school students: An exploratory study

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Abstract

Due to the expansion of Web 2.0 and the spread of social media platforms, current media research has shifted its orientation towards media users, their motives, traffic, and conduct in using the Internet. Situated within media audience studies, this paper explored Internet use and traffic among adolescents in secondary school. Drawing on the Uses and Gratification Theory (U&GT), this study examined Moroccan secondary school students’ motives for Internet use and their online activities. 395 adolescents were selected through the convenience sampling technique from both rural and urban areas and were given a paper-based questionnaire. 20 informants were also questioned in semi-structured interviews. Descriptive statistics were used to measure the frequency of the variables based on the quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire. The qualitative data were thematically analyzed and discussed. Our results revealed that the participants
utilized the Internet more for socializing and entertainment than for educative purposes and that using the Internet for learning purposes and academic research was not a priority for the students. Results from this study were used to discuss practical implications.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, online activities, Uses and Gratification Theory, Web 2.0, social media, Morocco

0. Introduction

Online usage has skyrocketed in the last two decades, becoming an integral part of our everyday lives. With the advent and spread of Web 2.0, social networking sites (SNS) have become the social and cultural environment for many, particularly today’s youths. Since the Internet is getting widely accessible and affordable to a significant number of people around the globe, online communication and access to information are dramatically getting popular and new digital cultures and modes of communication are emerging. Morocco is no exception to this trend. The country has entered into a digital era and a significant portion of its population access the Internet today. According to the Digital-2021 report for Morocco, the number of Internet users in Morocco reached 27.62 million in January 2021 (Kemp, 2021). Youths in Morocco are increasingly turning to the Internet as a means of communication, with the use of forums, blogs, wikis, and YouTube videos becoming increasingly popular in the country (Zaid & Ibahrine, 2011) along with the spread of other social media platforms (Larhmaid et al., 2019).

Adolescents appear to be the age group that uses the Internet the most (Karacic & Oreskovic, 2017). Teenagers nowadays are a unique generation since they are the first digital natives, who have grown up with the Internet and communication technology, as opposed to digital immigrants who learned about digital systems as adults (Prensky, 2001). With the advent of the technological age, young people, or the Net Generation, have developed a new digital culture (Pasquier, 2005). Morocco’s youths, especially those in metropolitan areas, utilize the Internet at even higher rates than their older Moroccan counterparts (Sabry, 2016). Research on today’s Internet generation needs to
consider adolescents’ Internet use in order to analyze their online activities with the aim to learn about their tastes and tendencies and monitor their behavior. The fact that teenagers are routinely linked to the virtual world is both a terrifying possibility for parents and educators, as well as a fascinating topic for sociological research (Boyd & Ellison, 2007).

While reviewing the literature in the Moroccan context, a few studies have been found about Moroccans’ use of the Internet. However, to the best of our knowledge, no study has examined secondary school students’ Internet use in their everyday lives. Thus, this research seeks to explore secondary-school students’ motives for Internet use and determine their online activities. It aims to get a deeper insight into their drives for Internet use and online behaviors. Understanding the reasons for and the way Moroccan students use the Internet may provide education specialists with insightful recommendations on how to exploit teenagers’ interests and motives to use the Internet for learning purposes and self-promotion. Accordingly, the present study sought to address the following research questions:

1. What are secondary-school students’ motives for using the Internet in their everyday lives?

2. How do secondary-school students in the Province of El Jadida utilize the Internet?

1. **Theoretical framework**

The present research is deeply rooted within the Uses and Gratification Theory (U & GT), which views audiences as active users who consume media material to gratify their needs (Griffin, 2012). The theory formerly targeted the use of traditional media such as the radio, newspapers, and television. Due to the dissemination of Web 2.0 and the growth of social media platforms, the theory has been revisited and refined with the view to examining computer-mediated communication in people’s everyday lives (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008). To better understand people’s motives for and gratifications obtained from using the Internet, especially social media sites and services, researchers have
sought to revitalize and improve the theory (Ruggiero, 2000). Users of media, according to U&GT, are conscious of their needs (Katz et al., 1974). Among these are cognitive and emotional needs, the desire for personal identity, the need for integration and social engagement, and escapism, among others (Katz et al., 1973). Ruggiero (2000) maintains that any attempt to predict the future path of mass communication must seriously consider the U&GT. Given that the U&GT helps describe and explain why and how media users meet their needs and gratify them (Katz et al., 1974), this paper adopts the conceptual framework of this theory to best determine Moroccan secondary school students’ motives for Internet use and describe their online activities.

2. Literature review

Research on Internet users’ motives for the Internet reports that the majority of people use social media mostly for socializing, entertainment, seeking and sharing of information, self-expression, and self-education (Boyd, 2014; Boyd & Ellison, 2007; El Harras, 2011; Gallion, 2010; Ito, et al., 2009; Jenkins, 2006; Karacic & Oreskovic, 2017; Katz et al., 1973, 1974; Shen & Shakir, 2012). Several research studies have documented the main drives behind the use of the Internet among adolescents and different findings are reported. Researchers found that entertainment, socializing, and gaining information were the most reported Internet motives among the majority of teenagers (Ceyhan, 2013; Luthfia, 2019; Vas & Gombor, 2009). While Ceyhan's (2013) study indicated that using the Net to do schoolwork was also a key Internet motive behind adolescents’ Internet use, Vas and Gombor (2009) reported that using the Net to escape reality was found to be the lowest motive behind Internet use. Meanwhile, Wang et al. (2012) maintained that using the Internet to gain knowledge and find information positively predicted healthy lifestyles among adolescents.

Research also documented adolescents’ online activities and findings suggested that the participants’ online practices were largely related to entertainment and socializing. Almasi et al. (2017), for instance, reported that the majority of secondary school students used the
Internet, mainly social media platforms, to chat and socialize with mates, watch films and listen to music. The researchers concluded that secondary students’ poor academic achievements were linked to their use of the Internet.

Being digital natives, teenagers utilize the Internet more than any other age group in the globe, mostly through SNSs. According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), teens spend much of their time online, particularly on social networking sites; they use the Internet for socializing, learning, entertainment, and creativity. Boyd (2014) also reported that the nature of the adolescents’ teenage phase may have triggered their desire for personal identity, integration, and social connection. Similarly, Karacic and Oreskovic (2017) found that the majority of the respondents used the Internet for entertainment purposes. Other studies, however, suggest that teachers should incorporate this new technology in their teaching since today’s pupils utilize the Internet and SNSs to learn (Ito, et al., 2009; Jenkins, 2006).

Mass media has also an important role to play in educating the public. Asemah (2011) found that people use the media for self-development and learning. According to Papoola (2014), SNSs and search engines like Google and Wikis might enable their users to search for content to increase their learning skills. Other findings suggested that information literacy skills, such as Internet use, can increase students’ talents and intellectual capacities when teachers guide students to effectively utilize information and communication technologies. For instance, Eisenberg (2003) asserts that social media is an effective educational tool since students can use it for learning purposes. In the same vein, Brady et al., (2010) and Lusk et al. (2010) concluded that social media is used by students to increase their learning productivity and build communication skills.

Concerning the link between Internet use and users’ identity, Shen and Shakir (2012) looked at Internet use and how it affected Arab youths’ identity formation. The researchers found that Internet usage trends varied based on five major activities, namely online discussions, emailing, searching, and entertaining. According to the study’s
findings, Web 2.0 has largely become a key source of information for the participants.

Gallion (2010) reported that Internet users utilize social media to satisfy their desire for entertainment and recreation. A similar finding was made by Whiting and Williams (2013), who found that 88% of the participants utilized social media to communicate and engage with friends and that 64% of their participants utilized social media to play games, hear jokes, see strange stuff, and read amusing remarks that made them laugh out loud. Similarly, a number of studies concluded that the major motives for using social media are social contact (Asemah, 2011), interacting with family and friends (Papoola, 2014), and staying in touch with old friends, keeping track of current friends, and establishing new ones (Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008).

In the Moroccan context, we found that a few studies have documented Moroccan youths’ use of the Internet. For example, El Harras (2011) reported that young Moroccans frequently accessed the Internet and mostly concentrated their attention on chatting and downloading songs, films, and music. The researcher concluded that the majority of students acknowledged exploiting pre-made Internet materials rather than putting out any effort to create novel work. However, different results were reported by Larhmaid et al. (2019), who explored the effects of digital technologies on learning practices and reading motivation among Moroccan EFL university students, and found that most of the participants claimed using digital materials for academic and recreational purposes.

Some researchers have also examined the misuse of the Internet among Moroccan people. El Harras (2011), for instance, found that many informants admitted to watching pornographic films. The same finding was confirmed by Kadri et al. (2013), who reported that about a third of the interviewees said they regularly consumed pornography on the Internet, and that half of the teenagers admitted appearing at least once undressed in front of a webcam or sent photos of their naked bodies to strangers.
Internet addiction was also studied, and research reported that 15.80% of Moroccan high-school students were Internet addicts and that their poor academic achievements were strongly connected to extreme Internet addiction (Mohamed & Bernouss, 2020). Similar results were reported by Alaika et al. (2020), whose study indicated that more than half of the respondents, who were Moroccan university students, reported experiencing a negative effect of social media use on their professional and academic careers.

While reviewing the literature, we found that a few studies have investigated the reasons behind Moroccan adolescents’ Internet use. Hence, this paper aimed to explore Internet use and traffic among adolescents in secondary school in the region of El Jadida. In particular, it examined Moroccan secondary school students’ motives for Internet use. It specifically investigated the type of online activities they frequently engaged in.

3. Method

3.1 Sample / Participants

The target population of the present study was secondary-school students from El Jadida province. 395 students (199 males, M=15.32, SD=1.83 and 196 females, M=15.72, SD=1.76) from the 7th grade to the 12th grade were selected through the convenience sampling technique. The respondents were selected from three state schools located in rural areas and four schools situated in El Jadida. 37% of participants (early adolescent) were between the ages of thirteen and fourteen, while 39% (middle adolescents) were between the ages of fifteen and sixteen, and 38% (late adolescents) were between the ages of seventeen and eighteen. From the middle school, 59 students were chosen from the 7th grade, 92 kids from the 8th grade, and 92 students from the 9th grade. 48 students from the common core, 39 from the first-year Baccalaureate, and 67 from the second-year Baccalaureate were selected from high school. The study included 177 participants (44.82%) from El Jadida and 218 (55.18%) from neighboring rural areas.
3.2 Data collection instruments

This study utilized a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview to gather data regarding adolescents’ motives for Internet use as well as their online activities. The design and content of the questionnaire were informed by previous studies conducted on young people’s Internet usage and traffic (Gallion, 2010; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Tanta et al., 2014). The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section aimed at collecting the participants’ demographic information such as age, gender, level of education, and location. The second section included 8 items that measured the participants’ access to and frequency of Internet use based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from never to always. The third section comprised two items with multiple-choice options from which the participants identified their motives for using the Internet. The fourth section, with eight items, aimed at identifying the respondents’ Internet use and their online activities. It specifically measured the participants’ frequency of Internet use, the type of activities they engaged in, and the type of videos they watch. The respondents rated themselves on a five-point Likert scale ranging from never to always.

For triangulation purposes, the present study also used a semi-structured interview to gather data on the issues addressed in the questionnaire. 20 informants (10 males and 10 females) were purposively selected from the sample in order to gain a deeper insight into the issue under study. Their age ranged between 13 and 18 (M = 15.66 years, SD =2.46). The participants came from a low to middle socio-economic class. The interview included 27 items.

The interview was divided into four parts. While part one focused on background information, part two, which included nine questions, focused on participants’ Internet access and parental control. The third part, which comprised six questions, examined students’ reasons for accessing the Internet. Additionally, it examined how students felt when exploring the Internet. The fourth part consisted of twelve questions that explored students’ online activities and traffic.
3.3. Data collection procedures

The questionnaire was administered in Standard Arabic to make it easily accessible to the participants. Seven public and five private schools from both urban and rural areas were selected to guarantee possible representativeness of data. Once getting consent from the head-teachers of the target schools, the researchers visited the schools over two weeks and gave out the questionnaire to the participants in person during the visit. Based on the results of piloting the questionnaire, the participants were given 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire in the presence of the researchers.

Using semi-structured interviews, 20 informants were asked 27 questions about their motives for Internet use and their online activities. The average duration for each one-on-one interviewee was 20 minutes. While 10 informants (5 males and 5 females) were selected from two schools in El Jadida, the same number of interviewees, with an equal number of males and females, were chosen from two schools from rural areas. The researchers approached the informants personally and asked them questions in Moroccan Arabic to obtain a deeper insight into their motives behind using the Internet and the kind of online activities they engaged in on a regular basis. For ethical considerations, the interviewees were given pseudo-names.

3.4. Data analysis

The present study’s research design was exploratory, and thus descriptive data analysis was employed. Descriptive statistics were used to measure the frequency of the variables based on the questionnaire’s quantitative data. Graphs, tables, and percentages were, therefore, utilized to illustrate the findings. Also, the researchers analyzed a corpus of 20 audio-recorded interviews. One researcher listened to the interviews many times to understand their content before translating and transcribing them into English. Another researcher checked the transcription while listening to recordings. Disagreement about the translation was resolved through discussion and consent.
The interviews aimed to obtain different perspectives on the research questions regarding students’ reasons for using the Internet as well as their online activities. The qualitative data gathered from the interview were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method used to identify, analyze, and report patterns or themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Hence, the participants’ drives for using the Internet and their online activities were identified using a deductive approach based on the themes and sub-themes informed by the questionnaire and the theoretical framework to answer our research questions. First, the interview data contained in the recordings were transcribed, summarized, and then manually coded and categorized into two topics, namely motives for Internet use and online activities, in accordance with the research questions. These themes were subsequently coded and subcategorized into subthemes in order to obtain a better understanding of the informants’ drives for Internet use and to identify their online traffic.

5. Results

The purpose of the current study was to explore Moroccan secondary school students’ motives for Internet use and their online activities. Our results revealed that the participants utilized the Internet more for socializing and entertainment than for educative purposes. The study also indicated that the vast majority of the students frequently engaged in online activities such as listening to music, chatting with friends, and watching films/videos and that using the Internet for learning purposes and academic research was not a priority.

5.1. Motives for Internet use

The current study examined the motives behind Internet use among secondary-school students living in El Jadida region. Our results showed that socializing (73.92%), entertainment (64.56%), schoolwork (33.92%), and information seeking (30.38%) were the participants’ primary reasons for using the Internet as figure 1 illustrates:
Our study also revealed that there were differences in the motives for using Web 2.0 by the three age groups under investigation. Socializing (93.29%) and entertainment (59.73%) were found as the two most important reasons for using the Internet by early adolescents (aged between 13 and 14). Participants from this age group also reported using the Internet for other reasons: Schoolwork (32.89%), information seeking (16.11%), and self-expression (5.37%). However, 10.74% of them admitted not knowing why they used the Internet. As regards the second age group (aged 15-16), it was found that socializing (81.51%) and entertainment (45.89%) were the most significant motives for using the Internet by these participants, followed by schoolwork (41.78%), information seeking (26.71%), and self-expression (21.92%). A small portion of middle adolescents (6.85%) said they had no specific motive for utilizing the Internet. Meanwhile, 75% of the participants in late adolescence (aged between 17 and 18) claimed they used the Internet mostly for socializing. However, it was found that this age group significantly differed from the other two age groups in using the Internet for educative purposes as 63.0% said they used it to do schoolwork and 54% for academic research. Only 45% of late adolescents reported using the Internet for entertainment, and 40% for self-expression. Only 1% of this age group said that they did not know the true reason for using the Internet. Figure 2 summarizes the main findings:
The qualitative results are in line with our findings from the questionnaire as the vast majority of the informants said they used the Internet more for socializing and entertainment, and less for learning purposes and academic research. Of the 20 people surveyed, the majority (80%) indicated they use the Internet mostly for socializing with family and friends and for entertainment (65%). Fewer (20%) reported that they frequently used the Internet to do schoolwork and academic research when they had tests or when they were given tasks by their teachers.

Taking Doha, 14, from El Jadida as an example, she said:

> Personally, I use the Internet for fun and enjoyment. Most of the time, I watch anime and funny stuff, play video games, read webtoons, online novels, and manga scans… For me, the Net is one of the ways to escape from reality and people.

Leila, a 15-year-old girl from rural areas, said: “I use the Internet for many reasons such as communicating with family and friends. I also surf the Net to have fun and do my schoolwork. I usually play games and sometimes watch video lessons on YouTube channels.” For the males interviewed, Internet use was largely motivated by socializing and entertainment and less by motives for educative purposes and
academic research. Ali, 16, from El Jadida, said: “I only use the Internet to play online games with mates, that’s all.” Abderrazak, a 14-year-old from rural areas, said: “I usually use the Internet in my free time to entertain myself and kill the time. I am often on Facebook to hang out with friends and exchange news with them. But when a teacher gives us assignments, I use the Net for research.”

In addition, our findings revealed that older informants used the Internet more as a source of information and education than younger ones. For instance, Omar who was 18 years old from El Jadida and was in his second year of baccalaureate said:

I am in the second-year Baccalaureate and I usually use the Internet to download video lessons to prepare for the national exams, sometimes I look for the addresses of institutions to apply for them. When I am tired, I chat with friends or watch videos for fun.

It’s worth noting that all of the respondents agreed, albeit to varying degrees, that they utilized the Internet to get information, amuse themselves, socialize, and perform homework, which is in line with the quantitative findings.

To get a deeper understanding of the issue at hand, we also examined whether the participants’ geographic location influenced their motives for utilizing the Internet. It was found that the participants from both rural (62.71%) and urban (62.71%) areas preferred online socializing. Regarding other motives, however, there were significant variations between urban and rural regions: While 73.45% of the participants from El Jadida city said they used the Net for entertainment, only 40.83% from the rural area of rural areas claimed using the Net for the same purpose. Also, while the participants from the urban area of El Jadida claimed to use the Net for general information-seeking (43.50%) and self-expression (24.86%), those from the rural areas scored only 22.94% and 7.34% for the same motives respectively. Also, only 25.42% of individuals residing in rural areas stated they used the Internet for schooling, compared to 37.61% of those from rural areas.
Figure 3 demonstrates the key results of the motives for Internet use according to location.

![Figure 3: Motives for Internet use according to location](image)

Quantitative results are in line with our qualitative findings. Internet use was mostly motivated by socializing, enjoyment, and, to a lesser extent, schooling and information searching for both men and women. Of the 20 people surveyed, the majority (80%) indicated they use the Internet mostly for socializing with family and friends and for entertainment (65%).

5.2. Participants’ online use and traffic

On a five-frequency-adverb scale, from never to always, the participants were asked to select the frequency that defines their Internet use and traffic. Our results indicated that listening to music (often, 18.23%; always, 57.22%), chatting with friends (often, 17.47%; always, 51.9%), and watching films or videos (often, 17.97%; always, 50.13%) are the most popular Internet activities for the vast majority of respondents. About a third of the respondents said they always share and discuss content (32.41%), play games (29.37%), and search for images (27.59%).

We also found that a significant portion of the participants said they never engaged in online activities such as buy or sell items online (68.1%), read or write blogs (41.01%), watch online TV (39.49%),
download material (39.24%), read books or magazines (29.62%) and upload movies and photographs (29.62%). Very few (often, 2.53%; always, 2.53%) claimed that they did not know why people were using the Internet. When it comes to information searching, more than a third of the participants said that they never (17.47%) or rarely (23.80%) used the Internet look for information and 23.80% asserted they never utilized the Internet to search for information. When it comes to utilizing the Internet for homework, 32.15% of the respondents indicated they occasionally used the Internet for schoolwork, while just 27.34% of the respondents claimed they never used it. Table 1 shows the frequencies secondary school students use the Internet.

Table 1
Participants’ online use and traffic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>rarely</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>look for information</td>
<td>17.47%</td>
<td>23.80%</td>
<td>24.81%</td>
<td>14.68%</td>
<td>19.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do schoolwork</td>
<td>10.38%</td>
<td>10.63%</td>
<td>32.15%</td>
<td>15.70%</td>
<td>27.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>follow the news</td>
<td>20.76%</td>
<td>16.71%</td>
<td>29.87%</td>
<td>12.91%</td>
<td>17.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>play games</td>
<td>13.16%</td>
<td>15.19%</td>
<td>27.59%</td>
<td>13.42%</td>
<td>29.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chat with friends</td>
<td>5.82%</td>
<td>8.10%</td>
<td>15.70%</td>
<td>17.47%</td>
<td>51.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read books, magazine</td>
<td>29.62%</td>
<td>18.99%</td>
<td>19.75%</td>
<td>13.16%</td>
<td>1.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listen to music</td>
<td>5.32%</td>
<td>6.08%</td>
<td>13.16%</td>
<td>18.23%</td>
<td>57.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watch films or videos</td>
<td>9.62%</td>
<td>4.05%</td>
<td>16.71%</td>
<td>17.97%</td>
<td>50.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buy or sell products</td>
<td>68.10%</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
<td>11.65%</td>
<td>4.30%</td>
<td>2.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watch online TV</td>
<td>39.49%</td>
<td>17.47%</td>
<td>19.75%</td>
<td>7.09%</td>
<td>13.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>download material</td>
<td>39.24%</td>
<td>19.24%</td>
<td>23.29%</td>
<td>12.15%</td>
<td>9.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upload videos or photos</td>
<td>25.06%</td>
<td>16.71%</td>
<td>22.28%</td>
<td>14.68%</td>
<td>19.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>read or write blogs</td>
<td>41.01%</td>
<td>14.94%</td>
<td>22.78%</td>
<td>7.34%</td>
<td>14.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>share and comment</td>
<td>21.52%</td>
<td>12.91%</td>
<td>18.73%</td>
<td>14.68%</td>
<td>32.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>search for images</td>
<td>21.27%</td>
<td>12.41%</td>
<td>16.71%</td>
<td>22.03%</td>
<td>27.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I don’t know 84.05% 8.86% 2.28% 2.53% 2.53%
do other things 1.77% 3.04% 0.76% 1.77% 2.28%

As part of the survey, the participants were questioned about the kind of films they viewed most frequently. Sports and games (often, 16.96%; always, 34.18%), video clips (often, 16.20%; always, 32.66%), films (often, 18.99%; always, 32.41%), and comedies and dramas (often, 20.76%; always, 29.62%) were the most frequently seen videos. It was revealed that about a third of the participants (often, 17.97%; always, 25.06%) claimed watching video lessons while about a quarter (often, 11.65%; always, 15.19%) said they watched documentaries on occasion. Pornographic movies were denied being viewed by 25.32% of the respondents. Table 2 sums up the findings.

Table 2
Type of videos the participants watch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of videos</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>never</th>
<th>rarely</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video lessons</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Films</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video clips</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports and games</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedies and drama</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentaries</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pornography</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3
Online videos watched in rural and urban settings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of video</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Rarely (%)</th>
<th>Sometimes (%)</th>
<th>Often (%)</th>
<th>Always (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video lessons</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Films</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moreover, as illustrated in table 3, it was found that the participants from both areas viewed different types of Internet videos. For example, the participants from rural areas watched more video lessons (often, 24.22%; always, 33.49%) than students from El Jadida (often, 12.60%; always, 14.69%). As regards pornographic videos, there was a noticeable disparity between the two groups: The respondents from rural areas admitted viewing more porn videos (often, 17.89%; always, 22.39%) than those who lived in the cities (often, 14.12%; always, 13.16%). Our findings suggest, however, that participants from El Jadida city viewed more films and video clips than those in the rural area under investigation.

Our interview results are also in line with those from the questionnaire. According to the informants’ replies, the vast majority use the Internet mostly to listen to music (70%), communicate with friends (80%), view movies or videos (60%), and play online games (75%). For example, Yasmine, in grade 8, said:

I always hang out with my friends online and watch video clips of my favorite band on YouTube.” Abderrazak, a first-year Baccalaureate student, also stated: “I am always on Facebook when I go online. I usually talk to my friends and classmates on Messenger and I watch videos of summaries of football matches on YouTube, but, honestly, these days I am watching video lessons on YouTube to prepare for the regional exams.

Given that the study was conducted in spring, which is the time to start preparing for the end of academic year exams, a lot of informants, especially those in exam classes (grade 9 and first- and second-year Baccalaureate) said they were spending more time studying and less time chatting and watching entertaining videos in the last few months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video clips</th>
<th>12.8</th>
<th>8.4</th>
<th>13.7</th>
<th>7.9</th>
<th>28.9</th>
<th>30.5</th>
<th>12.8</th>
<th>20.3</th>
<th>30.2</th>
<th>35.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+ 18 (porn)</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R= rural; U=urban
of the academic year (April and May). Inas, in grade 9, complained about the same thing:

My parents took my mobile phone away from me last week and said I had to focus on my studies because the exams are due. I told them I was watching video lessons, but they did not believe me. They said I can use my dad’s computer for the exam preparation but in the presence of my mum […]. This is unfair. I am doing well in the tests, but I want my mobile back.

Most male respondents (70%) said they watch online recaps of football matches and videos about how to play video games. Some of them claimed they were watching video lessons to prepare for examinations. Only one of them said that he watched documentaries for both entertainment and learning. Eight out of ten female informants said they enjoyed music videos, comedies, soap operas, and movies, and four out of ten claimed that they did not watch. Also, our female informants claimed to have watched DIY videos to learn how to bake a cake, prepare a light snack, or dress up in the latest fashions, among other things. In terms of pornographic content, it should be noted that all-female interviewees denied watching porn, except for one who said that everyone watched porn. It appears that males tend to watch different types of videos compared to females.

Our interview data also revealed that 70% of the respondents interviewed seldom used the Internet to look for academic information, while only 10% said they never used it for such a purpose. A fifth of respondents (20%) stated they seldom read online, while 15% acknowledged occasionally reading some information online. In short, the findings of the interviews are quite similar to the results of the survey.

6. Discussion

6.1. Motives for Internet use

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of the participants used the Internet for socializing (73.92%) and entertainment (64.56%). From this finding, it might be argued that the Internet has become a
good space for social interaction and a great source of entertainment for the participants. This high percentage of the motive for socializing with friends and partners can be due to the respondents’ psychological needs, such as self-recognition, integration, independence, and developing a personal identity. This finding is in line with Karacic and Oreskovic (2017), who reported that the vast majority of the adolescents who participated in their study used the Internet for entertainment. Our result is also supported by Boyd (2014), who states that the nature of the teenage phase might trigger their need for personal identity, as well as integration and social interaction. Thus, the participants’ interest in socializing could be attributed to their desire to fulfill the need for self-confidence embodied in seeking recognition from others, group belonging, personal stability and social status, and the need for affiliation and connection with the outside world.

Our results are in line with Raacke and Bonds-Raacke (2008), who indicated that the participants used social media platforms to make new friends and rediscover old ones, and Almasi et al. (2017), who reported that adolescents’ main motives of Internet use are to chat and socialize with mates, watch films and listen to music. This might be due to the peer influence in adolescence since most of the respondents said they were online because their friends were there. According to Gallion (2010), socializing is one of the central and most essential elements of applying the U&G theory to social media studies, arguing that the desire to talk to friends and keep relationships is among the socializing needs.

Entertainment was also found to be among the most important drives behind Internet use since the majority of the participants reported using the Net to be entertained. According to Katz et al. (1973), individuals used mass media to seek many psychological needs such as emotional experiences and pleasure and the need to escape unpleasant reality and find catharsis. Thus, seeking to meet such needs could be one of the reasons why the participants of the current research used the Net as a means of entertainment. It appears that the Internet has become a primary source of entertainment for the participants as it allows them access to countless products and services such as text, moving images, animation, audio, video, games, video-chatting. This finding agrees
with Gallion (2010), who concluded that the respondents solely used the Net to satisfy their needs for leisure and amusement.

The present study also found that the older the participants were, the less they socialized and entertained themselves and the more information they sought. This may be owing to the fact that the majority of the participants in late adolescence were in the 1st or 2nd year of Baccalaureate, and thus had to study for the regional and national exams. This could be the reason why those in late adolescence seemed to spend less time on online socializing and entertainment and more on studying. This could be explained by the fact that the participants in late adolescence may have developed a higher awareness to use the Internet for academic purposes than the other two age groups. Another explanation for this rising interest in using the Net for educational purposes and information seeking on the part of the participants in late adolescence could be due to their age and awareness of the importance of cognitive needs. In other words, it could be elicited that the older the participants were, the more need for acquiring information, knowledge, understanding of their social environment, curiosity, and exploration they had. Preparing for national and regional exams could be another motive behind the frequent use of the Internet for educational purposes among older participants. The finding that the students in late adolescence used the Internet more for academic purposes than the other two age groups lends support to Larhmaid et al. (2019), who found that the majority of university students exploited digital materials for academic purposes. This result seems to align with Eisenberg (2003), who states that information literacy skills, mainly the Internet, could enhance students’ skills and intellectual abilities if their teachers direct them efficiently to exploit information and communication technology.

6.2. Participants’ online use and traffic

The current research also explored the participants’ most common online use and traffic and the kinds of videos they consumed most. It was found that the most preferred online activities the majority of the respondents always did were purely connected to socializing and
entertainment: listen to music (57.22%), chat with friends (51.90%), and watch films or videos (50.13%). Also, about a third of the respondents reported that they always share and comment (32.41%), play games (29.37%), and search for images (27.59%). The participants’ favorite online activities became much clearer when the qualitative data were analyzed. This was reflected by a number of the informants’ responses. It was elicited that almost all the interviewees admitted enjoying chatting with friends, watching entertaining videos or films, and playing online games. This could suggest that the Internet has become a major source of social interaction, communication, and entertainment for the participants.

Our findings support Papoola (2014), who concluded that socializing was a key drive for Internet use. Our results are also in line Whiting and Williams (2013), who found that their respondents used social media to listen to jokes, play games, read funny and humorous comments, and watch crazy things that can make them laugh. Similar results were reported by El Harras (2011), who found that young people in Morocco focused their attention mainly on chatting and downloading songs, films, and music. Further, our findings regarding the participants’ reasons behind Internet use are also confirmed by Shen and Shakir (2012), who conducted an exploratory study to examine the Internet usage among Arab youth, and its impact on their identity development. Their study reported that Internet use patterns were varied with five chief activities, namely searching, emailing, chatting, entertainment, and online discussions, accounting for 75% of Internet usage. However, other researchers found that students use social media sites for learning purposes (Brady et al., 2010) and the improvement of their learning productivity and communication skills (Lusk, 2010). The discrepancies with these findings could be mainly due to the differences in the socio-economic background of the participants in these studies.

Regarding information seeking, the current study revealed that a significant number of the respondents admitted they never or hardly ever used the Net to look for information (never, 23.80%; rarely 17.47%). Only 19.24% said they always used the Net to do research. As regards using the Internet for school purposes, 32.15% said they
sometimes exploited the Internet to do schoolwork, while only 27.34% reported they always used it for that purpose. 29.62% said they never read books or magazines online. The qualitative data clarified that the majority of the informants did not use the Internet to do research or read materials regularly. When asked why they claimed that they spent so much time at school studying that they were already exhausted when they got home. This might explain why they did not use the Net for research or reading as much as they used it for socializing and entertainment.

The aforementioned findings seem to be consistent with previous research that explored whether Moroccan youths use the Net to seek information and do research. For instance, El Harras (2011) found that the majority of the participants said they were mainly interested in chatting and downloading movies and songs and did not make any cognitive efforts to do research.

The finding that the greatest majority of the respondents reported not reading much online (29.62% said they never read books or magazines online) also seems to be supported by the Arab Reading Index for 2016 (Al Maktoum, 2016). The Index reported that Moroccans spend only 57 hours per year in reading, which is a very weak reading rate equivalent to only 9 minutes per day, whereas the average annual rate in Western countries may be up to 27 minutes per day.

Pornographic movies were also reported to be seen many respondents. It was found that the students living in the country viewed more pornography than those from the city. After building some type of intimacy with the informants via regular talks and interviews, the reasons for this social phenomenon became clear. This could be due to the fact that the participants who were not given any personal space, who were subjected to strict parental control and constant family or societal surveillance, and who were not allowed to leave the house and meet friends in public places secretly watched more pornographic videos than those who were given more freedom. To be more specific, this could suggest that teenagers who can mix freely with the opposite sex have a tendency to watch less pornographic material. The finding
that adolescents living in rural regions watched more pornographic videos than their counterparts from the city supports El-Harras (2011), who discovered that young people aged 15 to 29 were addicted to watching pornography. The same finding was reported by Kadri et al. (2013), who found that about a third of the interviewees said that they frequently consume pornography on the Internet, and half of the adolescents admitted appearing at least once in their on webcam, undressed or sending photos of their naked bodies to strangers.

7. Conclusions and Implications

The findings of the present study would be a step further in forming an understanding of the current situation regarding secondary school students’ online use and traffic and the integration of social media educational platforms in education. This understanding would allow the education Officials to chart insightful policies and make informed decisions based on the results of the current research not only to encourage wise use of the Internet among secondary school students but also to promote the spread and implementation of Internet-based platforms and websites in education. One of the recommendations of this research is that education specialists and textbook designers should take into consideration the tastes and areas of interest of this Internet generation while designing curricula. This could be done through an investment in the creation of instructional websites and Internet-based and interactive contents of the designed syllabi along with the construction of online educational forums, pages, platforms, and channels that can cater to students’ learning needs. Also, more youths’ clubs and public places should be created for Moroccan adolescents to avoid having a generation that prefers virtual relationships to face-to-face communication and real-life contact. This could be done through organizing social events that the youths can use to interact and mingle with each other physically.

The study results disclosed that the respondents did not usually use the Internet for doing research, reading, and information-seeking. It was found that when navigating the Internet, the participants spent most of their time playing online games and watching inappropriate content.
One way to alleviate this is that students should be encouraged to utilize Web 2.0 more for research, educational purposes, and self-development. Accordingly, decision-makers need to allocate funding to equip schools with computers and Internet connections along with interactive educational programs and learning management systems to help students develop the habit of wise and beneficial Internet usage. This may minimize students’ time wastage on chatting and other irrelevant engagements that are not of major importance in their lives.

This study examined Internet use among secondary school students in one region in Morocco. More research is needed to better understand Internet use among Moroccan students with a special focus on other populations with diverse and larger samples.

References


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